

# LASE

# connections

Fall 2015

## St. Mark's 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Wins Poetry Award

Some may know Sophia as a talented artist or “the girl with the giant singing voice”, but a local organization, the 7th Grade Poetry Foundation (7GP), recognized her for an additional artistic talent. When faced with her mom’s health issues, Sofia Sattia, a 7th grade LASE student with autism, bared her soul and shared insights through poetry. Encouraged by her St. Mark’s classroom teacher in partnership with her LASE resource teacher, Sophia created a poem that touched the judges’ hearts and won her the 7th Grade Poetry Foundation Award. This local organization has been successful in re-energizing the art of poetry writing in local middle schools, transforming young lives and their classroom experience through writing. This is a portion of Sophia’s poem.

### *Seeing Myself*

*One day I looked in the mirror  
and saw a girl with dirty blonde hair, glasses and hazel eyes  
wondering to herself,  
“Who am I?”.....*

*I knew that I was different from the others,  
but now it doesn't give me any bothers.*

*I've realized my successes and mistakes.  
I now know my soul never will break.*

*When I came back to reality,  
the girl who was crying waterfalls in the mirror  
was actually me.*



Debbie Armbruster, Home Room Teacher, Sophia Sattia and Daviann Phye, LASE Teacher

## Excellence in Education

### PEABODY LEADER IN EDUCATION AWARD RECOGNIZES LASE TEACHER

Sue Klobnak, teacher/director of the LASE Learning Center at Lutheran High School St. Charles (LHSSC), was a recipient of the 2015 Peabody Leaders in Education Award! The Peabody Energy Leaders in Education program recognizes outstanding education professionals who make a difference in the lives of students in our communities. Thirty educators were selected out of four hundred nominees for their commitment to inspire young people to develop their full potential.

Sue has continuously incorporated changes to LASE’s Learning Center over the last 12 years to meet the evolving needs of students, parents, and LASE/LHS staff. The LASE Learning Center continually strives to provide the best possible services for students with different abilities that include: learning disabilities, language and speech impairments, autism, intellectual deficits, emotional disturbances, ADHD, and other medical diagnoses. Upon receiving the award Sue stated, “I feel very humble to be recognized as a leader among outstanding professionals in education while performing a job that I love!”

We are so proud of Sue for the great work she does for the LASE students at LHSSC. Congratulations!



LASE teacher, Sue Klobnak of LHSSC, (center) with a few other Peabody Award winners at the Ballpark Hilton.

## LASE MISSION STATEMENT

Lutheran Association for Special Education will assist and support schools to address the cognitive, social and spiritual development of children with special needs, so they may fully enjoy their God-given potential.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### GRANT SUPPORT

THANK YOU *to the following  
LASE Supporters:*

- ▶ Cardinals Care
- ▶ Employees Community Fund of Boeing
- ▶ St. Louis Christmas Carols
- ▶ Variety – The Children’s Charity of St. Louis

## From the Executive Director, *As Told to Karen Scuito*

**“THEREFORE ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AND BUILD EACH OTHER UP...”  
1 THESSALONIANS 5:11**

Lori has always been drawn to the underdog—those who needed “a little extra help.” Even as a child, she reached out to kids who were picked last for the team or those who needed a partner for school projects. As a child of two Lutheran educators, her career choice to teach was a natural, but her calling to serve those who learn differently was her inspiration to pursue a special education degree. The mission of Lutheran Association for Special Education, *to reach, inspire and strengthen every child of God*, has been her passion for the last 20+ years. As the Executive Director of LASE, Lori’s focus has always been mission-oriented: to impact the lives and faith of children in Lutheran schools by recruiting and mentoring outstanding faculty and educating utilizing high quality curriculum and best practices in special education. Nothing brought a smile to Lori’s face quicker than listening to a faculty member sharing new ideas, strategies and success stories resulting from the impact of LASE on the lives of the children and families we serve.



LASE Executive Director, Lori Christiansen



LASE Assistant Director, Chris Tomlinson

During the many months since her cancer diagnosis in December 2013, Lori coveted your prayers and support for her and her family. She fought an inspiring and courageous battle and God in His mercy granted her the strength and ability to continue to serve Him as the Executive Director of LASE. She is now victorious in her battle and resting in the arms of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Always mindful of the future of LASE, Lori had appointed Chris Tomlinson, B.S. Ed., M.A., to the newly created position of Assistant Director of LASE at the beginning of this school year. Chris is one of the outstanding and dedicated faculty members that Lori has mentored over the years, having served LASE for 16 years both as a resource teacher at Zion Lutheran School in St. Charles and in a leadership capacity as a LASE facilitator. Chris’ heart for ministry is evident in her classroom, as an active member of her Zion congregation, and with the faculty she mentors as a facilitator. Lori’s confidence in Chris was grounded in her belief that Chris will carry on her tradition of effective, faith-based leadership for the students and families of LASE.

Your prayers and support for the ministry of LASE, its leadership, faculty and staff during this transition are appreciated as we continue the mission Lori lived out in her everyday life—to reach out and lift up the children of the King to help them reach their God-given potential.

## John Obermann, The Trifecta of LASE



John and Donita Obermann pictured at a LASE Donor Appreciation Event.

