



FVLA Follower

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

Spring 2006

Principal's Perspective

Every person and organization lives by values whether those are stated or obvious by actions. FVLA has worked to identify the five things we most value. Creating them within our community, instilling them in the students we have, and simply living by them are very important to us.

Forgiveness - Forgiveness is God's gift of love and acceptance to us; it in turn empowers us to live our vocation as His servant. It frees us from the impossible burden of trying to earn God's pleasure. In that freedom we can look beyond our own self-centered needs and be God's servant to others.

Servanthood - Living as God's people, we are blessed to experience His touchpoints of grace and bring them alive for others. This year's theme of *Touchpoints* is based on 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.

Relationships - To value relationships is to value the importance and significance of each person created by God. Creating meaningful relationships with others assures and affirms the fact that God values each of us. One strength of the FVLA school environment is that each student is known, including both personality assets and needs. As a result, a community of caring persons can be developed as teachers reach out to meet those needs and develop those strengths, and students recognize and support one another.

Integrity - God set for us the ultimate example of integrity. He is completely honest with us and can be relied upon to keep His word and promises to us. As a school we operate with integrity as we value honesty and can be held accountable for what we promise. Along the way of their discipleship journey, we want our

students to learn, value, and live a life of integrity, holding themselves accountable to what they have promised or are expected to do.

Excellence - Continual progress towards excellence is a school priority. An ongoing improvement plan has been part of our strategic initiative for the past several years and was formalized for our accreditation visit this year. More important, continuous improvement in all areas of ministry is a way of life and how we conduct business here at FVLA. Our vision states it...*a Christ-focused discipleship experience brought alive in an outstanding learning community.* Our tagline embodies it...*giving each student a greater opportunity to excel.*

All of our values combine to give a powerful foundation for the school, a quality way to conduct the business of education, and a compelling way to train disciples of Christ.

Focus on the Staff—Hannibal Frederich

Pastor Hannibal Frederich has been an instructor and school chaplain at FVLA since 1995. In that time he has taught a variety of subjects including government, psychology, and sociology. Pastor Frederich also develops and teaches the school's theology classes. His unique approach to unit-based teaching incorporates all elements of the theology program, including the study of World Religions, Christian Ethics, and Old and New Testament, into each year's course of study. He earned his B.A. from Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne, and he

received his Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees from Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. Prior to coming to FVLA, he served as guest professor at Concordia Seminary and was pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church in St. Louis. Besides his teaching at FVLA, he presently serves as Associate Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Elgin.

Pastor Frederich originated the theme for this school year: *Touchpoints*. He launched this yearlong emphasis with an explanation of the ways God touches us with His love and forgiveness; mainly

through the means of grace. In reading 1 John 1:1 we come to understand these touchpoints of our Heavenly Father, and we become passionate to be evangelists who help others experience His love. Enlivened by God's grace, we then become a touchpoint of grace to all we meet.

We are truly grateful that the Lord has continued to lead Pastor Frederich to be an integral part of the ministry at FVLA. We pray for God's continued blessings upon him, his family, and his ministry at FVLA.

Touchpoints: Servant Leadership

Providing exciting opportunities to practice servant leadership has been a focus of this school year and is one of the goals included in FVLA's school improvement plan. Developing this service learning has helped bring alive this year's theme of *Touchpoints*. The overall purpose of instilling a servant's heart in the students provides the emphasis and the impetus for all of the activities. Mrs. Jean Rahn, teacher at FVLA and leader for the service development program, summed up the emphasis. "One of the school's goals is to get the students involved in service projects to put their faith into action."



The first major project involved FVLA students spending four days at the Thrivent-sponsored Habitat for Humanity build in Elgin where they were busy working on a variety of jobs that needed attention. Participation in Habitat has opened new experiences for those involved. Junior Dennis Labaj commented on the work he was able to do. "I not only had a sense of self-accomplishment, but thinking of how grateful others will be when the task is completed motivated me to work hard."

Following the commitment to Habitat, the students directed effort to *Project Linus* with the making of blankets for people facing challenges of illness, either physical or emotional. Student



donations amassed \$400 in money to purchase the fleece material needed to make the blankets, and the Northeast Kane County Chapter of Thrivent contributed an additional \$100. The students' goal is to complete 75 blankets by the end of the school year.

Additional service learning has become part of the curriculum. Working with area Lutheran elementary educators, FVLA teacher, Miss Hannah Gurnett, has taken high school students into the elementary classrooms to assist teachers in carrying out various learning projects. Juniors and seniors worked with Mrs. Karen Crow's fourth graders to help them design and edit their own picture books to be eventually read to Good Shepherd's kindergartners. In another project the freshmen assisted seventh graders in Mr. Zimdahl's geography class at St. John's Elgin to research a country and prepare individual Power Point presentations about that country to be presented to their classmates. These programs have helped the high school students work in another setting and develop skills that empower others to excel. Freshman Samantha Pfortmiller summed up her mentoring by saying, "It was a great experience because we learned from



each other."

Finally, the sophomore Spanish class has written and is working on the production of a play. In the process they are learning both leadership and teamwork development through all of the activities connected with the project. There is a student director and a student in charge of set design. In addition, the sophomores have made the program themselves, chosen the cast, designed the practice schedule, created expectations for the participants, written lyrics to the closing song, and choreographed the dances. This project certainly has fostered both creativity and the skills to work with others in order to carry a project through to completion. Any profit made from the play to be presented on April 8th will be donated to charity.

