

ST. JAMES SCHOOL IS LINCOLN PARK'S FIRST CHOICE

Ask any parent at the flourishing St. James School and you'll quickly find out why this school is Lincoln Park's first choice.

"Our children thrive at St. James. The community has the same value structure we do. The education is top-notch. The children are prepared with a knack for critical thinking and a moral armor that holds their rate of success high even after they leave."

"We love the teachers, all are amazingly caring! We appreciate the small class size and the easy access to speak with the teachers. Our kids are learning what they need to learn, and they feel loved and safe."

"The teachers are wonderful, the school puts children's best interests first and promotes a love for Christ at a young age."
(St. James continued on page 5)

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

In honor of Lutheran Schools week, CLEF is offering a brief pop quiz in history. Question: What Lutheran tradition is over 500 years old? Answer: Lutheran Education! Thanks to Martin Luther, education and literacy are now considered universal rights. Rights first championed by Luther, and faithfully followed by future generations of Lutheran educators.

Today more than 1,200 early childhood centers and preschools are operated by congregations and Christian day schools within the Lutheran tradition. Additionally, our congregations operate 880 elementary schools which serve approximately 113,000 students.

Recently in collaboration with Concordia University Chicago,

CLEF has taken steps to initiate two educational excellence programs. The first step is our Pathways to Excellence program which stresses that strong school leadership by the principal is key to achieving overall school excellence.

The second step is CLEF's Medallion program which identifies eight core school best practices that establish a clear set of rigorous and measurable standards that define academic excellence and promote Christian values. Schools that meet these criteria are identified as a Medallion School of Distinction. A brief overview of this program is provided in this newsletter.

Luther established a lasting legacy of combining education with a servants' heart when

he wrote, "I will therefore give myself to my neighbor and will do... what I see will be needful, advantageous, and wholesome for my neighbor."

Luther's vision of what it means to live an authentic human life; one that is empirically linked with that of others through grace and salvation, transforms the idea of education into a lifetime of learning and service to a community of neighbors wherever they may live.

Today, in honor of Lutheran Schools' Week, let's remember and honor all the dedicated and inspired educators from our past, our present and those in the future that will extend Luther's educational legacy for another 500 years.

Executive Director

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Chicagoland Lutheran Educational Foundation is to empower urban Lutheran Schools to deliver innovative, quality education in a Christian environment.

OUR VISION

Our vision is that children in Chicagoland have the opportunity to experience Christ's love and grace through a high-quality, Christian values-based education, in order to reach their potential and fulfill their vocation.



YOU'RE INVITED

CLEF 2020 SCHOLARSHIP GALA

JOIN US FOR A MAGICAL EVENING!

APRIL 18, 2020

THE MORTON ARBORETUM IN LISLE

GIVE THE GIFT OF EDUCATION!

TO REGISTER:

[BIT.LY/CLEFGALA2020](https://bit.ly/CLEFGALA2020) OR CALL (630) 595-9310

THE PATHWAY TO MEDALLION



CLEF and its school partners are on an exciting pathway to becoming Medallion Schools of Distinction. The Medallion program establishes a clear set of rigorous and measurable standards that define academic excellence and promote Christian values.

These initiatives create a process in which school leaders, working in partnership with CLEF, can demonstrate to their constituents that they are models of extraordinary educational excellence and Christian character development.

The Medallion School of Distinction is the next step in CLEF's comprehensive Pathways to Excellence program that stresses the importance of strong school leadership by the principal in helping to achieve overall school excellence.

"Thanks to the CLEF staff and board and all their partners for providing the opportunity for Chicago Lutheran schools to excel," says St. John's Principal Dan Green. "I am humbled to be a part of this initiative."

Student Support

Each student receives individual academic attention and instruction appropriate for their age and grade level. Students are given guidance and encouragement to fully prepare them to successfully advance in their studies, as well as in their lives.

School Support

CLEF works with each school by providing educational resources and customized support every step of the way. Schools receive a financial reward and promotional support for each badge completed. On becoming a Medallion School of Distinction, a school receives an additional financial reward, and an all-school celebration in recognition of its new status.

Watch upcoming newsletters and our social media channels for more updates as our schools achieve Medallion Badges of Distinction!

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THANK YOU DONORS

YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT HELPS US EMPOWER LUTHERAN SCHOOL STUDENTS



Super School Supply Drive!

Thanks to all our generous donors for supporting our online school supply drive this fall! Through our partnership with You Give Goods, we collected 528 items valued at \$1,176.86. Pencils, notebooks, backpacks, gluesticks, folders, papers, crayons, and more were shipped to selected schools. One principal said, "The children were very elated that donors took the time to get something which would help them be better prepared at school. God is always on time."



Let the Music Play

Thanks to the Fanny R. Wurlitzer Foundation Fund grant from the DeKalb County Community Foundation three schools are celebrating with music. Walther Christian Academy received a grant to help make band instruments free of charge for students. Grace Christian Academy also received a grant to help cover the cost of band lessons for students. For the fifth year this fund is helping to support the music instruction program at St. Paul-Austin.



