



Lutheran Church Extension Fund  
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# Interest Time

*Sharing information about our Church Extension ministry*

## Important Task Brings Laborers, Students to Louisiana



*Members of NAILS—the student arm of Laborers For Christ—from Concordia University Texas, Austin, and Slidell, La., joined Laborers and congregation members of Bethany Lutheran Church, Slidell, during their spring break to help construct a new Open Arms Child Development Center.*

Jim Eberhart calls building a new child development center for Bethany Lutheran Church in Slidell, La., a special project.

“Most Laborers have grandchildren and even great-grandchildren, so we’re pleased to be working on a preschool,” said Laborers For Christ’s Eberhart, who served as the preconstruction coordinator and then project manager for the congregation. A former teacher and the grandfather of 16, Eberhart says with conviction, “Good Christian education is vitally important, especially in today’s environment.”

Bethany is building a nearly 9,000-square-foot Open Arms center scheduled to open in the fall, with the capacity to serve 108 youngsters.

Adding to the “young” factor of the project was the participation of a group of NAILS members, the student arm of Laborers, from Concordia University Texas, Austin. They were Wynn Derong, from Katy, Texas; Lydia Humphries, Deanna Shackel and Daniel Stoneburner, all from Austin and Michelle Pontiff, Hattiesburg, Miss. Amanda White from Slidell also joined them while on break from another university.

“This group of NAILS was not only fun to work with, but they did quality work on the project and were willing to tackle anything assigned,” Eberhart said. “After work, they also performed services for members of the congregation.”

An LCEF demographics study plus lengthy waiting lists at local preschools and child care programs point to what Rev. Rod Pasch calls a “strong need” in the Slidell area. “This is a very family-oriented community, including many parents who commute to work in New Orleans [about 30 miles southwest],” the pastor said.

The congregation used other LCEF services, including loan support for the construction and LCEF’s Capital Funding Services for help with a capital stewardship campaign. Earlier assistance came from LCEF’s Strategic Ministry Planning Services which helped point Bethany in the direction of today’s child development center.

The goal is to provide more than child care though. “We want to help children develop spiritually, emotionally, and physically in a high quality, very loving and caring environment that’s devoted to helping families stay together,” Pasch said.



*The new entrance to the Open Arms center at Bethany Lutheran Church symbolizes the welcoming arms of Jesus. LCEF has been the congregation’s partner through the many phases of the project, including helping members develop a long-range ministry plan, embark on a capital campaign, and build with help of the Laborers For Christ and a loan.*

## New Directors Chosen During LCMS Convention

The 64th Regular Convention of the LCMS, which serves as the principal legislative assembly for the church body, was conducted July 10-17 in Houston, Texas.

The following were elected to the LCEF Board of Directors: **Dr. David L. Bahn**, Cypress, Texas; **Thomas M. Buuck**, Meridian, Idaho; and **David E. Wuenschel**, St. Louis, Mo.

Replacing Mark Braun, who stepped down from the LCEF Board of Directors earlier in the year, is **Carol Radtke**, Springfield, Ill., elected by mail ballot to LCEF at-large delegates in June. Radtke is an executive with Security Bank in Springfield and has served as a board member for the Central Illinois District’s Church Extension Fund.

LCEF Silver Eagle member and past LCEF Board of Directors Chair **Warren Puck** was elected to the LCMS Board of Directors as a layperson. Puck, a resident of Manning, Iowa, has served as an advisor to LCEF since past LCEF president Merle Freitag established the Silver Eagles group in 2000.

## Silver Eagles Welcome New Members

The Silver Eagles advisory group of LCEF welcomed two new members during their April meeting: Jack Schulze and Merle Freitag. Last year the group received as a new member Ralph Klevenow.

Schulze was the recipient of the 2009 Arthur C. Haake Leadership Award, presented during the Fall Leadership Conference. He was honored for his work in the Northwest District, including becoming the district’s first LCEF Vice President after it joined the national Church Extension organization.

Freitag was inducted to the group he organized in 2000 for serving as president of LCEF for more than 11 years. He retired in January but remains active in activities such as the military chaplain ministry of the LCMS.

The Silver Eagles are men and women who have a heart for the ministry of Church Extension that the staff and leadership look to for guidance and mentoring. They share ideas from past experiences and help shape LCEF’s future.



*LCEF President/CEO Rich Robertson, far left, welcomed Silver Eagles members to St. Louis in April. Those attending were (from left) Warren Puck, Jim Bode, Jack Schumacher, Vance Hinrichs, Ralph Klevenow, Carol Barton, Iddo Heinicke, Lou Eberhard, Vance Hinrichs, Karen Drier, Larry Jung, Vic Bryant, Rev. David Belasic, Rich Neubauer, Jack Schulze and Merle Freitag.*



*The Rumble Seat Four barbershop quartet entertained attendees of the Church Extension Fund Ice Cream Social Sunday night of the LCMS Convention in Houston. The event provided attendees an opportunity for fellowship as the convention calendar began to fill up.*

## Church Extension Funds Host Old-Fashioned Social

As any good ice cream social should have, there were smiling people; red, white and blue decorations; plenty of sweet treats; and a barbershop quartet entertaining the crowd during a special gathering Sunday night of the Synod Convention in Houston.

Hosts for the social event were the Church Extension Funds of California-Nevada-Hawaii, Central Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, South Dakota, Southern, and Texas districts, and the 28 districts of LCEF. The goal was to provide an opportunity for casual fellowship as the convention calendar began to fill up, and to thank the thousands of supporters of the Synod's various Church Extension Funds. Without the funds invested by the faithful supporters of these organizations, churches, schools, camps, and other LCMS organizations could not build economically or help support their ministries and church workers.

## NYG Participants Thankful for LCEF Services

A road trip to New Orleans in the summer might not sound like fun, but for youth leader Melanie Accola, from St. Paul Lutheran Church, Fall Creek, Wisc., she said her group had an "amazing time."

Accola accompanied eight high school students from her church, and one from St. John Lutheran Church, also in Fall Creek, to the 2010 National Youth Gathering.

"It's such a wonderful, spiritual place to be," Accola said of the Gathering.

"One student sent me a text saying, 'This was the best trip of my life,'" Accola said. "Our group of kids was just blown away by this experience."

The youth group at St. Paul maintains a StewardAccount® and used the LCEF Exchange (LCEF's on-site facility) during the Gathering. The funds they had raised and added to their investment could be easily accessed without extra fees or the hassle of finding an ATM. The investment in LCEF is something the group maintains even when not preparing for the Youth Gathering.

"That was so wonderful," Accola said. "I could go down, show my ID and withdraw the necessary amount of money for the kids' allowance each day...You hate to carry around that much money and I don't want to deal with traveler's checks," Accola said. "It was just so convenient and everyone was so friendly."

The attitude of those at the Gathering was something Accola said the kids talked about and shared with the congregation when they returned.

"How that many people—25,000—can be that happy and friendly, and all be there for the same reason," Accola said really "stuck with the kids...Everyone was so positive and upbeat, and I think that was kind of a shocker for them."

Of those attending, approximately 12,000 participants volunteered at 100 service projects around the city that included cleaning, grounds maintenance, home repairs, painting, and assisting at day camps and with neighborhood outreach programs. The St. Paul

group helped clean the grounds and paint the gym of a center that helps children transition out of the foster care system.

Accola said it was a good experience for the students to serve the Lord "doing things just because they are the right thing to do," and not necessarily for the recognition.



## Emanuel K.I.D.S. Learn the Value of Sharing, Saving

During the school year, the students at Emanuel Lutheran School, in Hamburg, Minn., look for the sign: "Tomorrow is Stamp Day." That's their signal to bring in their nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars to invest in the Lord's work and their own futures.

About half of the 87 students enrolled at Emanuel take part in the K.I.D.S. (Kids Into Discipleship and Stewardship) Stamp Program, developed by LCEF. It teaches children the importance of saving money, with an emphasis on discipleship and stewardship.

"This has been a great way to help kids learn to save a little bit," said the Rev. Donald Andrix, noting that Marilyn Vollbrecht, the K.I.D.S. coordinator, has done an incredible job with the program, now in its fifth year.

Every Tuesday afternoon Vollbrecht puts out her sign, reminding students they can buy 25-cent or \$1 stamps to add to their book, which eventually is worth \$25 and can be used to open an LCEF investment. It earns interest or can be withdrawn at any time. The stamp money is used to fund Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) projects.

"This past (school) year, 34 students filled one or more books for a total of 121 books," Vollbrecht said.

Though the students don't always say what they are saving for, there are some who have opened accounts for their preschool siblings. "The important thing is that they're getting into the good habit of saving regularly," Vollbrecht said. "It's a good stewardship lesson."

Vollbrecht said she's been blessed with a wonderful parent volunteer, Stacy Stockman, who helps the children get their stamps in the right places while Vollbrecht collects the money.

So ripples from this primarily rural community, 45 miles from Minneapolis/St. Paul, spread out to churches across the country through the stamp program, and, as Pastor Andrix says, "The children are doing their part."



*Students of Emanuel Lutheran School, Hamburg, Minn.*

## LCEF Employees Work Together to Combat Hunger

A quart-sized bag of rice, soy nuggets, dehydrated vegetables, vitamins and minerals can make a big difference for families who are hungry. To LCEF employees, it was a surefire way to serve yet another ministry, but in a more active manner.



*Family members, even those as young as Leah Reed, 6, pictured above, joined LCEF employees in assembling the meal packets, boxing them, and then loading them into the Orphan Grain Train truck.*

In June, LCEF employees, friends, and families worked together for a few hours to assemble bags of ingredients that, once put together, become a highly nutritious meal. Though each bag could fit easily in the palms of an adult's hands, it feeds a family of six.

Working with Kids Against Hunger, a program of Feeding Children International, a total of 21,407 meals were packaged in three hours at LCEF's offices in St. Louis. Assembly lines were formed to weigh and measure product into the bags, then seal them and box them.

The blessing of this service project was not only the ability to serve together with fellow employees, but to share it with others. Many employees invited in children and spouses, and two people that work in offices located in the same building as LCEF joined the assembly operation as well.

Mark Marshall, vice president in LCEF's Capital Funding Services ministry, said that he and his family thought the Kids

Against Hunger was a great project for them personally as well as for LCEF. Mark was joined by his wife Sharon and their son David and daughter-in-law Mallory.

"It was a fun and meaningful event that can help change kids lives," Mark said.

Laura Reed, assistant in specialized functions of the Investment Processing department, said her three children—John, 10, Emma, 8, and Leah, 6—said they liked being able to help other children.

The meals were shipped to Christ Community Lutheran School in Bulumwaki-Kawete, Uganda, Africa, a sister school to Christ Community Lutheran School in Kirkwood, Mo., with the help of Orphan Grain Train, which transported the meals.

The mission of Kids Against Hunger is to significantly reduce the number of hungry children in the United States and throughout the world. It accomplishes that by setting up food packaging stations for community and youth volunteer packaging events. It is a partner to With God's Little Ones nonprofit organization, headquartered in St. Louis and led by Executive Director Rudy Schaser and his wife Dorothy.



*Dorothy Schaser demonstrates how to measure, weigh and package the contents of the special meal packets LCEF employees assembled and shipped via the Orphan Grain Train to Uganda, Africa.*