

# LASE

Spring 2017

# connections

## LASE Celebrates 60 Years of Impact on Families

Sixty years ago, in 1956, Lutheran Association for Special Education began with the dream and vision of parents who wanted their child to be seen, to be heard, to be loved and educated as a Christian. Being part of a program in which their children's educational needs could be met, while they learn about God and thrive in a Christian community, was their hope and dream. Today, LASE partners with families, pastors, principals, general education teachers and the entire community to impact the lives and the futures of all children in our Lutheran schools. It is with pride that we remember the many faces, challenges and success stories of students, teachers and families that have been impacted by the ministry of LASE. Thank you for being part of this vital ministry!



LASE Faculty and Parent Guest Speaker, Karen Starnes, celebrate LASE's 60th with birthday cake!!

## National Lutheran School Accreditation



This year has offered an exciting opportunity for LASE faculty and staff to collaborate, reflect, and evaluate the impact of our ministry within the Lutheran

Schools that we serve. Under the leadership of Jackie Smith, LASE Executive Director, we have teamed up to work through a comprehensive self-study process to identify and



LASE faculty, staff and board members collaborate on the self study for NLSA accreditation.

celebrate our strengths, shed light on our challenges and suggest areas for improvement. Through this reflective process, we will create a strategic plan for growth over the next several years. The National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) encourages and recognizes Lutheran schools that provide quality Christian education and engage in continuous improvement. NLSA will benefit from the study as well, as LASE is only the second Recognized Service Organization (RSO) of the LCMS to participate in the accreditation process. A seven member team will visit in April

to review our self-study and observe LASE in action at our partner schools. Here's to self reflection, collaboration and our new NLSA Accreditation!



A child with special education needs affects the entire family. Thank you for providing us with solution based strategies that make homework manageable and family time more enjoyable.



## From Our Executive Director

Dear Friends of LASE,

We are very pleased to share our 2015-16 Annual Report with you. With the loss of Lori Christiansen, the 2015-2016 school year was met with many challenges and our biggest accomplishment during that time was “SURVIVAL.” As a team, we had to step back and evaluate how to maintain the day-to-day operations *without* impacting the support services we were providing to students. This took an extraordinary amount of commitment and dedication from our Board of Directors, faculty and staff, and **you!** Thanks to your prayers, your generosity and your time, our ministry is thriving and we are deeply grateful.

As we look toward the future, God is opening new doors and opportunities for us every day. We are in the middle of the NLSA (National Lutheran School Accreditation) self-study process which is giving us clarity on who we are and how we should evolve to reach the growing needs of children with learning disabilities. This process will catapult us into the 2017-18 school year with clearer and more focused priorities.

Please take time to review the annual report to better understand how God continues to bless us. Your continued prayers are powerful and we ask you to keep us in yours.

In His Service,

Jackie Smith



LASE Executive Director, Jackie Smith

## From the Assistant Director

There’s a saying in the world of special education, “If you’ve met one child with autism, you’ve met ONE child with autism,” meaning that autism is as individual as the individual themselves. At LASE we could say, “If you’ve seen one LASE expert in action, you’ve seen ONE LASE expert,” meaning that the LASE staff of teachers, consultants and speech therapists meet different needs at different schools using different talents—ALL to serve HIS children to HIS glory. LASE is a team of individuals.

Let me show you a snapshot of them at work:

- A resource teacher uses enlarged reading materials and an iPad to teach her Visually Disabled student with a brain tumor about swamps in Southern Florida;
- A speech therapist is so loved that everyone in class asks, “When will it be my turn to go with you?”;
- A LASE educational consultant beams with joy, and sometimes tears, with the confidence in knowing that she was in the exact place at the right time to collaborate with a teacher to find a solution to her student’s struggle with reading

LASE is blessed with a team of experts who works diligently to research, problem solve, and collaborate in order to best meet the needs of the students at their schools. When you’ve seen one LASE staff member in action you’ve seen a teacher, therapist or consultant that is helping each individual child be a success!

God’s blessings,

Karen Wittmayer



LASE Assistant Director, Karen Wittmayer

### GRANT SUPPORT

THANK YOU *to the following*  
LASE Supporters:

- ▶ Cardinals Care
- ▶ Employees Community Fund of Boeing
- ▶ St. Louis Christmas Carols Association
- ▶ Concordia Outbound Ministries

"Thank you for all you do for the students at St. Mark's. You go above and beyond on a daily basis for them. I was just singing your praises to my coworkers today. I feel so lucky to have you as a resource!"

