



CLEF NOTES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CHICAGOLAND LUTHERAN EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION | WINTER 2023 | WWW.CLEFCHICAGO.ORG



SUPER HEROES!

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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.



From the Director

Dear Friends,

Wishing each of you a Blessed Christmas and a healthy Nurse Pat New Year. This past year has been a satisfying one for our CLEF staff and schools. Many students have completed a new session of Superheroes and are now on their way to living a healthier and happier lifestyle, thanks to Nurse Pat and her love for all CLEF students.

CLEF’s 30th Anniversary celebration, held at Soldier Field, was an evening for both reflection and anticipation on CLEF’s continuing dedication to providing academic excellence and a Christ-centered focus as a means of a life strengthening experience for all students.

This Christmas we observe the Christ Child and wonder with the Wise Men what child is this. When you think about Christ’s coming and how he chose to arrive as a baby, you may wonder why he just didn’t appear in all His majestic glory with a chorus of heavenly hosts. Yet in Mark 10:14-15 Jesus implores and then affirms to his disciples:

“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Now stop and remember that we too are Children of God. And as little children, often in age but always in our hearts, we have received the glorious gift of faith, not because we earned it but because with an open heart, we have acknowledged our lack of merit and accepted God’s gift of forgiveness and eternal life.

During these most holy of days, when we see the wonder and joy in the faces of little children, we remember the Greatest Gift of all given to us as Children of God. My wish to each of you is to let your hearts be open and filled with child-like joy, wonder, and thankfulness.

*And his name shall be Emmanuel;
God with us! Isaiah 7:14*

In His Service,

Janet Klotz
Executive Director



Remembering
Sandy Wackenhuth

Sandy Wackenhuth was an inspirational principal, teacher, team player, parent, and grandparent. Yet she was more than all of these exceptional gifts and talents. She was also a Spirit-led servant who encouraged and motivated all those she came in contact with.

For many years, Sandy was a dedicated teacher and later promoted to principal with Ashburn Lutheran School. After her retirement from Ashburn, her dedication to education led her to serve as the Education Coordinator with CLEF. Sandy excelled in this capacity where she was able to develop and implement professional development opportunities for CLEF teachers.

This role also afforded her an opportunity to be CLEF’s liaison to Chicago Public Schools; facilitating the federal fund title grants and support for our diverse learners for our CLEF schools. Her tenacity to find and leverage resources to support our teachers and schools was epic and never ending. She often commented that the energy of the teachers gave her renewed energy for her many responsibilities.

Sandy’s love of education and resourcefulness was displayed in her diligent work as the coordinator for the Dream Awards for CLEF’s teacher annual recognition dinner and support of the annual networking conference.

When she retired for the second time in fall of 2014, she decided to spend more time with her family, traveling and enjoying her love of movies and other activities. She continued to enjoy her days until called to Glory by her heavenly Father on May 16, 2023.

With the passing of Sandy, all of us at CLEF and all whose lives she changed, have lost a valuable partner. Her presence and positive attitude are remembered by many and missed by all who were blessed to know her.

Janet Klotz, Executive Director
CLEF Board of Directors and Staff



From Good Shepard Christian Academy
Celebration at the Blackhawks
Community Ice Rink



CLEF Community Partners



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:



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

SUPERHEROES!

For 2 years my class had the opportunity to participate in the Superheroes program with "Nurse Pat" and "Dr. Steve." Superheroes is a program that strengthens both the minds and hearts of students as well as teachers through classroom instruction by Nurse Pat for our students and Zoom meetings with Dr. Steve for the teachers.

Once a week for about 8 weeks my students waited with excited anticipation for Nurse Pat to walk in and empty her crate, giving them a hint of what they would be learning for that day. We discussed various science and health topics like understanding our feelings, washing hands, brushing teeth, getting the right amount of sleep, and exercising.

Nurse Pat ended every session with song, dance, and exercise. I loved seeing the smiles on their faces when she would say, "Stand up" because they knew what would follow. My class met for Superheroes on Tuesdays. One morning a student stood up and declared, "Today is Tuesday, and Tuesday means Superheroes! I love Tuesdays!" I knew I made the right choice in signing up back in August for another session of Superheroes. Another student came to school to tell me that he had his mom make copies of his teeth brushing chart because "dental health is important for everyone, Mrs. Gus. Nurse Pat said so."

