



FVLA Follower

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

Fall 2006

Principal's Perspective

Building Momentum. That's the goal of the strategic planning being done this school year. Multiple factors are vital for building the momentum necessary to realize the dream of a strong Lutheran high school serving a large number of students in the Fox River Valley area. The foundation has to be solid, and we have many building blocks already in place. The first is a commitment to quality, and public recognition of that quality in receiving various accreditations validates the priorities of the school. The fact that over 800 alumni have experienced and value the education they received is also important. In addition, we have a clear goal of bringing to life a sustainable model learning organization that is the area's premier provider of Christ-focused quality high school education.

Now that the intensive market research study is complete, we have quantified the interest and the need for that large quality Lutheran high school that we believe can serve the area for generations to come. The research has shown that the demand is there both within Lutheran churches and in the community in which we live, providing a significant number of people who have expressed a desire to consider the high quality program we envision offering.

The research has also revealed to us what the market values. Desired most of all are qualified, dedicated, and caring teachers. In addition, there is demand for a safe and secure environment, and there is demonstrated need for a culture that holds students accountable for respectable behavior. Lutheran schools tradition-

ally show how well they can meet those needs while providing so many important extras because of the Christ-focus and commitment to quality that they have. FVLA is no exception.

Now we need to make it happen. That's where the building momentum comes in. Perseverance has enabled us to stand at the launching pad. Passion and participants will launch the project. Now is the time for you to explore how you may participate in the formative stages of this process. As each additional person becomes involved in the months ahead, momentum necessary to bring reality to the vision builds. Listen, as progress is made, for the ways that you can be irresistibly swept up in the tide of momentum to come.

National Lutheran School Accreditation Added

Long recognized by the State of Illinois and continuously accredited by North Central Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement since 1977, Valley recently added National Lutheran School Accreditation to its list of recognitions when the NLSA commissioners granted accreditation to FVLA at its annual meeting.

In their report the NLSA visiting team cited the following strengths of the school. "There is ample evidence that FVLA is a spiritual place with a tangible sense of Christian community. The concept of 'service' is evident in word and deed, and courses and activities display the school's commitment to leadership and service as vocation. In addition, the

educational commitment to increase and improve writing in all courses offered is outstanding. The benefits reaped by students 'down the road' will be very apparent." The visiting team also noted that the "cooperative relationship of committed administrators, board, and staff provides a strong base from which to work towards the future." Adding this accreditation is important because NLSA also evaluates the spiritual culture and climate of the school, acknowledging its significance alongside the rigors of a quality academic program.

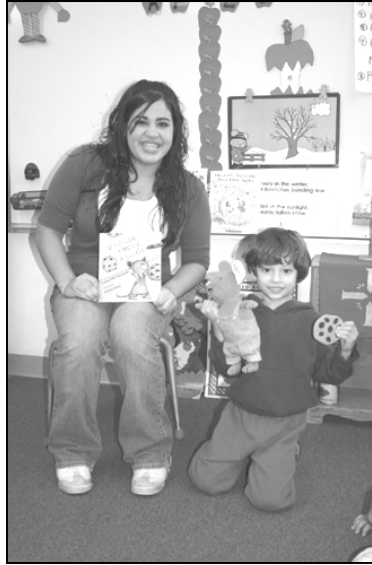
Simultaneous with the NLSA visit were concurrent evaluative assessments by North Central Accreditation and by the State of Illinois. The state site visitor also

noted strengths of the school's culture by stating, "The warm family-like atmosphere permeates throughout the school's well-maintained facility. This attitude is, without a doubt, a result of the care, attention, and influence of their administrator in cooperation with their faculty and staff who greet all the students and their parents by name. They also take the time to ask them about the details of their life in the way a family member might. Students are clearly thriving socially in this environment where they are made to feel particularly important. They all seem to relate very well to each other and to the faculty."

FVLA celebrates the public recognition of these accreditation awards.