Special Education Assistance

Thanks to a generous grant from A. Montgomery Ward Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee, we'll be able to help provide more special education services to students. Our Special Education Coordinator Cheryl Saiki connects students with speech therapists, counselors and instructional support.

HELP US SUPPORT MORE STUDENTS. GIVE THE GIFT OF EDUCATION!

With 22 partner schools in our CLEF network, the need is always great.

Here are the different ways you can help CLEF provide scholarships, services, resources and educational programs:



One-Time Donation



Employer Matching Gifts



Thrivent Choice Dollars



Amazon Smile



Donor Advised Funds



Planned Giving



Securities, Stocks or Mutual Funds



Invest in Kids*

* Individuals and corporations who donate through our designated Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) partner, Empower Illinois, will receive a credit against their Illinois income tax liability equal to 75 percent of their donation.

(St. James continued from front cover)

Students Served

Located in the beautiful-tree lined Sheffield neighborhood of Lincoln Park, St. James has 211 students enrolled from early childhood to eighth grade. The school graduates students to Chicago's best high schools.

CLEF recently supported the school's rebranding efforts with a marketing grant. This rebrand is reflected in the school's new logo which emphasizes to parents:

- *Your first choice in Lincoln Park*
- *Your first choice for inquiry-based learning*
- *Your first choice to find the perfect Chicago high school*



St. James Lutheran School

Your first choice.

Did you know? St. James is the oldest, continuously operating school in Chicago. It occupied as many as five buildings in Lincoln Park between its formation by a small group of German immigrants in 1857.

Today, St. James has become one of the leading private schools on the city's North Side. Promoting an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning, St. James emphasizes intellectual engagement and helps to foster a deeper understanding through the development of a hands-on and minds-on experience by the student.

Inquiry-based learning is on display during the highly anticipated project week when teachers ask students to work toward a culminating experience or capstone to a project. In one recent venture, eighth graders undertook a school improvement activity, researching vendors and helping plan the addition of a painted bicycle path on the playground. On any given snow-free day, you can find younger students pedaling with joy on this new bike path. The school emphasizes social-emotional learning and has added resources including a new sensory room and school counselor to support its social-emotional learning initiatives.

Students love the after-school program offerings such as art, cooking and drama classes. There is something for parents too, with workshops on topics including nutrition, internet safety and social-emotional learning.

"Every new family has a mentor," says Sue Dees, Director of Admissions. "The parent advocate sets up a play date with their children and invites them to school events."

Clearly their model is working. With a 94% retention rate each year, there are now wait lists at many grade levels. The caring teachers and excellent administrative staff proudly say, *Together, we can prepare your child to love learning, love God and love others.*

CLEF CARD CONTEST SPREADS CHRISTMAS CHEER

We are grateful for the CLEF students who participated in our fifth annual Christmas card design contest, spreading the joy of the season and sharing what Christmas means to them. The many entries showcased students' impressive talents and reflect how blessed they are to learn in a Christ-centered environment.

CLEF's social media channels featured many of these inspiring student designs in December! Did you miss out? Be sure to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @CLEFCHICAGO.



We congratulate the following students on their winning entries, (shown above, left to right):

- Isabella Viray, 8th grader at Good Shepherd Christian Academy
- Melanie Goman, a senior at Walther Christian Academy
- Addie Green, 7th grader at St. John's Lutheran School



STUDENTS CELEBRATE CHRIST'S BIRTH



CLEF COACHES CHEER ON EDUCATORS

For the past three years, CLEF has provided instructional coaching as part of the Pathways to Excellence program. Our newly appointed Director of Academic Excellence Rachel Swanson has the privilege of coordinating educational resources directly with our coaches. This has allowed CLEF greater ability to immediately respond to school needs and deploy people and resources appropriately. CLEF has five exceptional instructional coaches that go into schools weekly, working directly with teachers and principals to support their instructional goals. Welcome to our coaches: Kim Peterz Dent, Jennifer Heinze, Erika Jackson, Dr. Della Weaver and Maggie Zampini. To give an insight into why coaches are passionate about helping their fellow educators, we recently talked to one of the CLEF coaches.



Meet Coach Jennifer

As her career path attests, Jennifer Heinze loves Lutheran schools. She began teaching at St. Philip Lutheran School in Chicago in the mid-80s, before moving to Saint Paul in Mt. Prospect. After serving as a teacher and assistant principal for 15 years, she was promoted to principal where she served for another 15 years until her recent retirement.

Jennifer is delighted to support Bethesda International Academy, Good Shepherd Christian Academy and St. Phillip Lutheran School this year as an instructional coach consultant for CLEF.

What is your favorite part of coaching teachers?

