

LASE

Spring 2021

connections



A Mom's Unexpected Journey...

We all have unanticipated events that suddenly change the way we live and take us on a growth journey. Mine began when my now 16-year-old son was three and attending preschool. Little did I know, when his teacher waived me in to her classroom, I was about to embark on a journey that would lead me to LASE Specialized Education.

“Your son is about 14 months behind in his development,” informed his teacher. “What does that mean?” I queried. The teacher pulled out a writing paper my son had worked on and compared it to another student’s paper. I could not recognize what my son had tried to put on his paper; however, the other student had

neat letters that filled his page. “But, he’s only three years old,” I defended. Her eyes replied, “Don’t go there, mom. I’m just trying to help.” So, from that day forward, I embraced every possible resource available in the educational and medical worlds that would help my son become a proud and productive student.

Twelve years ago, I received an unanticipated note from my son’s teacher explaining the services of LASE Specialized Education. I grew up learning not to question God’s unanticipated events but to trust in Him and learn from the journeys created for me. I enrolled my son and he began leaving his regular classes to go work with his LASE teacher for help with math and reading. He told me how much he looked forward to visiting her because she accepted him the way God

made him. He was in a classroom with other kids who had similar challenges and that comforted him. Baby steps were acknowledged and setbacks were accepted. Pressure to perform was non-existent but attempts were expected. When you are something special in the world, like my son, kids don’t understand or readily accept you. The LASE program built his confidence and gave him value as a student.

When the unanticipated COVID hit, so came another new journey. The fortitude and positive attitude of the LASE teachers kept the learning process going without missing a beat. I have enormous gratitude for the LASE program, the loving teachers, and the donors who faithfully support this vital program for students like my son. LASE, my unanticipated friend, has accompanied me on my unanticipated journey for which I will forever be grateful.



“Diversity is not about how we are different. Diversity is about how we recognize, accept and celebrate each other’s uniqueness.”

—Janey Menner

Special Education/English Language Coordinator Word of Life Lutheran School



LASE partner school, **Word of Life (WOL)**, is one of the last remaining Lutheran schools located in the city of St. Louis. Their unique student body represents eleven different countries. WOL embraced the diversity of their community and opened admissions to welcome and serve children from other nations for over a decade. Diversity is not just an idea at WOL, but an action where differences are not only accepted but also celebrated.

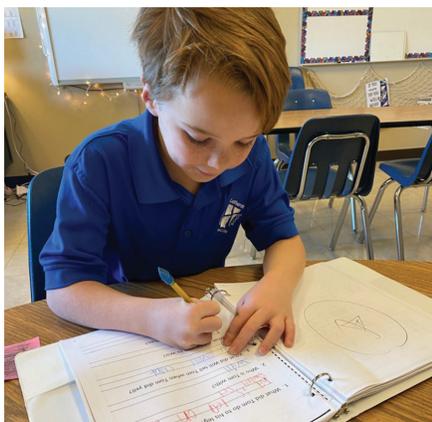
Before arriving to the U.S. many of these students lived as refugees with limited opportunities to attend school and learn about Jesus. Despite their challenges, including learning a new language, in some cases, and needing the specialized education

services from LASE, these children have flourished! Their example of perseverance, resilience, and faith does not go unnoticed by teachers and classmates and serves to prepare the entire school community for true citizenship in our multi-cultural society. WOL serves as a mission agency in our community as they promote love and respect while receiving the love of Jesus.

Matching personalized learning to the growing diversity of students in our schools today includes understanding how individual learners learn best, and actively engaging and inspiring them with the right resources at the right time, in the right medium, and at the right pace. An excellent example of effectively recognizing and fulfilling learning diversity is found at **Immanuel Lutheran School, Wentzville**. Principal, Allison Dolak,

sums up their educational mission as *“celebrating the diverse learning needs of every student while keeping the school culture and integrity intact for ALL. LASE services allow us to view a full picture of what each person needs and allows an honest appraisal if we can fully meet their needs for full academic potential at our school.”* LASE educator, Laura Stolin, works with a broad range of students from kindergarten to eighth grade with a variety of learning challenges that include autism, twice exceptional learners, social behavior issues, and reading and math deficits.

LASE is proud to partner with these impactful Lutheran schools where daily learning is enhanced by a Christian environment, where every student is recognized and loved as a unique child of God.