Speech Class Goes to Kindergarten

Juniors and seniors taking speech recently practiced their public speaking skills in an enjoyable and novel manner. These students had the pleasure of presenting story time to the kindergarten class at St. John's Lutheran School in Elgin. In preparation for the four days of reading stories to the children, the speech class went to the public library where they scoured the shelves for the most appealing story books they could find. After making their choices, the students practiced their reading with each other and discovered that there are more skills than they realized involved in story telling. Through this process they learned to incorporate effective story-enhancing skills into the readings they were preparing. As the stories were read to the kindergartners, the high school students saw their hard work pay off in the excitement and enthusiasm shown by the kindergarten children.



Blankets of Care

This fall brought conclusion to a service project begun last school year. Ten baby blankets and thirty full-sized blankets, all made by the willing hands of the student body, were donated to Project Linus and to Blankets of Care. To put their faith into action, the students spent hours raising money to buy the needed fabric, creating the blankets, writing letters to the recipients, wrapping the blankets, and boxing them up to be distributed.

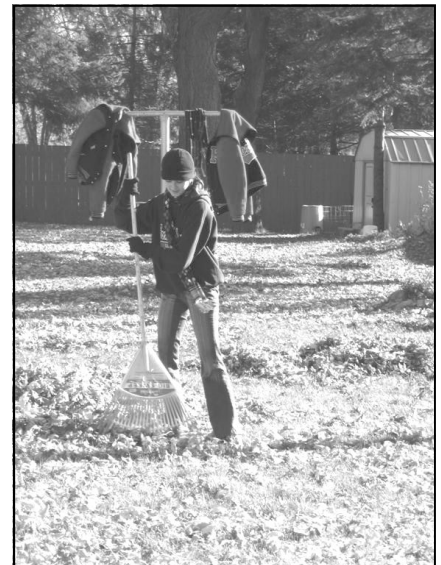
The students decided that the baby blankets would be donated to Project Linus, a nationwide project with chapters

all over the country that collects blankets for children who are hospitalized or otherwise traumatized. The full-sized blankets were given to Blankets of Care, a service project of Lutheran Church Charities where blankets are sent to Lutheran churches in the Gulf coast area. They are then donated to families who still suffer from the lasting effects of Hurricane Katrina. The students enjoyed writing personal letters to those who would receive the blankets. In those letters they had the opportunity to let the affected families know that they are still remembered and that God continues to be their shelter throughout these difficult times.

The students and faculty are excited to bring this project to completion and to have their efforts now benefit those in need. Servant leadership development is one of the school's goals for the 2006-2007 school year, and the blanket project is the first of many opportunities the students will have to be involved in service within the school and throughout the community.

Day of Giving

In early November, the students and faculty of FVLA put aside their textbooks and pencils and picked up their rakes and gardening gloves to participate in the Day of Giving, a day devoted to the service of senior citizens in the Elgin and South Elgin communities. Tasks involved in maintaining a home and yard become increasingly difficult for people desiring to stay in their own homes despite their age. Autumn's seemingly unending "battle of the leaves" is a particularly challenging time. According to Jean Rahn, FVLA's teacher who led the project development, "As we began to locate places to offer assistance, we were overwhelmed by the magnitude of the needs and by the gratitude of the seniors in the community that we serve." Initially, the names of people needing assistance were provided by Elgin's United Way Neighbor to Neighbor program, but soon it became apparent that the area churches had many people who also needed service. It is truly rewarding to see students grow by looking outside of their personal needs and desires, while at the same time providing a needed service for senior citizens.



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Volleyball Player in National Competition

Sophomore Sarah Mounger has been selected to participate in the King Kamehameha Classic volleyball tournament, a national competition which will be held in Honolulu, Hawaii, from July 10–19, 2007. Sarah has been chosen as part of a twelve member group called Team Illinois. All of the girls from ages sixteen to nineteen were identified based on talent, ability, and experience in volleyball. Sarah, who plays the positions of setter and right side hitter, has distinguished herself at FVLA as a strong athlete who displays Christian values and sportsmanship. Her volleyball career began at St. John's Lutheran School in Elgin, and she has further strengthened her skills by attending summer volleyball camps and by playing for Club Fusion, a traveling volleyball team which competes in the Tri-State area. Sarah feels that her many years of experience in ballet and tumbling have helped her to develop grace and core strength which are essential for her sport. In reaction to her selection, she summarizes, "This is an awesome opportunity that will enable me to better my skills and knowledge of volleyball while experiencing the history and culture of a very beautiful place."



