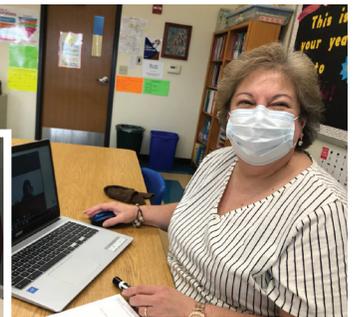


## Pivoting with Grace and Joy

**March 16, 2020**—None of us could have realized that when faculty and students left school that day, we would not be back together for FIVE MONTHS! Our world paused briefly as the pandemic became a reality and then pivoted everyone into a distanced, virtual world where we found strength and hope by uniting in our faith. LASE educators increased their efforts, accelerating the creativity and personalized attention that makes them master teachers. Their “bag of tricks” included front porch visits, encouraging phone calls and texts, packet drop offs, GOOGLE EVERYTHING, funny emoji’s and time spent learning together via ZOOM.

**August 19, 2020**—With the continued convergence of education and health, LASE moved forward once again to be proactive in transitioning students back to school. The “Welcome Back!” faculty workshop included relevant professional development topics including **Google overview** training, presented by Scott Ackerson, Lutheran High School South, and dynamic Pastor Gerard Bolling, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, speaking on “**Diversity & Inclusion of School Aged Children**”. Masks, hand sanitizer, temperature checks and elbow bumps are the new tools needed for faculty as “front line workers” and disciples of Jesus in their schools. Many teachers are concurrently teaching in person and virtually to those unable to attend school. Though times are challenging, the focus and commitment remains steadfast: teach to each child’s needs, model grace and empathy daily, and continue pivoting to evolve God’s plan for our students. Please join us in daily prayers for our Lutheran school community.



## LASE MISSION STATEMENT

LASE provides Christ-centered education to students with unique learning needs so they can grow academically, socially and spiritually.

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## From the Executive Director

As you peruse our fall newsletter, you will see a common theme—how we have had to pivot with grace to meet the rapidly changing and increasingly challenging needs of our children with special learning needs. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic we, like our Lutheran schools, have had to adapt, evolve, develop, decide, adjust, collaborate, analyze and ‘pivot’ in new ways. In a matter of six months, we’ve had to learn how to teach and conduct meetings remotely while developing new policies and safety procedures to try and keep everyone safe and healthy. We’ve had to listen, understand, and support our parents with their virtual learning joys and challenges, and we’ve had to ask for more support from our generous community of donors for an event that wasn’t able to happen.

But we are reminded, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance” –James 1:2-3. This verse is asking us to see reality through a different lens—*the lens of joy*—and to use this as an opportunity that God is giving us. We may not recognize the “joy,” but we can be certain “that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose” –Romans 8:28.

As we continue to ‘pivot’ with grace and joy, we are excited to be serving God’s children and continuing to teach them and share His love for them. Thank YOU for helping us continue to do that. What a joy that is.



Jackie A. Smith, M.A.  
Executive Director



LASE Executive Director,  
Jackie Smith

## Lori’s Legacy Enables LASE to Partner with Zion Lutheran School, Belleville

The family of former LASE Executive Director, **Lori Christiansen**, celebrated her life by establishing the Lori’s Legacy fund in her memory. For those that knew her, Lori embraced the LASE ministry and wanted to further the mission by growing an early childhood program that concentrated on early identification, intervention and programming for ‘at risk’ children.

LASE is happy to announce that Zion Lutheran School – Belleville is the first recipient of **Lori’s Legacy funding**. They are receiving special education expertise one day per week for the entire 2020-21 school year. The collaborative goals include Zion’s early identification of children with special learning needs, identifying ways to minimize potential delays, and consulting with Zion’s teachers to build new strategies so children can reach their full potential.

Zion Lutheran Principal, Ananda Baron, is a motivating role model for her faculty, parents, students, and colleagues. She sees her school as a resource to all families and feels a responsibility as a Christian educator to reach out and witness to all families so that their children will come to know the love of Jesus.

*“It is a hard conversation for a principal to have with a parent when you feel your school cannot offer the level of teaching support that their child deserves”, says Ananda. “LASE’s specialized services are a vital enhancement to every school’s curriculum.”*



MADE POSSIBLE BY  
**Lori’s Legacy**

Ananda is thankful to LASE Specialized Education's Mary Skittino, Educational Consultant, who currently works with the collaborative Early Education team at Zion to provide developmentally appropriate strategies and resources, so these young children may grow in every way with an appreciation for the uniqueness of themselves and others.

