

Views & Vision

The Newsletter of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association



Mentoring, Coaching, Encouraging . . . Just Do It!

Volume 10, Issue 4

Summer 2009

Gayle Denny, ELEA Executive Director

I was excited to see them both. They had started as teacher's aides when they were still in high school at the full day child care center I directed. They were best friends and both were great with kids. Now, years later (gosh, how many???), they were both preschool teachers, and excellent ones I am told, at one of our ELEA member schools and were attending our ELEA Region 1 conference where I was a presenter.

We'd somewhat kept in touch over the years, and I knew these two now 30-something's were doing well as moms, wives and teachers. But I hadn't seen either one in a long time.

Sam found me first. When we had a moment to chat, she said, "I don't know if I ever really told you thank you." "For what?", I replied. "For making me go to school and get my early childhood ed degree." Did I MAKE her go to school? Gosh, I know I can be a pretty bossy person, hoped I hadn't pushed her.

She reminded me that after she had graduated from high school, was working full time at the early childhood center, and was unclear as to the direction her life was taking, I strongly suggested that she go to college. I went so far as to getting all the information she needed, rearranging her work schedule so she could attend classes, and signing up as her mentor through the college program so her work hours would count as required field experience. And then, apparently I did the same thing with Amy, her friend! Wow, I guess I really CAN be bossy!

I don't recall thinking I was doing anything altruistic - just wanted to see these girls develop the potential I saw in them. But they now both say that having that degree made a huge difference, and gave them the confidence to be great teachers.

Chatting with Sam and Amy made me think about how many of us at times either serve as a mentor/coach/encourager, or have had someone serve in that role for us.

Neither Sam nor Amy stayed in my employ for long after they completed the degrees. They both got married, had children, and moved on to other things. I wished they'd stayed longer - they were both great, but in the long run, here they are at another ELEA school

nurturing and teaching a whole new generation of preschoolers, so goal accomplished - right?

Following are some stories I share with you from colleagues in the hopes they will encourage you to coach, encourage, and mentor others. We all know we need great teachers and administrators - all it takes sometimes is a gentle nudge.

My "Special" Mentor

*Submitted by Marge Robison, Retired Educator and
ELEA National Board Representative from Region 4*

I knew that seventh grade was going to be hard but I had no idea how wonderful it would turn out. Just before school began we heard that a new teacher was hired to teach seventh grade at First Lutheran School, Blue Island, Illinois. SIXTY-THREE years ago (that's a really long time) my seventh grade teacher also became my mentor.

To this very day I can still hear his deep bass voice and infectious laughter. Seventh grade was hard but I didn't mind working extra hard because of the encouragement, joy, and inspiration that was a part of learning that year. Of all the years in school it was the most memorable.

My mentor suggested the idea to me that I would be a good Christian Day School teacher. I had wanted to be a missionary but he planted a new idea.

During my high school years the pastor had guided the youth to consider a Lutheran college. After graduation, six from my class went to Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. There my major was Christian Day School Teaching (education). Besides the regular education courses I also took classes at the seminary that pertained to Christian teaching.

Whenever I returned home for vacation there was my mentor inquiring about my classes and how I was doing. Always there were words of encouragement and guidance for me.

For several years following college when I married and began my family, my mentor and I were many miles apart. Then I received a "Call" from Cross Lutheran

Mentoring, Coaching & Encouraging . . . Just Do It!, *Continued from Page 1*

Church, Pigeon, Michigan to be the principal and teacher of first and second grade.

I took this new position and soon found the staff, Pastor & Mrs. Orth, (who then served at Cross), and myself in cars heading for Chicago to a three day conference of the American Lutheran Education Association (ALEA). This organization was the predecessor of today's ELEA.

What a thrill it was to see my mentor at the conference and introduce him to my staff. I'll never forget the pats on the back and his words of joy at my new position at Cross Lutheran School. I have always been grateful for his guidance and encouragement.