My favorite part of Superheroes must be the last day of class when the students get to dress up in capes and masks. For days they ask to wear them. They all choose different superheroes with different powers but all strike that pose with their fisted hands on their hips and legs spread eagle looking into the distance. If I had a superpower, it would be to know the lyrics to every song. When I am with my family in the car and the radio is on, there is usually laughter as I have no idea what I am singing. Admit it, you have all been there at least a few times in your life.

Heather Gustafson, Saint Luke Academy

"Today is Tuesday, and Tuesday means Superheroes! I love Tuesdays!"



"The program has made my students a lot more conscious of themselves and their daily health habits."

Nurse Pat's Superhero Program has been a wonderful experience for my 1st and 2nd graders as well as for myself as a lower primary teacher. Her topics spanned from brushing your teeth to healthy eating to emotional intelligence. Each of the topics always tied in perfectly with my lesson plans.

One of the kid's favorite lessons was our food pyramid. Nurse Pat explained and discussed what a food pyramid is and what it consisted of in order to make a healthy plate.

Nurse Pat's commitment to the program is very inspiring and needed in schools, especially in the curriculum for our primary students. The program has made my students a lot more conscious of themselves and their daily health habits. As our last day approached, a few weeks ago, the students were very disappointed that they weren't seeing Nurse Pat as much. But, they are continuously using the skills and tools for being a healthy student. Also, they are constantly asking when she is coming back. I too am anxiously waiting for Nurse Pat's return, too!

Jonathan Lee, St. Paul Dorchester



of the countries and cultures they have studied. "The Dream Award is just the latest reason for all of us to be grateful to CLEF! This encouragement for teachers to think beyond the typical curriculum, and DREAM BIG, has resulted in enriching experiences for students at all levels!"

Thanks to the generosity of CLEF, and the hard work of Mrs Schau and the St. Philip staff, kids are truly the winners of this Dream Award!



Principal
Donna Tennis



Kelley Schau



Around the World with St. Philip Lutheran School!

The school year is only halfway over, but the students and staff at St. Philip Lutheran School have already had some wonderful worldwide "travelling" experiences, thanks to a generous CLEF grant to make a Teacher Dream come true!

Each year, CLEF invites teachers at all CLEF schools to apply for the Dream Grant, which allows teachers to dream big about experiences or supplies which will enhance the academic curriculum, the school environment, or the positive culture of the school. Teachers articulate their dreams, write proposals and budgets, then look forward to the Teacher Dream Awards Dinner in May, when the winners are announced.

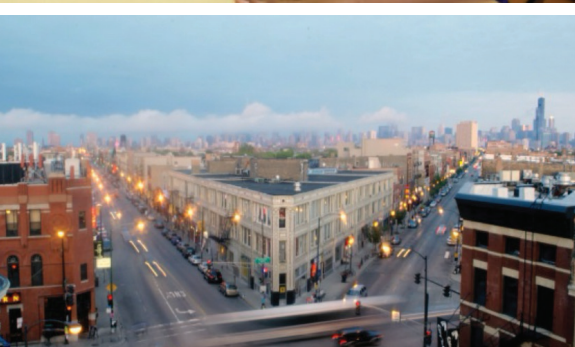
St. Philip teacher Kelley Schau took the challenge, and devised a plan for a wonderful year-long trip around the world via field trips, cultural experiences, and food! Every month, a different country is featured - each representative of the background of

some of St. Philip's students. Teachers guide students through fun activities, appropriate to grade level, so that students learn about the country of the month. At the end, a culminating activity is enjoyed by all students in Grades PreK - 8th Grade!

So far, the St. Philip community has enjoyed a trip to the Puerto Rican Museum, a homemade German lunch to commemorate the Reformation, as well as tasty cuisine from Mexico. Trips to the nearby Swedish Museum, the DuSable Museum, and the Ukrainian Museum are planned, as well as experiences with the culture and cuisine from China and Greece. This year-long experience will culminate with a Family Cultural Celebration with all of the St. Philip community!

Principal Donna Tennis reports that the kids are all excited each month when they learn which country will be featured next. Colorful flags festoon St. Philip's hallways, as a reminder





Jesus loves us this we know!

Good Shepherd Christian Academy, a ministry of Jehovah El Buen Pastor Lutheran Church has been blessed by God and has been a blessing to many. I have had the privilege of being a part of this ministry since 1989.

Little Ones to Him belong, We are weak but He is strong!