## Child of God

**"LET LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS NEVER LEAVE YOU; BIND THEM AROUND YOUR NECK, WRITE THEM ON THE TABLET OF YOUR HEART." PROVERBS 3:3**



Chava and her LASE Teacher, Brandi

*"Do you believe in miracles?"* asked the 5th grade teacher at Child of God Lutheran School, prompting a discussion among her students. Chava, a student of LASE teacher, Brandi Hallemier, spoke up confidently saying, *"Yes! The doctors said I would never walk, but I can!"* The other students were curious but supportive, coming together daily

to help with her needs. Chava shows love and faithfulness in everything she does each day. She is known for encouraging her peers to be kind to those who are different. Chava does not focus on things she cannot do, but instead rejoices in the abilities God gave her. She continually does the hard work necessary to achieve her full potential as a student and as a Christian. Chava's faith is strong, inspirational, and motivating. She has touched many lives in the Child of God community; whose parents even came together to build a modified work space for her in the classroom. Chava is already very wise...and very loved at Child of God!



Thank you for the gift of children.  
Thank you for the child in me.  
Teach me to welcome children  
in your name.  
Teach me to live as a child of God.

## LASE's Herald the Holidays

### A CELEBRATION OF FAITH, FAMILY AND FELLOWSHIP

There was much cause for celebration as 200+ LASE supporters entered the festive ballrooms at the Orlando's Event Center in Richmond Heights. Everyone got into the holiday spirit, as they viewed hundreds of beautifully displayed silent auction items along with popular gift items for purchase in the Holiday Boutique. Guests were entertained by the **St. Louis Rep's Costume Parade**. The Student Ambassador to the event was Terry Tatum, a senior at



Terry and LASE Teachers, Sue Klobnak and Geri Kidd

Lutheran High School, St. Charles. He and his parents chose the school because of their partnership with the LASE Learning Center which offered customized strategies and support for his learning. LHSSC's Dr. Craig Ernstmeyer, Head of School, and LASE Resource Teachers, Sue Klobnak and Geri Kidd, all watched with pride as Terry and Erica told their moving story of challenges and prayer, the collaboration and team work that led to their joy-filled success: Terry has been accepted to the University of Central Missouri! He has everything he needs to advocate for himself, achieve social and academic success and continue his example as a Christian to his fellow students. Congratulations!

LASE Student Ambassador, Terry Tatum and parents, Damon and Erica

## “Firsties” Blossom at Green Park Lutheran School

**“...I LOVE IT WHEN THE LIGHT BULB GOES ON AND THEN I WATCH MY STUDENTS TURN AROUND AND BEGIN TO TEACH OTHERS.”**

**Beth Meyer,  
GREEN PARK LUTHERAN SCHOOL**

Students, faculty and staff at Green Park Lutheran School enthusiastically joined in the celebration, as Jackie Smith, LASE Executive Director, awarded the 2017 Jeremiah Award to First Grade Teacher, Beth Meyer.

The award is an opportunity for LASE to honor a general education teacher in a partner school, who excels at meeting the unique and individual educational needs of all students in the classroom, especially those students with disabilities. Green Park Principal, Stephen Eggold, nominated Beth, stating that *“Mrs. Meyer has created an environment and culture in her classroom that encourages students to do their best. Her lesson plans are based*

*around differentiating learning and working with each child at their individual needs level. Her cooperation with our LASE Resource Teacher and implementation of strategies that can help students be successful is unparalleled.”* LASE has a 60 year history of partnering with Lutheran schools in the St. Louis and St. Charles areas to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities and special needs. Jackie Smith, LASE Executive Director, presented the award to Mrs. Meyer for excellence in inspiring students to become lifelong learners, for her collaborative efforts with LASE Resource Teacher, Sandi Loduca, and for giving her students “hope and a future.”



**Stephen Eggold, Principal,  
Beth Meyer and Jackie Smith at  
Jeremiah Award presentation.**

**You are the first one to tell me what he CAN do, and not just recite what he CANNOT do. You see his potential. You give me hope.**



3558 S. Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63118

 Join our community on Facebook

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### April 7, 2017 (Friday)

#### Let's Get Purse-onal

The Edge of Webster

359 Marshall Avenue, Webster Groves, MO

An Evening in Paris

Silent auction of new and gently used purses

Appetizers, margaritas, beverages and desserts

Ticket price of \$30

Student rate of \$25 (under age 21)

Reserved tables of eight guests

### June 19, 2017 (Monday)

#### Thirty-Fifth Annual Golf Tournament

Sunset Country Club, Sunset Hills, MO

4 person scramble, lunch, oral auction, evening

cocktails with appetizer buffet dinner

Registration: \$225 per person.

Sponsorship, volunteer & donation opportunities available.

Mega Tickets, Mulligans, Skins and Hole Contests

### August 2017

#### Evening LASE Insight Series Parent Workshop

**(Friday) LASE Insight Series Teacher Workshop**

Watch for further details!

### November 11, 2017 (Saturday)

#### Herald the Holidays

Orlando's Event Center in Maryland Heights

Luncheon, Silent Auction and Style Show

Silent Auction: 9:30am – 11:30am

Tickets: \$55 per person – May reserve tables of ten

**For more information visit Events Page at  
[lutheranspecial.org](http://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.