The opportunity to serve on the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association board is an honor for me as well as a remembrance of my mentor, MR. DONALD A. VETTER. (*Don Vetter was ELEA's first executive director.*)

The Difference between Teaching in a Public School and in a Lutheran School

Submitted by Mary Ann Pollock, Retired Educator, ELEA National Board President

Several years ago I was given the opportunity and honor of mentoring a fresh-out-of-college teacher at St. John's Christian Day School in Baltimore, Maryland. At that time there were very few ELCA Lutheran elementary schools in our synod, actually only three! Wendy came from an active Lutheran family. Her family members were "pillars" in her congregation which was not the one where our school was located. She had been very active in her church as a teenager. Wendy attended a state university where she was taught all about the separation of church and state. Teaching in a Lutheran school was important to her even though she wasn't sure exactly what that entailed. She was astounded to learn that she was allowed to express her beliefs and live out her faith in this school setting. It was difficult for her to express herself at the beginning of the school year. We had many discussions about the "rightness" of living out our faith in this setting. Years of being told that she could not talk about religion in the classroom were difficult to overcome!

As the year progressed and Wendy became more comfortable as a teacher and as a teacher in a Lutheran Christian school, she learned to love being able to teach about religion. She was surprised that she was allowed, in fact encouraged, to use "teachable moments" to show how faith guided her everyday life. Most of her fifth and sixth graders did not come from a faith background. She was excited to be able to show how her faith helped her live her life. Her students, at least those who had attended St. John's for several years found nothing strange about being able to talk about their faith. Wendy was amazed that her students were so comfortable discussing what would have been taboo in a public school.

It was my privilege to have had a part in the development of this excellent teacher. After a slow beginning as a Christian educator, Wendy has gone on to be

an advocate for Lutheran schools and the important role they play in the faith development of the children who are entrusted into their care.

Mentoring Can Happen At Any Time

Submitted by Kay Nickelsen, Kindergarten Teacher and ELEA National Board Representative from Region 6

As a child we had a Parish Worker at my home congregation (Zion, Davenport, Iowa). I was very impressed with her enthusiasm and the fact she could make church fun. It was also the first time we had a woman on staff. Her presence plus the emphasis on missionary work led me to sign up as a short term teacher in Papua New Guinea.

When I returned, I became a Director of Christian Education at St. Mark, Toledo, Ohio. Before I took that assignment, I went to Madison, Wisconsin to meet with Della Koester - my old parish worker from Iowa, who I hadn't seen in about 10 years, who was now working at Bethel Lutheran in Madison. I spent a day with her as she talked with me about being a member of a multi-person staff and how to relate to clergy when you were a lay staff member. I found her advice very helpful and got me off to a good start at my new job. So I guess mentoring can happen even after a number of years.

Mentoring

Submitted by Karen Beasley, Director of First Lutheran Preschool, Shoreline, Washington

As I look back on the last 20 years of working at First Lutheran Preschool, one person comes to mind. Donna Elmquist. Donna was the director in 1989 when I first came to work as an Assistant Teacher. It was such a great place to work. I was able to put to use the 7 years of co-op preschool and daycare experience I had acquired. As I became more comfortable and confident in the classroom, it occurred to me that I could do this "Lead Teacher" thing just as well as the others!!! First Lutheran Preschool has always had the policy to be a Lead Teacher a person had to have a full teaching degree or a two year ECE degree. So now what???? Donna encouraged me and another new assistant to investigate the programs at the community colleges. Laura found out about the ECE program at Edmonds Community College and we both started in the Spring of 1990. Donna gave us the opportunity to do our Practicums at First Lutheran, she encouraged us to try projects, games and circle times. Now all we had to do was complete our studies and hope that a teaching position would open up. Thankfully it did and here I am 20 years later. I've completed my BA. I've taught every age group we have and I've been the director since 1993. I always knew I wanted to teach, but wasn't sure of the age or grade level. I set that dream aside when I got married and had my children, but God certainly opened a window when another friend encouraged me to apply at our church. So thank you, Donna, for your encouragement those many years ago.

ELEA's National Board of Directors

ELEA has been around since the inception of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in 1988. Actually, the education association existed even before that as ALEA (American Lutheran Education Association), the education association of one of the predecessor church bodies, the ALC. The mission has always been the same . . . To promote and support quality, Christ-centered educations in the schools and early childhood centers of the ELCA, and more recently, also the full communion partner churches of the ELCA who do not have their own education association. All of the services of ELEA; conferences, accreditation, employee benefits, resources, testing programs, and more, cannot be provided solely by staff (there are only a few of us!), so much of the work is accomplished through a National Board of Directors made up of dedicated volunteers. ELEA's board is truly a "working board". These educators do more than just show up for an occasional meeting - they truly contribute to the work of the association in many ways.

