

# LASE

# connections

Fall 2013

## “I Can Do” Attitude Drives Success for Orion Melton



Junior Orion Melton at Lutheran High St. Charles

Lutheran High School St. Charles junior, Orion Melton, says he’s grown as a student because “I’ve learned to think of homework less as daily torture and more as something that needs to be done and that I can do.” Orion attributes much of his high school success to

the LASE Learning Center, a program that provides academic instruction and support for students with disabilities. Orion’s grandmother, Pam Melton, said that the LASE Learning Center dispelled her fears about sending her grandson with Asperger’s to high school. “His LASE teacher, Mrs. Sue Klobnak, keeps him organized. I couldn’t ask for a better teacher,” she thankfully states. When asked what he wants others to know about people with Asperger’s, Orion carefully replied, “*Asperger’s makes people act and think differently but it does not mean they are not intelligent or not interesting.*” Orion is not sure what the future holds but he definitely wants to go to college and perhaps become a writer.

## LASE Workshop Gives Insights into Autism

Eighty-six Lutheran educators joined together on August 2nd at St. Paul’s Lutheran, Des Peres, for the first workshop in the LASE Insight Series: Insights into Children with Autism. Amy Buie, Executive Director of The Center for Autism Education, and Carrie Salyer, Occupational Therapist and Co-Owner of Leaps and Bounds, engaged the teachers in stories, strategies, and suggestions that will help them work effectively with children with Autism in the classroom. One participant said, “Loved the entire event! Loved the concise info and that I can use on the first day of school. The presenters were real motivators for us to start the year!”

The LASE Insight Series Workshops will continue with regional workshops in Fall 2013 and Spring 2014. LASE is committed to partnering with Lutheran schools to find solutions that help children with special needs find success.

Teachers practice technique of blowing bubbles to promote relaxation and focus in students.



## 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.



LASE Executive Director, Lori Christiansen

## From the Executive Director

### CONNECTED IN CHRIST

Ephesians 4:4-6 says: “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.”

Parents, students, teachers, administrators, and special educators. We are all connected on the same team: God’s team. The common bond of our Christian faith makes us one and gives us unity of purpose. That purpose is to ensure that each child in Lutheran schools develops a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Savior while growing academically, physically, and socially.

LASE is determined to connect students with disabilities and special needs to the resources they need to grow in a caring Lutheran school environment. Our special education staff brings expertise to each school we serve in partnership with dedicated teachers and administrators. Together with our parents, we are driven by the shared value for educating the promise and potential in the spirit and mind of every child of God.

## Ability Awareness Day Ignites Student Sensitivity

Students at St. Mark’s Lutheran School, Eureka, discovered that the biggest word in “disability” is “ability” during a recent “Ability Awareness Day.” LASE Resource Teacher, Carlyn Reed, and School Counselor, Susan Howard, organized the event to develop student sensitivity toward people with disabilities. Students learned about different disabilities and the many accomplishments people with disabilities have made in the world. Students also engaged in simulation activities that helped them

experience what it might be like to be learning disabled, physically, visually or hearing impaired. When reflecting on what she learned, one fourth grader wrote, “Even if people are different you should still treat them the way you would want to be treated.” LASE Resource Teacher, Carlyn Reed, believes that heightening students’ awareness of the different gifts in others helps children to love and accept others for who they are.



St. Mark’s students during disability simulation activities.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joseph Bordeaux, *Chair*  
Bette Schlie, *Vice-Chair*  
Judy Ruf, *Treasurer*  
Michele Berra  
Don Hugo  
Boone Jackson  
Diana Meers  
John Obermann  
Steve Siepman

## ADVISORY BOARD

Paul Crisler  
Dave Drewes  
Warren Fick  
Dennis Gehrke  
Chris James  
Sandy Meyer  
Ted Schuessler  
Kermit Starnes  
Robert Wold

Lori Christiansen, Ed.S.  
*Executive Director*  
Karen Scuito  
*Director of Fundraising & Events*

## GRANT SUPPORT

THANK YOU to the following LASE Supporters:

- ▶ Cardinals Care
- ▶ Missouri District Lutheran Women’s Missionary League
- ▶ St. Louis Christmas Carols
- ▶ The Webb Foundation
- ▶ The Tilles Fund
- ▶ Variety – The Children’s Charity of St. Louis

## A Light at the End of the Tunnel

### FORMER LASE STUDENT FINDS NICHE AS MECHANICAL ENGINEERING INTERN

Corey Bryan's mom, Karen Starnes, wondered how she would ever get her son through school when he was diagnosed with learning disabilities in reading, processing, and short-term memory issues. LASE helped her find the answers. Corey was a hard working student and learned to compensate for his challenges with the help of one of his favorite LASE teachers, Mrs. Sandi Loduca. A Christian school and LASE Resource Room at Christ Community Lutheran School was a blessing for Corey because no one picked on him or made him feel dumb. Fast forward over 10 years to the present. The boy who couldn't remember his math facts in grade school is now doing high level math as a senior Mechanical Engineering student at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, MO. Corey is currently completing an internship in Sweetwater, TX with United States Gypsum (USG), the largest manufacturer of building materials in North America. Corey's learning disabilities did not magically disappear, but over the years he learned how to overcome his challenges. His job prospects after graduation are promising.