We have 50 students in our school and 8 out of 10 are Hispanic. Our school and church secretary, one full time teacher, our admissions marketing coordinator, before and after care worker, and pastor are bi-lingual. Our bi-lingual staff help with the everyday needs of many of our parents whose first language is Spanish. Our entire staff have a love for the children and this community.

Yes, Jesus loves us!

Our gym is on the second floor of the school building. Our building trustee, a volunteer, rents the gym out 7 nights a week. Men, women and children from the community, and beyond, play basketball and volleyball in our gym for a small fee.

Yes, Jesus loves us!

Over the years many people have come back who were students at our school. It is an amazing experience for me to tour them through the school and church and listen to their stories as they reminisce of times spent here. A few years ago, Daisy, a student of mine who was in one of my 2nd grade classes, came back to see me. As I was showing her around the classrooms and catching up with her, she saw an All God's People Sing hymnal on a bookshelf and said how she remembers singing songs from it. I offered her a copy and she had tears in her eyes as she accepted that gift.

Jesus loves us He who died, heaven's gates to open wide! He will wash away our sins, let His little child come in!

Friends abound here, and one such friend is Dr. Patricia Braun. She is a SuperHero who students from pre-kindergarten through 8th grade recognize as their friend. The program she and Dr. Steven Gerner has offered our school over the years, is an amazing addition to our curriculum. This year not only did our students participate in CLEF SuperHero Program, our middle school students benefited from the CLEF Student Awareness Program. All subjects covered hit the target on teaching and discussing what older students need to be aware of in handling emotions, to knowledge about internet safety. Our students were engaged and loved the program!

I have many stories about the ministry here at Good Shepherd Christian Academy and Jehovah El Buen Pastor Lutheran Church, and ideas of how to continue the ministry in this place. One such idea is hiring teachers from foreign countries to teach at our school. I believe our vision helps me make plans for the future and all our staff will join to be sure that GSCA students continue to acquire knowledge and wisdom with a Biblical worldview and that worldview will shine through by demonstrations of service and leadership in worship, missions, care, and growth.

Enjoying His Work,
Mrs. Jo Ellen T. Hoffmann, Principal
Good Shepherd Christian Academy

The mission of Good Shepherd Christian Academy is to lead students to connect with Christ, grow in faith and serve with conviction, making a world of difference. GSCA seeks to be a family's first choice for Pre-K-8th grade education.

Our vision is that GSCA students will acquire knowledge and wisdom with a Biblical world view as demonstrated through service and leadership in worship, missions, care, and growth.



We had an alumnus who wanted to reminisce about her time as a student at our school. Dorothy Rutz, born June 19, 1932, stopped by with family members. Also, her father was the custodian of our church and school. I heard from her what it was like to be a student in our school during World War II and the Great Depression.



"Forward Focused"

by Amanda Hays, Admissions and Marketing

This fall, CLEF's Admission & Marketing Coordinators (AMCs) have successfully connected with their communities and spread the word about their schools to new families all over the city! Saint Luke met with thousands of families at the Roscoe Village fall chamber event and passed out 1,500 goody bags to families. Pilgrim won the Lincoln Square Apple Fest contest, securing them a free door hanger marketing campaign in the area. Grace Christian served 100 conchas and 75 cups of coffee to families at their Conchas and Coffee event in front of the school. And Walther's fall open house had 32 prospective families in attendance! All of our AMCs are diligently working towards their goals of bringing more families to their schools!

The November AMC professional development session was led by Linda Fox, Bethany Lutheran's Admissions Director, and was a huge hit with our AMCs! Linda's presentation focused on best practices and tips for leading school tours. She facilitated a great conversation, and our AMCs took away many new ideas to implement in their tours. In addition, each AMC will tour another CLEF school in the coming months to learn from each other and generate ideas to bring back to their own school.

Our AMCs have made great strides towards improving their marketing materials this fall. St. Paul Dorchester, Grace Christian, and St. John's are securing new exterior banners. St. Philip is upgrading their tour folder, and Grace Christian and Saint Luke are working to obtain new yard signs. CLEF hired a film crew to create a virtual tour at Walther, and the finishing touches are currently being made on this project. I have also been working with St. Paul Austin to identify the school's marketing needs, and they now have a new school logo and will soon have an updated brochure and exterior banners.

As peak enrollment season quickly approaches this spring, our AMCs are doing everything they can to help retain students through Kindergarten Nights, mentor program events, and informational meetings for families. They are also brainstorming new ways to engage prospective families by rethinking open houses and their school's admission process. I am looking forward to the positive changes that will be made during the 2024 enrollment season!