July 1, 2009 ushers in four new board members, replacing outgoing members from Regions 2, 3, and 7, along with the Pastoral Representative position. The new list of board members, along with their contact information follows. To learn more about Regions (which Region you are in, what states are included in each, etc.) view the information in the front of your ELEA Membership Directory, or visit our website - www.eleanational.org. ELEA's Region lines are the same as the ELCA church lines, so you can also view maps at www.elca.org. Don't hesitate to contact the representative from your Region or any of the board members with ideas about how we can better serve your needs!

ELEA Board Members As of July 1, 2009

Region 1	Rose Moore Christ Lutheran Child Care Center 3701 NE North Shore Road Belfair, WA 98528 Phone: 360-275-0499 Email: clcchildcare@wavecable.com	Region 4 ELEA Secretary	Marge Robison 13105 Pollard Drive Austin, TX 78727 Phone: 512-335-1242 Email: margaret-robison@sbcglobal.net
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Region 3	Joanne Gustafson Normandale Preschool 6100 Normandale Road Edina, MN 55436 Phone: 952-929-1697 Email: joanne@normluth.org	Region 6 ELEA Treasurer	Sherri Bishop Central College Preschool 975 South Sunbury Road Westerville, OH 43081 Phone: 614-794-1123 Email: sherribishop@ccpc.us
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Reaching School & Preschool Families for Christ ~ 26 Strategies

Rev. Dr. Steven Goodwin
Mission Pointe, Chino, California



Far too many congregations are content to have their school or preschool be a parallel universe instead of seeing this as a huge ministry opportunity. The truth is that families have reached a level of trust with the church to place their precious children in the school. This offers the church some of the very best opportunities for evangelical outreach a congregation could ever hope for. Here are 26 ideas congregations could (and should!) actively pursue:

1. Be an adoptive grandparent – imagine recruiting older saints to bless the lives of the children by adding to the love in their lives!
2. Cooking meals for programs, events, etc – rolling up sleeves and taking on the role of servant is exactly the kind of ministry our Lord models for us. This type of selflessness speaks volumes about the love of God.
3. Serving coffee at events – see above.
4. Making blankets – got a quilter's group at your church? How about inviting them to make some special quilts for families in their own school or preschool?
5. Reading to children – Remember those crazy days as a young family and wishing you had more time to read to the kids? Both the reader and the child will be immensely blessed.
6. Playing with kids – oh, come on! Admit it. Legos are fun!
7. Assisting with chapel – share your faith and learn faith from the children at the same time.
8. Calling preschool families to invite them to church events – a no strings attached, humble invitation often goes a long way.
9. Participate on the preschool ministry team (see job description);
10. Create puppets, doll clothes, etc – creativity is a gift from God. Who said ministry could not be fun?!
11. Prep craft materials – use some TV time to fiddle with craft preparations and make a difference.
12. Organize service projects – even small children want to make a difference.
13. Host a community dinner – busy families would love a meal they did not have to wrangle up.
14. Coordinate community dinners for a needy family – better yet, organize school families to put on a dinner for a family in pain or in dire need.
15. Greet parents as they drop off and pick up kids – every pastor with a school or preschool should grab a cup of coffee and greet families as they come or depart. Yes, this IS YOUR JOB! If the pastor does not fish, how can she expect her congregation to fish?
16. Share about your career or hobby at a career/hobby day – anybody can speak about their favorite passion (just keep it interesting and SHORT!).
17. Bring treats for teachers/staff periodically- teachers have a difficult job. Bless them regularly with love.
18. Organize two teacher appreciation weeks during the year – wouldn't that communicate the importance of their ministry!
19. Volunteer as a regular aide – a couple hours a week giving yourself away might just become your favorite few hours every week.
20. Take care of infants so parents can volunteer – young parents really want to be of help in the classroom but often have younger children that require care. Help them out.
21. Provide childcare for parent meetings and parenting education classes – same deal as #20.
22. Be on the PTA – your perspective, time, and giftedness can be valuable assets to the program.
23. Lead music for kids – gifts are for sharing, are they not?
24. Act in dramas for chapel – there is a ham actor in us all. Go ahead, express yourself and have a blast!
25. Be on the chapel puppet team – even easier since you can hide behind a curtain!
26. Send cards to kid's homes on birthdays and/or holidays – every child likes to be remembered on their birthday.

