



FVLA Follower

✠ a Christ-focused discipleship experience ✠
brought alive in an outstanding learning community

Fall 2005

Principal's Perspective

Fox Valley Lutheran Academy was blessed to begin its 32nd academic year on August 23rd. At the evening worship service that day, Pastor Hannibal Frederich, our school chaplain, introduced the theme for the year: *Touchpoints*. He launched this yearlong emphasis with an explanation of the ways God touches us with His love and forgiveness; namely, through the means of grace. It is through those touchpoints of grace that God enters our hearts and claims us as His own people. Understanding these touchpoints of our Heavenly Father makes us able to become passionate to live as His people and be evangelists who tell others of His love. Enlivened by God's grace, we then become touchpoints of grace to one another.

This theme was first developed through an acknowledgement of current business emphasis on customer experience and the touchpoints companies employ to win the loyalty of their customers. The spiritual connection to this idea is summed in the words of Pastor Frederich. "*Touchpoints* perfectly describes God's action among us sacramentally and

equally describes the fact that, through us, He touches others with the Gospel in our works of service."

It is exciting to see so many things mesh together at the beginning of this school year. Previous emphasis on the clarification of vision, philosophy, mission, and values, along with the development of a strategic plan, has brought an exciting alignment to everything we plan and do. The theme *Touchpoints* fits so well with who we are and what the school is about. Starting with the foundation of the Gospel and the origin of the touchpoints of grace, we will expand the theme to include an emphasis on building ministry relationships between the school and those who will support Lutheran educational ministry. Another aspect of the touchpoints theme will be an emphasis on the vocational acts of service to which God calls His people. Opportunities will be expanded during the coming school year for students to be regularly involved in service projects both within and outside of the school community.

Focus on the Staff

Beginning his seventh year at FVLA is Mr. David Kuhfahl. He teaches subjects in the social sciences such as World History and American Government. He also teaches physical education and coaches the FVLA Falcon volleyball team. In past years at FVLA, David has worked with the prom committee and served as student council advisor. Before coming to Valley, David

worked as a substitute teacher for two years and a teacher's aide for one year.

In preparation for his teaching career, he graduated from North Central College in Naperville, Illinois where he earned a B.A. degree in Secondary Education with a specialization in U.S. History. Presently he is working on colloquy classes that will allow him to be a called

Lutheran teacher.

David and his wife, Laurie, are members of St. Peter Lutheran Church in Gilberts. This summer, on August 12th, the Kuhfahls welcomed their first child, Luke, to their family. As with all of our teachers and staff, we are grateful to God for the role each individual fills as a member of the FVLA ministry.

<i>Touchpoints</i>	
1 John 1:1	That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched — this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

FVLA Staff

Principal
Janet Zimdahl

Asst. Principal
Janet Burmeister

Teachers
Rev. Hannibal Frederich
Hannah Gurnett
David Kuhfahl
Karl Lauer
Kathy O'Connor
Jean Rahn
Peg Youngren

Support Staff
Merilee Werrbach

A Servant's Heart

FVLA students spent meaningful time this summer providing service to others in diverse ways. Many helped in their local churches to teach Vacation Bible School. Others were regularly involved in helping with Girl Scouts, Elgin Children's Chorus Honors Fest Camp, and the local elementary school band program. As students reflected on their experiences, they commented on how the opportunities helped them gain confidence, allowed them to share their faith, and gave them enjoyment in helping others.

Several Fox Valley students had quite unique experiences. Senior Diego Vega helped with Kids' Club in the Cabrini Green area of Chicago. He commented on how it gave him a deeper understanding of what it means to be content.

Junior Dennis Labaj spent 8 days in Mexico translating, painting, building, cleaning, cooking, and helping with VBS. He said, "I gained a knowledge of the culture, and I learned to appreciate what I have. It gave me a good feeling to help those in need."

Sophomores Aaron Orzechowski and Tricia Parker both went to Kentucky on

an Appalachia Service Project. Much of the work done involved repair to houses. This was important assistance to people who would not normally be able to afford those repairs themselves. Aaron summed up his experience with these words, "I gained an understanding of the less fortunate. When I left Kentucky after the week of work, I was more grateful for the things I take for granted in my own life, even things like food, clothes, or a place to sleep."

Service learning is an important part of giving to others as God has given to us. With the present school year emphasis on "Touchpoints," it is natural to focus on developing a service-learning program. Mrs. Jean Rahn, FVLA's Spanish teacher, is providing the leadership for this development of a servant mind and heart. While most opportunities will involve reaching out into the community, the service learning doesn't stop there. Another goal in developing the program, is to help the students learn a service mentality; namely, a desire to see a need and fill it. That means also spontaneity in reaching out to one another within the school on a daily basis.

FVLA Develops Leadership Course

During the past school year a new course, *TeamLead*, became part of the FVLA curriculum. Developed through staff discussion concerning the value of good leaders and willing team members, the course has been implemented and taught by assistant principal, Janet Burmeister. During the first year juniors and seniors were involved in the pilot instruction. This year sophomores have been given the opportunity to benefit from the course of study.

This one-semester course devotes approximately half of the time on teamwork learning and the other half on leadership development. John Maxwell's two books, *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* and *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* provide the textbook basis for the

class. Each law is brought alive for the students through a class activity or experience, and then discussion shapes the understanding and application of the concept.

The goal of the class is to transform the students into effective team members and into people who can successfully lead in their school, family, church, or future profession. Miss Burmeister brings that goal into focus with her words, "Leadership skills can and should be learned over years of practice. Students who develop an awareness at a young age can put themselves in a position to advance into positions of leadership sooner, and organizations can then benefit longer from their expertise."

Calendar

- October 12 –
All School Testing
- October 18 –
Prospective Student Night—7 P.M.
- October 19 –
All School Field Trip
- November 9 –
Prospective Student Night—7 P.M.
- November 10 –
Parent Teacher Conferences

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Immanuel — East Dundee

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Lynda Ranieri
St. Peter — Schaumburg

Cori Smith
St. Peter — Dundee

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Alumni Activities

Growing interest and energy is evident among the nearly 900 alumni of Valley. Various events and activities over the past six months have begun the reconnection of the alumni to each other and with the values of their high school experience.

An alumni fest was held at the end of July. About 30 people attended representing a variety of graduating classes.



The group enjoyed an afternoon of conversation, reminiscing, and picture taking as they shared their enthusiasm for the memories of their Lutheran secondary education experiences.

A month later, on August 20th, the

classes of 1985 and 1986 celebrated their 20-year reunion at the Lincoln Inn in Batavia, Illinois. With 20 people in attendance, they too shared a great time and enjoyed the chance to reconnect to each other and to share their high school memories.

Another point of reconnection for the alumni has been the alumni website, www.valleyalumni.com. In its first month of operation, it received 500 hits. On the site alumni have signed up and shared with one another their reflections on the value of the Valley experience while catching up with each other on their current location and family life.

Much interest in an alumni network has been verbalized; now it will be organized and focused. Work is being done on the formation of an Alumni Association which will give individuals the opportunity to become involved in four different areas: alumni research, auction gift gathering, event planning, and alumni endowment. Soon alumni will be able to visit the website and sign up where their interests direct them.



From The Heart of Alumni Sue (Gramse) Laesch ('77)

Sue Gramse Laesch was a student when Valley Lutheran High School first opened. To read thoughts of her Valley experience allows readers of the *FVLA Follower* to share the enthusiasm of someone who experienced so many of the school's "firsts."

Sue vividly remembers being excited to join a group of parents, students, teachers, and administrators who were venturing out to provide Lutheran secondary education in the Fox River area. She states, "I remember those first days of getting to know each other, setting things up in our new school, choosing the original colors of silver and blue, and voting for the new nickname, the 'Valley Ventures'. Being a small group with a common purpose, we all became friends quickly. I will always cherish how special

it was to be part of that initial group and feel the love and support of all involved. We had the advantage of being drawn in to so many more things because of a smaller school size that was more personal than other area high schools. Our beautiful campus was the scene of many events. The outdoor chapel services, the 'Spook Walks', and the Oktoberfests are special memories." While she realizes that it couldn't have been easy for her parents to pick her up from all of those practices and activities in which she was involved, they must have adjusted quickly as they continued their support of Valley for a long time. Her mom served Valley as secretary for years, and her three younger brothers, Rick ('79), Tom ('81), and Don ('84), all graduated from Valley, as did her sister-in law, Carol

Thiede ('81).

After high school, Sue's path led her to Concordia University River Forest, where she met her husband Larry. She recognized in him the same Lutheran foundations that had been nurtured in her through the Holy Spirit, her family, and her experiences in Christian education. She and Larry were married in 1980 and have been blessed with two wonderful children, Kelly (21) and Alex (18). For many years Sue worked in the bookstore of Concordia University River Forest. Currently she is working in the bookstore of William Rainey Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, and her family holds their church membership at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church located in Delavan, Wisconsin.

... giving each student a greater opportunity to excel

Enhanced Technology Brings New Opportunities

New Computers Networked

Last fall a lead gift of 10 new computers provided opportunities the school was thrilled to offer with students busy preparing PowerPoint presentations for classes and conducting online research for various projects or lessons. At the end of last school year an appeal was sent out to Valley supporters asking for money to complete the installation of new computers throughout the building.

That appeal brought in over \$7,000 and made it possible to now have all new computers in the school's lab and classrooms. Each computer has high-speed Internet access and is fully networked to other computers in the building. In addition, the money given allowed the purchase of a new, high-quality laser printer for the computer lab.

Now with the changeover to all new equipment complete, each student has access in any classroom or in the lab itself to the power and speed of research along with up-to-date technology to assist in preparation of projects and assignments. This complete transformation of technology equipment throughout the building began with one person's generous gift and was completed in less than a year through the many donors that responded to FVLA's spring appeal.



Online Classes Offered

With the installation of all new, networked computers throughout the building, the addition of online classes has become possible for the present school year. Working with the University of Nebraska and the University of Missouri, FVLA has opened a new realm of diversity in electives for its students. Subjects such as Interior Design, Accounting, Introduction to Art, German, Small Engine Repair, and Music Theory have become part of the school's curriculum through this online program.

Students have a variety of reasons for taking the online classes. Junior Christian Bishop wants to take college physics next year, so this year he is studying the physics class that FVLA offers along with the chemistry class offered by the University of Nebraska. Completion of these classes will prepare him to work at the college level in science during his senior year. He comments, "I like taking the online class because it allows me to work according to my own schedule." Some students simply want to pursue a topic of interest to them and work during their study hall on subjects that would not otherwise have been offered. Junior Jennifer Groskopf states, "So far, I have learned many different things about the elements of interior design and how much work actually

goes into creating a beautiful living space." Other students desire to take an overload in classes that wouldn't be possible without online classes. They have a full schedule during the day and then add their online course requirements to their afternoon and evening schedule. Regardless of the reasons for taking the courses, the opportunities given expand both experiences and learning for the students.

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Touchpoints