Corey's mom, Karen, says, "I cannot thank LASE enough for the work they did with Corey from second grade on to put him in the position he is today! In Corey's case LASE absolutely met and far exceeded their mission to... 'serve a child with special needs to grow in Christ and *enjoy his God-given potential.*'"

Former LASE Student Corey Bryan, a Senior Mechanical Engineering Major



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 8, 2013 (Tuesday)

### LASE Insight Series Workshops

**Amy Buie: "Behavior Mapping: A Strategy to Reduce Challenging Behaviors"**

Complimentary for Lutheran teachers

4:15 - 6:15 pm

Immanuel Lutheran School

115 S. 6th St., St. Charles, MO 63301

November 2, 2013 (Saturday)

### Herald the Holidays

Frontenac Hilton, St. Louis, MO

Luncheon, Silent Auction and Style Show

Fashions from Ann Taylor, Chico's and Leopard

Doors open at 9:30am

Tickets: \$50 per person – May reserve tables of ten

February 2014

### Let's Get Purse-onal

New location to be announced

Silent Auction of new and gently used purses

Wine, appetizers, desserts

Tickets: \$25 per person – May reserve tables of eight

June 23, 2014 (Monday)

### Thirty-Second Annual Golf Tournament

Sunset Country Club, Sunset Hills, MO

4 person scramble, lunch, silent and oral auctions, evening cocktails with appetizer dinner

**For information regarding events, contact us at (314) 268.1234.**

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

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

## Golfers Join the LASE Championship Team

Since golf tournament champions are determined by team play and scores, then the children of LASE were definitely winners at the 31st Annual Golf Tournament in June. Team members contributing to the successful event included: Foam Supplies, Inc., Tournament Partner, 11 golf committee members, 31 tournament sponsors, 10 in-kind sponsors, 6 Thrivent Chapters, 120 golfers and 36 volunteers. The winning score was \$73,500 that will impact the lives of the special children and families LASE serves in our Lutheran schools. Thanks to these LASE connections, we consider that a hole-in-one effort! Student Ambassador, Alex Kossman, from Word of Life Lutheran School, greeted every golfer to thank them for believing in the LASE mission to reach and teach every child. A special thanks to Dean Eggerding and Tom Dankenbring, Tournament Co-Chair, for their leadership in planning this event. Join the LASE championship team - Mark your calendar for June 23, 2014.



2013 Student Ambassador, Alex Kossman and LASE teacher, Deb Weltmer, greet guests as they arrive.

## A Heart for Giving

*"Your faculty and staff are amazing! LASE is really making a difference in the lives of children... It's such a wonderful ministry - more people need to get involved!"* LASE

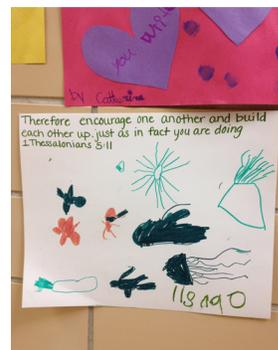


LASE advocate, Sandy Meyer

couldn't ask for a better advocate than Sandy Meyer, a benefactor for 20 years. Her support for LASE continues to grow due to her heart for children and her solid belief in being a good steward of her God-given gifts of time, talent, and treasures. Sandy serves LASE as an advisory board member, makes significant contributions throughout the year, and phones the office weekly with ideas and contact names for fundraising and marketing ideas which promote the mission of LASE. Sandy wants to challenge others to be good stewards and share their resources with LASE as well. She supports LASE because she knows her gifts ensure that LASE can continue to provide leading expertise and quality services for LASE students and families. Every gift makes a measurable impact on the children. Sandy, you are a blessing!

## LASE Makes a Difference

### WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING ABOUT LASE



LASE encourages students and parents

*"Over the last three years I have watched my son's self-esteem grow along with his confidence. Thank you for giving our son an opportunity for a greater life after high school."* – LASE parent

*"From the day my son was baptized in a Lutheran church, I envisioned him attending a Lutheran school.*

*When he was diagnosed with autism, I thought that dream had ended. I later discovered LASE services were an option and my dream came true. Thanks to LASE's support, he has continued to grow in a loving and Christ-centered environment. Thanks for making this possible."* – LASE parent



Golf Tournament Chair Tom Dankenbring (2nd left) and Dean Eggerding (2nd right) and guests getting ready to tee off at Sunset CC.