Certainly this is not an exhaustive list. Add your own items and then “go and make disciples.”

Pastor Steve Goodwin serves as senior pastor at MissionPointe (formerly Redeemer Lutheran Church) in Chino, California and has served as the Pastoral Representative on the ELEA National Board since 2003. His term ends July 1, 2009, and he will be missed! Thank you, Pastor Steve, for your years of service to ELEA, to schools and centers, and to children and families!

ELEA National Board of Directors . . . Continued from Page 3

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Notes from National ...

Gayle Denny, ELEA Executive Director



☺ We once again wish to thank those who have contributed to our Annual Fund and/or the School Extension Fund of ELEA. Donations to our Annual Fund go directly into ELEA's operating budget, and donations to the School Extension Fund go to provide up to three grants per year to schools and centers who are expanding their programs. Thank you to those who have contributed in the last fiscal quarter:

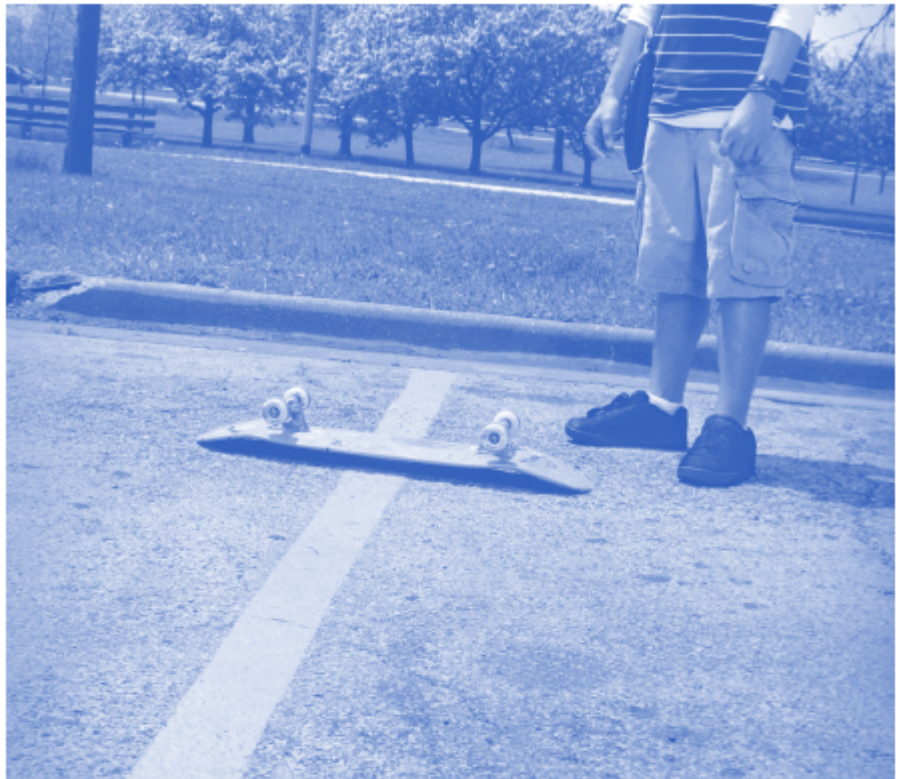
- ★ Bethlehem Lutheran Church
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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- ★ Rose & Wendell Moore
Belfair, Washington
- ★ Mary Ann & George Pollock
Pasadena, Maryland

☺ Here's those dates again in case you've missed them before! Mark your calendar:

- ★ Region 5 conference hosted by Rockford Lutheran Academy in Rockford, Illinois on August 15, 2009 with Donna Braband, ELCA Director for Schools as keynote.
- ★ Region 8 Conference hosted by Christ Lutheran Preschool in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Special guest for this event is Humor Therapist Elaine Lundberg - be prepared to laugh on October 3, 2009.
- ★ Region 4 Conference hosted by Living Lord Lutheran Preschool in Lake St. Louis, Missouri on October 24, 2009 with Eric Hamrick, Director of Youth & Family Ministries as our keynote.
- ★ Region 6 Conference hosted by Central College Preschool in Westerville, Ohio (suburb of Columbus). Keynote and concert by AriSon Records - this will be a very special treat!

Registration materials are mailed 6 - 8 weeks in advance, and also available on our website at www.eleanational.org with links from our home page. Hope to see you soon!