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GREETINGS
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MISTLETOE

NUTCRACKER
PARTRIDGE
CELEBRATE
CIDER
ELVES
GRINCH
JOLLY
NOEL
NUTMEG
SANTA CLAUS

Meet Dr. Chinyere Okafor Conley

Dr. Chinyere Okafor Conley, a dedicated educator, is propelled by a profound commitment to fostering effective education through the lens of social justice. With extensive experience across various educational roles, Dr. Conley brings a multifaceted perspective to her work.

As a former school principal, her leadership yielded transformative outcomes, significantly advancing academic progress within school environments. Currently, Dr. Conley continues to impact education through her unwavering dedication to educational equity by employing her coaching expertise at CLEF Schools. Her focus remains on empowering educators to embrace an inclusive, engaging, and student-centered approach to learning that resonates with today's diverse student population.

Meet Dr. Robyn DuBose

My career in education started in 1992 with Chicago Public Schools (CPS). I have served in various positions from Classroom Teacher, Lead Teacher, Director of a Small School, Curriculum Coordinator, Literacy Coach, and Assistant Principal. I accepted a principalship from the Board Members of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran School and served from 2013 to 2023.

I am a past board member of Christ our Savior Catholic School and Seton Academy. I am currently a member of the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), Illinois Literacy Council and Chicago Area Reading Association. I am blessed to serve as a Mentor/Coach for new and aspiring principals in the State of Illinois for the IPA, and an Instructional Coach for St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran School.

I am a lifelong learner. I have a Bachelors in Communications, Masters in Marketing Communication, Masters in Urban Education, a Doctorate in Education Administration and Supervision, and a Van Lunen Fellow in Executive Management in Christian Schools.

Meet Jenna Scifo

Jenna Scifo has worked in Christian Education since 2002. She's had many roles including classroom teacher, school administrator, resource director, and currently serves as St. John's Instructional Coach and Admissions and Marketing Coordinator.

Jenna Scifo graduated from Trinity International University with her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education in 2002 and received her Master's Degree in Teaching & Learning from Liberty University in 2014. She is also about halfway complete with her Master's in School Counseling.

She and her husband have been married for almost 21 years and have 3 daughters. All 3 of her daughters have attended Lutheran schools. Fun fact: Jenna and her husband met during their first year of teaching!

Her personal mission while serving in Christian Education has always been and continues to be, reaching students and their families with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ while focusing on best practices in education and academic excellence.

CLEF Schools 2023 Directory by Location

CLEF PRESCHOOLS AND GRADE SCHOOLS

- 1 **Bethesda International Academy**, 6803 N. Campbell Ave.
- 2 **Christ the King Lutheran School**, 3701 S. Lake Park Ave.
- 3 **Concordia Place**, 3696 N. Milwaukee
- 4 **Concordia Place**, 4809 N. Ravenswood Ave.
- 5 **Concordia Place**, 3855 N. Seeley Ave.
- 6 **Concordia Place**, 3300 N. Whipple St.
- 7 **Good Shepherd Christian Academy**, 3740 W. Belden Ave.
- 8 **Grace Christian Academy**, 4106 W. 28th St.
- 9 **Grace Lutheran School**, 2725 N. Laramie Ave.
- 10 **Holy Family School**, 3415 W. Arthington St.
- 11 **Little Learners Academy**, 3415 W. Arthington St.
- 12 **Lutheran Day Nursery**, 1802 N. Fairfield Ave.
- 13 **Our Saviour Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten**, 7151 W. Cornelia Ave.
- 14 **Pilgrim Lutheran School**, 4300 N. Winchester Ave.
- 15 **Saint Luke Academy**, 1500 W. Belmont Ave.
- 16 **St. James Lutheran School**, 2101 N. Fremont St.
- 17 **St. John's Lutheran School**, 4939 W. Montrose Ave.
- 18 **St. Paul Lutheran School**, 7621 S. Dorchester Ave.
- 19 **St. Paul Lutheran School**, 846 N. Menard Ave.
- 20 **St. Philip Lutheran School**, 2500 W. Bryn Mawr Ave.

CLEF MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL

- 21 Walther Christian Academy – STEM Middle School,**
900 Chicago Ave., Melrose Park
- 22 Walther Christian Academy – High School,**
900 Chicago Ave., Melrose Park





Chicagoland Lutheran
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