It won't be the same without you! John Obermann announced retirement from his position on the LASE board after being actively involved with LASE for over 40 years. John is the "trifecta" of supporters: with his service on the **board**, his many hours of **volunteer work on committees** and his generosity as a **donor and advocate** for the children of

LASE. John deserves much recognition for his role as one of the founders of the highly successful 34th Annual LASE Golf Tournament. He has spent many hours sharing his leadership as Board Chair, and board member. He and his wife Donita's loyal support for the children exemplifies their strong faith and involvement in the Lutheran community. Three cheers and thanks from the children of LASE!

## It's All About the Teamwork!

### LASE INSIGHT SERIES WORKSHOP

Over 150 area Lutheran Educators attended LASE Insight Series Workshop: Insights into Reading. Drs. Joe and Michelle Sencibaugh, of Webster University, presented the morning session, "Reading and Learning to Read: Effective Strategies at the Primary Level" for Kindergarten to 3rd grade teachers and the afternoon session, "Why Teaching Reading in the Upper Grades Matters: Comprehension, Vocabulary and Content Area Strategies" for fourth through eighth grade teachers. Each year the response to the workshops has been overwhelmingly positive and this year



Several members of LASE faculty forming the tree of the LASE logo.

is no exception. One attendee stated that she always attends LASE workshops because they are so well organized and that "you spoil us with good speakers, snacks and chocolate!"

*(continued on next page)*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### November 14, 2015 (Saturday)

#### Herald the Holidays

Frontenac Hilton, St. Louis, MO  
Luncheon, Silent Auction and Style Show  
Featuring fashions from Eileen Fisher and Ann Taylor  
Silent Auction starts at 9:30am  
Tickets: \$55 per person – reserved tables of ten guests

### February 19, 2016 (Friday)

#### Let's Get Purse-onal

The Edge of Webster  
359 Marshall Avenue Webster Groves, MO  
Silent auction of new and gently used purses  
Appetizers, wine and desserts served  
Ticket price of \$25  
Student rate of \$20 (under 21 age limit)  
Reserved tables of eight guests

### June 20, 2016 (Monday)

#### 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament

Sunset Country Club, Sunset Hills, MO  
4 person scramble, lunch, silent and oral auctions, evening cocktails with hors d'oeuvres buffet dinner  
Registration: \$225 per person. Sponsorship, volunteer and donation opportunities available.  
Mega Tickets, Mulligans, and Skins Game  
Let's Tee it up for the Kids!

For information or registration for events, visit [www.lutheranspecial.org](http://www.lutheranspecial.org) or call 314.268.1234

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Lutheran Association for Special Education admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Other responses include the following statements: “I love that we were given hands-on experiences as well as lists and references to further resources” and “I will be able to use several ideas, which is what I always hope for when attending a workshop.”

Since its inception in 2013, the LASE Insight Series of workshops has been attended by over 500 Lutheran educators from the St. Louis area. The LASE Insight Series is yet another way in which LASE partners with Lutheran elementary schools to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers who attend the workshops also receive LASE’s monthly Insights E-news filled with useful articles and resources for all teachers. Plan to attend the August 5, 2016 LASE Insight Series Workshop. See you there!

## iPads and LASE Students: A Perfect Partnership thanks to Boeing!

Research is showing that iPads are especially helpful in increasing student engagement which includes excitement for learning and task focus, especially for students with special needs. Thanks to a \$2300 grant from the Boeing Employees Community Fund, several LASE speech pathologists and resource teachers will be able to individualize instruction and therapy through the use of Apps specifically designed to teach or enhance an essential skill. We appreciate their generous support.



## LASE Welcomes Associate Members and New Staff

The Associate Membership program is one way in which LASE partners with schools to support their independent special educator. Annual membership entitles a Lutheran school special education teacher to participate in monthly LASE professional development activities during staff meetings. Special educators from Abiding Savior, Concordia Lutheran School, Lutheran North, Lutheran South, St. John’s Ellisville and St. Paul Des Peres have partnered with LASE for the 2015-2016 school year.



Immanuel, St. Charles Resource Teacher, Kelley Malady

LASE welcomes back Kelley Malady as Resource Teacher at Immanuel Lutheran in St. Charles. Kelley returns to LASE after spending some years at home with her young

children. We are blessed to add Dawn Praechter, a retiree from the Fox School District, to the LASE roster, as speech language pathologist at Salem Lutheran School in Affton. Welcome!



Salem LASE Speech Pathologist, Dawn Praechter

## The Power of Team LASE

The 33rd Annual Golf Tournament participants took a few moments before tee off to pose for a photo of Lori Christiansen, LASE Executive Director, and her many prayer warriors. Her valiant fight with cancer over the last 20 months has served as a source of inspiration and motivation for so many families and individuals dealing with illness in their lives. Lori commented that she bonds even more closely with our LASE students because her journey has taught many lessons about patience and finding the right advocates you need for the expertise and support that will get you to the next level. As always, the moment of focus on her was brief, but she did allow a few moments to document the huge show of love and support. The 2015 tournament raised \$80,000, thanks to everyone who participated as a sponsor, committee member, donor, golfer or volunteer. A special shout out goes to Foam Supplies, Inc., our Tournament Partner, whose loyal support is vital to the tournament’s success. See you next year on June 20, 2016!



Lori Christiansen and some of her Prayer Warriors at Golf Tournament