☺ Elementary testing dates for 2010 are March 29 - April 29.



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Aging is the Only Way To Live!

Dr. Rich Bimler, Past President, Wheat Ridge Ministries



I saw this sign in Nashville a few months ago that said, "Aging is the Only Way to Live!" Makes sense to me!

Someone also put it this way, "Some people are afraid to die. What's worse is people who are afraid to live!" And how about this gem: "Many people believe in a life after death. What is just as important is to believe in a life before death!"

As Lutheran educators, and even more important, as Easter People and Resurrection Resources, we celebrate in our classrooms and in all of life what St. John records in John 10:10, "I (Jesus) have come to give you life ... and give it to you abundantly! Because of our Baptism we are promised New Life in Christ, even in the midst of all of our worries, woes and wars.

This truth really plays out in the day-to-day activities in our classrooms and in our homes, as we worship and as we play, as we shop and as we pray. To test out the truth that we can celebrate God's gift of aging each day, here are a few questions to ask ourselves to reflect on, especially on those days that we need special "reflecting."

1. Are there times in my life when I feel that I am afraid to die? If so, when? And why?
2. What are some barriers in my life that are making me afraid to live?
3. Who in your life is a coach or cheerleader for you that encourages you to live life to the fullest?
4. Who are you a coach or cheerleader for to encourage them to live life to the fullest?
5. What are the perceptions of "aging" and "old people" that you sense in your own family, in your classroom, on your staff, in yourself? Are these perceptions real, factual, Scriptural?
6. How can you/we go about changing some of the false perceptions of aging in our church and society?

7. What are some positive aspects in the aging process that you can encourage, advocate, celebrate with others? (Go ahead, make a list).
8. What can you do today that will show someone close to you that you are living life to the fullest, in Jesus Christ?
9. What one thing can we do today that will make a difference in someone's life (Well, what's stopping you?)
10. Free One: The best news of all is that our Lord continues to love and forgive us even when we do not celebrate life, when we do not share our faith, when we fail miserably at living life to the fullest. Indeed, "aging is the only way to live" precisely because our Lord has already been to the Cross for us, and has already risen from the Grave for us, and has already given us everything we need to celebrate the gift of life each day, in the Lord.

And now, as educators, and especially as God's Chosen ones, we do not have "to do" anything. No, instead of feeling we "gotta do" something, we "get to" celebrate life, we "get to" be champions for all ages ... we "get to" live life to the fullest!

Hooray for aging! Hooray for life! Hooray for the Lord Who celebrates Life with us!

Dr. Rich Bimler is past president of Wheat Ridge Ministries, Itasca, Illinois, and can be reached at wrbimlerrw@wheatridge.org.

ELEA's Purpose Statement

*The Evangelical Lutheran Education Association
promotes and supports quality,
Christ-centered schools and
early childhood programs of the ELCA and its full communion partners.*

Evangelical Lutheran Education Association

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- Teachers

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ELEA's Annual Budget July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010

Income		Views & Vision	3,000.00
Corporate Relationship*	15,000.00	On Board	2,000.00
Annual Fund	3,600.00	Payroll (includes Executive Director, Membership Coordinator & Accreditation Coordinator)	97,472.64
Resources & Accreditation	7,500.00	Micellaneous (gifts, synod assembly attendance, etc.)	1,300.00
Membership Dues	110,000.00	Utilities	4,000.00
Grants	1,000.00		
Interest	250.00	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 140,350.00
Advertising Income	2,000.00		
Miscellaneous Income	1,000.00		
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 140,350.00		

Expenses	
D & O Insurance	1,000.00
Financial Fees	320.00
Continuing Education	1,250.00
Office Expenses (supplies, equipment, mileage, postage, phone, board meetings, etc.)	18,057.36
Member Program Expenses (member mailings, web site, AD&D Insurance, accreditation expenses, etc.)	11,950.00

This budget was approved by the ELEA National Board at its April meeting and is based upon 475 fully paid memberships @ \$225 each, 20 individual memberships @ \$112.50, and several scholarship memberships.

Please direct any questions regarding the budget to ELEA's National Office at 800-500-7644 or email Gayle@eleanational.org.

* Corporate relationship funds are donated by Nancy Bond Insurance Services, ELEA's Benefits Administrator