FVLA Staff

Principal

Janet Zimdahl

Asst. Principal

Janet Burmeister

Teachers

Rev. Hannibal Frederick
Hannah Gurnett
David Kuhfahl
Kathy O'Connor
Jean Rahn
Peg Youngren

Support Staff

Merilee Werrbach

From The Heart of Alumni—Michele Huske ('89)

Michele Huske chose to attend Valley so that her high school experiences could provide a Christian education that taught her how to be a servant leader by applying God-given gifts and talents. After graduating from Valley in 1989, she attended Concordia University in River Forest (Chicago). The sole reason she applied to Concordia was that her teachers at Valley encouraged her to look at her talents and consider the profession of teaching. As it turned out, God's words spoken and lived by her teachers at Valley and their commitment to not only her academic growth, but more importantly her walk with God, led her to really love teaching! Michele states, "I wonder how lost I'd have been trying to 'find myself', searching for the perfect job if it weren't for Valley. There all of my teachers knew the Lord and shared their faith, there I experienced smaller class sizes, and there I built closer friendships with teachers and classmates."

Since her graduation from Concordia, she has taught in Las Vegas, the Indianapolis area, and Arlington, Texas. In those places she's been active in many activities beyond teaching including coaching, serving as athletic director, being involved with youth, writing dramas and plays, helping start a school from the very beginning, and serving an important role in the music ministry of the church. She connects her passion for music to her time at Valley, "My choir directors not only taught the music, but they encouraged me to experience what I was singing, understand it, and grow to love the variety, composers, and the art of music itself."

Michele completed her Masters degree in 2005 and looks forward to pursuing teaching at the college level. In the meantime she has returned to the place of her early education years teaching first grade at St. John's in Elgin.

... giving each student a greater opportunity to excel

Fall Activities

Fall brings a number of traditional high school events. Two of these for FVLA were the volleyball season and homecoming. This year's volleyball team was coached by Mr. Glenn Gurnett with assistance from his daughter, FVLA English teacher, Miss Hannah Gurnett. During the season there was an obvious improvement in individual skill development and team playing confidence. The teamwork exhibited by the girls both on and off the court was delightful to observe.

Homecoming has always been consistently full of activity and school spirit, and this year was no exception. Excitement surrounded the hall decorating with each class creatively transforming their assigned section of the school. Students also enjoyed the theme days which provided the opportunity to come in the special designated attire. Towards the end of the week, a new all-school speed volleyball competition brought plenty of laughter and fun. The final activities were a home volleyball game and the dance which was preceded by a dinner.

The Friday of homecoming week also marked the induction of four more students into the Venture Chapter of the National Honor Society. These inductees included senior Dennis Labaj, and juniors Tim Groskopf, Katherine Unruh, and Alicia Woock. A special ceremony was held in the church and then followed by a luncheon reception for the students and their parents.

Medieval Times

At the end of October the lords and ladies of FVLA traveled to a feast and tournament at Medieval Times. Students prepared for the outing through their studies in British literature as well as a special presentation on art in the Middle Ages. Armed with their historical knowledge, the travelers departed and made their way to the castle. Upon arrival students were led through the dungeon where they could examine various torture devices used and discuss their reactions to the unjust actions of people during that historical period. As the time for the feast approached, the excitement built. The group was welcomed by a gracious host and seated in the front two rows of the Red Knight's section. Students enjoyed a succulent feast of soup, chicken, and potato as they watched the King's horse trainer, weapons master, and falconer demonstrate their skills. After this brief display of talents, the tournament began. As the six knights took to the arena, cheers filled the air, and FVLA's students proudly waved their red banners in the air. Despite the Red Knight's early loss, the students were entranced by the performance and cheered to the end of the show. After the performance the group met the knights and even paused to take a picture with their very own Red Knight. It was a day filled with laughter and learning.

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