I love meeting the people who are doing this important work in Lutheran Schools and seeing how they do it! The teachers are passionate and dedicated and have great ideas about how to serve their own communities. Lutheran schools are accomplishing God's work, in their own way. There's no "one-size-fits-all" Lutheran school, but we share a common goal: to be missionaries to the neighborhoods in which God's placed us. I'm happy to assist as schools work on their School Improvement Plans. Maintaining excellence in schools is an excellent witness to our Lord.

What are three quick tips you always share with educators?

1. You're teaching KIDS as well as teaching the SUBJECT. We can't ever forget that in order to reach kids with content, we have to connect with THEM, and help them connect the info with their experience. It's an art and science, but it is a joy to watch when you see a teacher who is in the sweet spot.

2. A favorite saying: Prepare the child for the path, not the other way around. Learning doesn't happen without a little bit of frustration and helping kiddos overcome obstacles builds resilience.

3. Attention from a teacher has the power to lift a sad, struggling kiddo to a better place. It doesn't cost money, and a little bit each day can go a long way. When a child is having social problems and having a hard time connecting with peers, a teacher who notices, affirms, or intervenes and instructs socially can be lifesaving. Literally. A teacher's attention may be the only reason a kiddo wants to come to school some days. We've got to "love 'em up" so they can face their world.

How do you motivate teachers to strive for the excellence in the classroom?

We have to remind ourselves how exciting this is: We're preparing kids for jobs that may not even exist yet.

Nothing is static, so we can't teach that way. We have to make sure that kids know the right things to navigate the world and adjust to its changes. Kids need to be allowed flexibility in thinking, and we need to model that. All the content areas are important including history, which helps give context to the dynamics of a changing world and marketplace. Training a nimble mind is a big responsibility....but exciting. Teachers need to bring their best game every day

What is your favorite Bible quote?

1 Thessalonians 5:11: *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.*



Beyond the classroom, Jennifer and her fellow church members at Saint Paul are wonderful role models as servant leaders. Jennifer saw a need at Bethesda International Academy to clean up their exterior grounds and enlisted fellow church volunteers. In a weekend, they transformed the exterior to beautify the grounds.



Immanuel families provided Christmas gifts for St. Paul-Dorchester students. Plus, they gave students hats, scarves, and gloves to keep warm this winter.

A PARTNERSHIP OF PRAYER, GIVING AND LOVE

Throughout the school year, urban and suburban Lutheran schools gather to share experiences and learn from each other. While students may come from different backgrounds and live far apart, they do have one thing in common. They both attend Christian schools where they are learning to live a Christ-centered life. Stirred to Love pairs urban and suburban school students thanks to the collaboration of CLEF and the Northern Illinois District (NID).

"Christ the King School has the unique opportunity to celebrate the love of Christ with our fellow Stirred to Love partners," says Geri Brazeal, Christ the King principal. "We're blessed with experiences which create a spirit of unity, a sharing of ideas and best practices as staffs and children interact in many different situations. Another blessing is how many of the students make life-long friendships with children from other Christian schools."

Now in its fifth year, Stirred to Love's goal is to increase the understanding and connection between suburban schools with Chicago schools.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Create connection between suburban schools and Chicago schools
- Provide resources for children in the city school
- Provide greater collaboration between staff at the partner schools

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love.

Hebrews 10:24

Stirred to Love Participating Schools 2019-2020

- Christ the King, St. Peter Schaumburg, and St. John's Lombard
- Bethesda International Academy and Immanuel, Elmhurst
- Good Shepherd Christian Academy and Immanuel, Dundee
- St. Paul-Menard and Trinity, Roselle
- St. Philip and St. Peter, Arlington Heights
- St. Paul-Dorchester and Immanuel, Palatine
- St. John's and Immanuel, Batavia

Making Connections with School Partnerships!

Many partner schools plan joint field trips to Walcamp, Springfield or Washington D.C. Suburban schools create service-learning opportunities for their students to benefit their city partners. Immanuel Palatine students provided Christmas dinners, gifts and winter clothing for families in need at St. Paul Dorchester. Immanuel Batavia will be hosting a food drive for the benefit of St. John's food pantry this spring. Schools also engage in cultural exchanges, where pastors visit and preach at partner chapel services, or music and arts groups perform at partner schools.

Follow CLEFs social media channels @CLEFchicago.org to see these partnerships in action.

Welcome Nina!

Programs Assistant Nina Pope is the newest member of the CLEF Team. She is helping to coordinate our teacher professional development initiatives, as well as supporting the Medallion School of Distinction program among other projects.



She received her Masters in Education in Elementary Education from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She has enjoyed touring CLEF schools with our Instructional Coach Team and looks forward to getting to know the school community better.



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to be added to our electronic communications list.*

SAVE THE DATES! DON'T MISS THESE UPCOMING EVENTS

SCHOLARSHIP GALA

APRIL 18, 2020

THE MORTON ARBORETUM

Teacher Recognition Dinner

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

River Forest Country Club, Elmhurst

Scholar Breakfast

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Walther Christian Academy

Networking Conference

Monday, August 10, 2020

Walther Christian Academy