We, at LASE, are so very appreciative for the generosity of the Christensen/Vogelsmeier family, friends, coworkers and all those who gave in Lori's memory. Thanks to your giving, her light continues to shine through the eyes of children—one child at a time.

## Finding Strength in Coming Together

### 2020 VIRTUAL LASE INSIGHT SERIES

LASE educators realized the increased need for professional development that would encourage and fortify all teachers as they entered the 2020-21 school year. This year's program, *Square 1: Grace for Re-entering School During COVID-19* was designed to assist teachers in examining the social-emotional, executive functioning and academic needs of their students and to encourage them to choose one strategy in each area that would benefit their students. The presentation was led by Karen Wittmayer, LASE Program Director, and LASE Educators, Mara Springer (St. John's Lutheran School—Arnold) and Laura Stolin (Immanuel Lutheran School—Wentzville). Over 150 principals and educators have viewed the workshop and utilized the Listening Guide. Thank you for coming together while staying distanced to serve as leaders for all in the Lutheran School Community.



## Herald the Holidays

We need your help in sharing the tradition of Herald the Holidays with family and friends this year! Out of respect for the health and safety of our guests, we are transitioning to a **virtual** event with many interactive elements!

- Register to preview and bid on 100+ items featured in LASE's **On-Line Silent Auction** that will be active 11/2 through 11/8.
- A **virtual styling tutorial** featuring fashions from **J. Jill and Never Enough Boutique**
- Featured Speaker, **Jane Wilke** presenting, *Do These Shoes Go with my Dress?*

LASE students, who struggle with daily learning challenges, are even more impacted by social distancing, virtual learning and a world with uncertainty. Their need is greater than ever! Our Herald the Holidays sponsors are **extending a challenge to each of you!** They will match dollar-for-dollar donations up to \$20,000—doubling the impact of your generosity.

Donations for the silent auction are appreciated. For further information contact LASE at 314-268-1234 or view <https://heraldtheholidays.maxgiving.bid>.



### DONOR HIGHLIGHT

Every December, long time donors Glenn and Patti Sprich don their Santa and Mrs. Claus outfits and reach out to family and friends for a donation to benefit the children of LASE. Their ongoing love of the ministry continues to impact our program by giving children the individualized support, strategies and resources they need to reach their God-given potential. Glenn and Patti, members of the Lutheran Church of Webster Gardens, have supported LASE in many ways, but this effort speaks directly to the heart of the ministry! Thank you, Glenn and Patti for your loving example of support for individualized learning so that all children know academic success! Every dollar raised is given in loving memory of Lori Christiansen.

### GRANT SUPPORT

**THANK YOU** to the following LASE Supporters:

- ▶ Cardinals Care
- ▶ Concordia Outbound Ministries
- ▶ Wayne C. Kaufmann Foundation
- ▶ Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
- ▶ Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis
- ▶ St. Louis Christmas Carols Association



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## LASE Annual Golf Benefit

**\$83K RAISED IN SUPPORT OF THE STUDENTS OF LASE!**



**ALL FORE ONE.** Golf is a communal game—no matter your age or skill level. It's a game that is meant to be shared and often spiked with colorful banter. The strong history and tradition of our tournament made the decision to reschedule more difficult, but we look forward to the **38<sup>th</sup> Annual LASE Golf Benefit on**

**Monday, June 28, 2021.** Although we missed the chance to celebrate our kids, the LASE community stepped up to sustain their levels of support so that our students continued to thrive. Special thanks to our Tournament Partner, **Foam Supplies, Inc., leaders, Todd Keske and Karen Keske,** for their loyal and generous support. We were humbled that so many of you stepped up and showed that communal spirit during a very challenging time for everyone. Because of your support, we can continue our commitment to moving our students forward to a new year of individualized learning. Thank you!

## Thank you, Judy!

**SCHOOL NURSES HEAL WITH SMILES AND BAND-AIDS!**



Please join us in thanking Judy Kupferle, School Health Services Administrator, and her team of nurses for their years of service to children in our Lutheran schools. May God continue to bless their work for our Lutheran community.



Many thanks to Lutheran Foundation for their response to the COVID-19 crisis last spring. The Crisis Response Grant we received equipped us with much needed technology—laptops with video capabilities, webcams and iPads to meet the unique challenges of working remotely and virtually for our teachers and students.

We are so very grateful to be a recipient! Thank you Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis.