

TEACHERS GRADUATE TO REMOTE LEARNING

Virtually overnight, educators needed to begin teaching students remotely. Not only did teachers respond to this immediate call to action, most had some type of remote learning in place within days of the state's mandate to close schools.

CLEF acted quickly to create a series of professional development opportunities to assist teachers in becoming online instructional experts. Director of Academic Excellence Rachel Swanson and Programs Assistant Nina Pope worked to rapidly transfer our previous in-person workshop into two weeks of remote learning dubbed Remote Innovative Teacher Institute.

From April 20-May 1, teachers from across our 22 partner schools joined CLEF virtually. The series featured over 20 different guest speakers, many from our own network of schools. Teachers logged more than 530 participation hours

over the two weeks. With four sessions to choose from each day, teachers were thrilled for the many and varied opportunities to enhance their remote instructional skills.

Online classes included topics from setting-up remote writing workshops to student internet safety. Our guest educators and presenters shared best practices for remote learning in reading, writing, math, and STEM, as well as social-emotional learning and health and wellness.

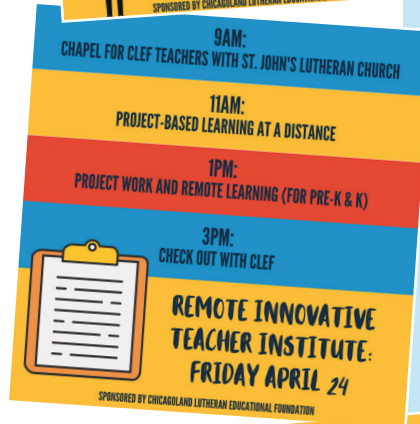
We also enlisted the help of St. John's Lutheran School and Church to guide teachers spiritually. Pastor Jacob Ehrhard and Music Teacher Katrina Jurica helped lead an inspiring devotion. During this e-chapel service, teachers prayed for students and parents, with special intentions for 8th graders and all graduates.

TEACHER APPRECIATION

Teachers expressed their gratitude for CLEF's Remote Innovative Teacher Institute. "I'm so grateful for what CLEF has done with the (remote) professional development. There's been so much useful information, and while there isn't enough time to implement all the amazing ideas we're coming away with, I do think there are things I will consider even into next year, whether we're teaching digitally or if we're mercifully back in class."

"Thank you for all the support and having fun while learning!"

"We wanted to express our deep thanks for the support that CLEF continues to give Bethesda International Academy. Whether we are learning in the classroom or at home, they generously support our teachers, student scholarships, educational materials, technology, marketing, enrollment, and administrative coaching."



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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.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

What constitutes learning? Is it simply the transfer of knowledge? Is it the ability to pass tests? What is the importance of nurturing in the learning process? Is remote learning simply a play on words?

Learning is often hard for many children for many different reasons. However online learning can be challenging for almost all students. It's not that students don't do the lessons or listen to their teachers or try their best to adjust to a vastly different learning environment. It's that learning without social, emotional, and personal interaction can be exceedingly difficult. Add in the anxiety, trauma and sense of isolation felt by students

and their parents from the threat of the coronavirus, and the challenges of learning and everyday living can be overwhelming.

During these unprecedented times, CLEF has marshalled all its resources to provide help and support to our teachers, students, and families. We continue to offer ongoing care for many physical and emotional concerns. This issue of CLEF Notes highlights some of these efforts. While we have all struggled, we have also learned.

We have learned that our most valuable resource is our dedicated and caring teachers. We have learned that our CLEF team, our principals,

and all school personnel are both resilient and creative. We have learned again that "Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to Him belong, we are weak, but He is strong."

We have learned what we always knew; following Jesus' example of sharing His love with each other and offering that love through a servant's heart, we can overcome a multiple of challenges, including a pandemic.

We carry on in His name, and in His will and invite each of you to join us in His mission.

Executive Director

NURSE PAT SUPPORTS ALL IN PANDEMIC



Since the pandemic started, School Nurse Pat Braun has talked with teachers, principals, and staff about COVID-19 related health issues. During these weekly Zoom chats with Nurse Pat, educators could ask health questions, share stressors, learn coping skills, get healthy living tips, and stay informed about the coronavirus. Pat offered best practices for school cleaning procedures and even discussed concerns teachers were having about what school will be like in the fall. She often checked-in on teachers' mental health as well. "You need to take care of yourself," she reminded teachers on one call. "Don't put yourself at the bottom of the list. Take some time for yourself"

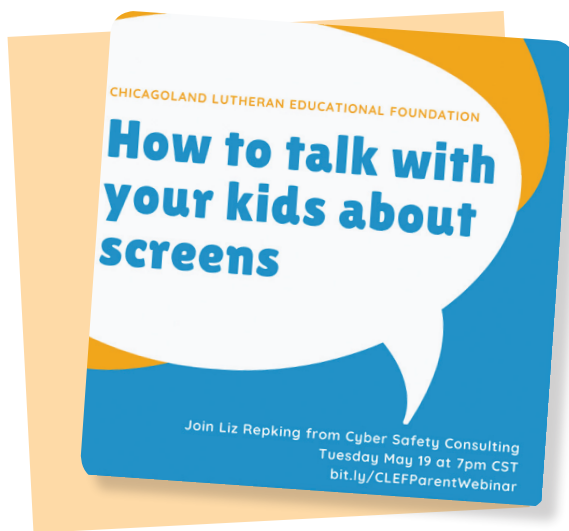
"Nurse Pat truly is a superhero!" says Good Shepherd Christian Academy Principal Jo Ellen Hoffmann. "She led a Zoom call for

Good Shepherd Christian Academy parents! It was very informative." In addition to the weekly chats, Nurse Pat called each school principal weekly to check-in how they and their staff were doing and to answer any health-related questions or concerns.

Additionally, Nurse Pat has led two webinars offering tips for parents to keep their children both physically and mentally healthy over the summer. For many kids, this pandemic has been a very traumatic and anxiety producing time. Braun emphasized how important keeping or rebuilding a healthy eating and sleeping schedule can be. "Wellness and health have a tremendous impact on learning," Nurse Pat concluded.

WEBINAR SERIES KEEPS PARENTS IN THE KNOW

Stay-at-home orders created a new dynamic in homes across Chicagoland. Students set up virtual classrooms in family rooms, often next to their parents who also were working from home. This new normal prompted CLEF to create a free Parent Webinar series to help parents navigate these uncharted waters of distance learning.



CYBER SAFETY AT HOME

The first webinar, How to Talk to Your Kids about Screens, featured Liz Repking, founder and owner of Cyber Safety Consulting. A past presenter at CLEF's Networking Conference, she often speaks to students, schools, and corporations nationwide about screen time and cyber safety. During this session, Repking discussed the following with parents:

- Ideas for talking with kids about screen time
- Strategies for navigating when, where, and how screens are being used
- Talking points to help parents make screen-time decisions

Repking advised parents to create a digital roadmap for their family.

"Make some big decisions on how they can use technology including location of devices, what is a free use in home, how much time spent on devices, start up and shut down times," Repking says. "And discuss how you will spend time offline as a family. With whom kids can connect with online and create a parent/child agreement for technology."

Given the increased screen time with remote learning and sheltering in place, Repking said it was important to give kids time offline as a family including:

- Engage in activities together
- Make a bucket list of non-tech things to do
- Create family tech free time each day
- Plan the night before for tech and non-tech time for the next day

One parent asked the best age to allow kids to have social media sites. Repking shared what she told her own children, "I said in my house you have to be 13. I phrased it in a such a way by saying: You are eligible at 13 for the use of social media." Such decisions can be an important part of a family's digital roadmap. She reminded parents every social media site has an age limit to platforms. Repking also shared important cyber safety tips since the tremendous increase in students' time online may make them vulnerable to cyber predators.

In closing, Repking suggested that parents make some concessions for the situation right now as these are unprecedented times and that they discuss as a family how they would like technology to look in their home this summer and fall.

To watch the entire presentation, go to:
<https://clefchicago.org/news-events/blog/>



NEWS AND NOTES

SPECIAL ED SERVICES DEPLOYED IN ONLY TWO WEEKS DESPITE COVID-19



Despite the many challenges associated with the unexpected pivot to remote learning, CLEF Special Education Coordinator Cheryl Saiki was able to activate special education services within two weeks of the mandated school closure. Across our network, students with diverse learning needs typically receive weekly direct instruction, speech, audiology and occupational therapy, and social work services. Saiki has worked tirelessly to ensure continuity of these critical special educational services for our most vulnerable students, either by linking them with service providers equipped to provide remote instruction or by providing the direct service herself.

Even though remote learning was not an ideal situation, every student who received services had a smart device and internet access within days. Saiki made sure these children were top priority in preventing any technological barriers. Due to her diligence, there was an 80% involvement rate in remote learning, compared to a 66% rate in the Chicago Public School system. “On the whole, CLEF schools were far more effective,” said Saiki.

We are especially grateful to donors who support our Special Education Fund. CPS did not allow us to use our federal Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) funds to deliver special education services for over six weeks. Due to donor generosity, we were able to rely on grants and special gifts to deliver these important services.

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To learn more about Thrivent and Thrivent Choice, please call 1-800-847-4836 to speak with personable and helpful operators or visit thrivent.com.

ANOTHER RESOURCE FOR EDUCATIONAL COACHING

Congratulations to Rachel Swanson, the Director of Academic Excellence at CLEF, for being one in only a hundred people nationwide to complete Google’s newly launched certification for Educational Coach. Educational Coaches must have previously completed two Google Educator programs and finished the researched-based five-step coaching model intended to help other educators.

Coupled with her Google for Education Certified Trainer and Certified Innovator credentials, Swanson is well positioned to aid teachers with integrating technology appropriately into educational instruction. “The Certified Coach Program is centered around a coaching model that lends itself to rich and meaningful experiences between teachers and their coach,” said Rachel McVeagh, a coach herself in the program, in a statement on the website. “Its individualized, challenge-based and non-evaluative approach really helps teachers feel supported and ready to step out of their comfort zone.”

THANK YOU!

To all our hardworking Lutheran school educators. Our favorite event of the year, Teacher Appreciation Night, was held virtually on June 17th. We are honored to recognize the extraordinary efforts of the teachers who worked so hard to continue meaningful instruction during these unprecedented times.



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LCMS English District

The English District is one of 35 districts of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. It sees itself in the role of the servant by providing help to the congregation, other districts and the entire LCMS. The English District promotes mutual faith, a one-in-purpose and a one-in-organization focus. Visit englishdistrict.org for more information.

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CONGRATULATIONS CLEF SCHOOLS 2020 GRADUATES