Immanuel Lutheran School, Wentzville

GRANT SUPPORT

THANK YOU to the following LASE Supporters:

- ▶ Cardinals Care
- ▶ Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis
- ▶ Employees Community Fund of Boeing
- ▶ Wayne C. Kaufmann Foundation
- ▶ Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
- ▶ St. Louis Christmas Carols Association



“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

We are more likely to recognize God in our blessings, but the deeper faith lessons appear when we embrace Him during the times of challenge, including this season of COVID-19. In the wake of overcoming isolation, sickness, doubt, waiting and uncertainty, we, at LASE, have chosen to seek God’s love in the living, the doing and the growing. The staff and faculty of LASE Specialized Education have been fortified by that faith and have maintained their focus on the blessings of this school year for our students. Here is a sample of the many blessings that are happening for the kids of LASE:

Heartfelt thanks to the **Wayne C. Kaufmann Foundation** for their generous and impactful support. The Kaufmann family, through their partnership with **YouthBridge Community Foundation**, takes the time to effectively partner with the mission of the agencies they choose to support. They listened to the challenges and impact COVID-19 has presented for LASE educators and students and responded with true collaborative action. We are blessed! Thank you!

Todd Keske, of Foam Supplies, Inc. continued his loyal support with a donation of six iPads for student use in the classroom. He realizes the importance of technology for learning, especially for students with specialized needs. Thank you, Todd! We look forward to working with you, our Tournament Partner, for the upcoming LASE golf event.



LASE Resource students at St. John’s Arnold decorated their classroom door with the theme of “How We Serve Others” for Lutheran Schools week.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday, June 28, 2021

Thirty-Eighth Annual Golf Benefit

Sunset Country Club

August 2021

LASE Insight Series Teacher Workshop

Lori’s Legacy Early Childhood Educator Workshop

November 6, 2021

Herald the Holidays 25th Anniversary Celebration

Doubletree Hotel St. Louis Westport

For information or registration for events, visit luthranspecialled.org/Events or call 314-268-1234.

Lutheran High School, St. Charles

NEWS FROM THE LASE LEARNING CENTER



Lance Hackney and parents

Sue Klobnak, LASE Learning Center, shared that **Lance Hackney**, a senior at LHSSC, just committed to Milikin University in IL, where he received a scholarship for up to 5 years to play basketball! Sue shared, “Lance has worked hard for this and I’m so proud of him!”

Freshman, **Sebastian Bierhals**, recently received an art award from the Community and Resource Children’s Board of St. Charles County (CCRB) for his piece, “Masking our Feelings,” which addresses the relevant topic of bullying in our schools. LHSSC Art teacher, Carla Krazl, coordinated submitting the artwork and the winning pieces were chosen based on interpretation of theme and artistic vision.



“Masking Our Feelings” by Sebastian Bierhals



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Herald the Holidays— Virtual Style!



The long established tradition of Herald the Holidays was briefly challenged by COVID-19 restrictions, but it didn't stop us from coming together in heart and faith to ignite the spirit of the season. There were so many unforeseen blessings in creating a virtual event. Special thanks to Concordia Publishing House for their generous IT support with creating an on-line event!

Over 200 guests logged in to celebrate the LASE students, resulting in revenue of \$49,000 to benefit our students. We pray that we can once again come together at the Westport Doubletree on November 6, 2021 for a 25th Anniversary celebration of Herald the Holidays!

THE Insight Series



LASE INSIGHT SERIES WORKSHOPS AUGUST 2021

Our hope is to reignite the power of convergence with an invitation to all teachers in our community to join us in

August as we host the **9th Annual LASE Insight Series Workshop**. We are planning to focus on authentic learning strategies for the classroom that will transform your teaching so that all students will be successful learners.

We received positive feedback on LASE's 2020 virtual workshop, *Square 1: Grace for Re-entering School During COVID-19*. The workshop, led by LASE staff, was virtually attended by 200+ educators and principals in our community.



A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

MADE POSSIBLE BY
Lori's Legacy

The early childhood workshop funded by Lori's Legacy has been rescheduled to August 2021. Lori Benson Adams, a nationally recognized education and intervention specialist, will lead the program, focusing on equipping and empowering preschool teachers in their work with young learners, aged three to five. Don't miss out on this valuable opportunity! Watch for workshop registration details and updates at www.lutheranspecialied.org.