All of these opportunities are part of the "more" that FVLA students experience as part of the school's program.

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Lynda Ranieri
St. Peter — Schaumburg

Small Equals More

Calendar

- April 8**
Drama Presentation
- April 22**
Annual Dinner Auction
- April 25**
Prospective Student Night
- April 26**
Vocations Day
- May 5**
Prom
- May 11**
Spring Concert
- May 16**
Honors Night
- May 27**
Graduation

While FVLA might be of small size, all associated with the school have learned to appreciate that here small means *more*.

Students and parents are quick to identify the individual attention given as being a major reason students excel at FVLA. Sarah Mounger, a freshman, says, "My teachers can see if there is an academic problem and find a way to help." Sophomore transfer Aaron Orzechowski states that he "doesn't feel lost in anything." He also adds that he was "surprised at all we can get done. I thought with fewer teachers there would be less progress. This isn't the case."

Miss Hannah Gurnett, English teacher, enjoys both the challenges and the rewards of teaching in a small school. "I can honestly say that I know all of my students—not only their names, but their interests, talents, struggles, even their friends and families." All of that background allows teachers to enhance and supplement their lessons to match the interest and ability of individual students.

Another *more* available at FVLA is that each student can become involved in athletics, music, drama, and student government, and students have more of a say in what is offered. Sophomore Tim Groskopf has an interest in movie directing. This year he has helped write a play in which he is also directing and acting.

An interesting *more* of social life is to build relationships with a greater variety of people. Georgiana Ismail, a freshman, says, "The kind of people I had stereotyped were not the way I imagined them to be. They turned out to be great friends." Another freshman, Tegan Pfortmiller states, "Being part of a small school has allowed me to interact with not just freshmen, but all the other classes as well." In her third year of high school, Jennifer Groskopf says being in a small setting has "forced me to socialize with all types of different people, people I would have never realized could be my friends."

The final *more* involves spiritual growth. Students have more opportunity to have their faith-life questions answered or their doubts put to rest. The sense of community is evident on a daily basis where Christian love and care attends to the needs of others.

Just as in the feeding of the five thousand, when Jesus used a small lunch to feed a crowd, here at FVLA the Lord empowers a small school to provide *more* than can be commonly found...more opportunity for academic success, more chances for involvement, more variety in friendships, and through all of these the Holy Spirit is at work growing disciples of Christ.

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

From The Heart of Alumni Jim Pfortmiller ('86)

Before Jim Pfortmiller's graduation from Valley, he attended St. John's Lutheran School in Elgin from kindergarten through eighth grade. Following his high school years he continued his education at Waubensee Community College until he entered the United States Air Force, serving from 1988-1992.

The importance of his high school years is captured in Jim's own words. "Valley has greatly influenced my life because of the Christ-centered education that I received. The faculty and students would not let you fail because someone was always there with a helping hand and a kind word. That support helped me remember that all things are possible only with the help of God. Due to the smaller class sizes, the faculty was able to have more one on one time with the student body which equates to better understanding of the subject matter, more practical knowledge, and

higher test scores for the student. The smaller class sizes also allowed us as students to get to know each other on a more personal basis which then helped us care for and respond to one another just as a family would. This closeness made it possible for us to build life-long friendships."

"I have to thank my parents for setting the foundation for my brothers and for me. The Holy Spirit has worked through them as he is also now working through my wife and me. Proverbs 22:6 is so important – *Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.*"

Jim and his wife Lisa are members of St. John's Lutheran Church in Elgin where Jim is an elder. They have two daughters: Samantha, who is currently a freshman at FVLA, and Megan, who is in seventh grade at St. John's.

... giving each student a greater opportunity to excel

Development Activities Gather Support

Very Successful Campaigns Completed Annual Dinner Auction Approaches

Development opportunities during the first half of the school year motivated a variety of donors to provide significant financial resources to the school's ministry. Both the Walkathon and the Year End Appeal generated over \$20,000 in revenue apiece.

In September the annual Walkathon gave opportunity for the students and faculty to unite in connecting donors to the school who would not at any other time be supportive or knowledgeable of FVLA and its program. Relatives, neighbors, and co-workers of school families responded in support for the Walkathon as did annual faithful donors. Maximizing the fundraising potential was the benevolent support of Thrivent both through chapter gifts and individual donor matches.

A new record total of over \$25,000 was the result of the Year End Appeal. Contributors were given the choice to support items on the school's wish list or give to the ministry's general operating expenses. Responses from the donors generously supported both sets of needs. It is astounding and cause for significant gratitude for God's goodness as it repeatedly becomes apparent what the people of God can do when motivated by His love to do His ministry.

FVLA's 22nd annual dinner auction will be held on Saturday, April 22nd, at St. Andrew's Country Club in West Chicago with the evening's activities revolving around the theme *Make a Joyful Noise*. The excitement begins at 4:30 P.M. with the silent auction. This offers a great time for fellowship and gives attendees the chance to stroll through the auction arena and bid on an inviting array of donated gifts. At 6:00 a delicious beef and chicken combo dinner will be served while silent auction bidding continues. The culmination of the evening features the live auction at 8:00.

More than 200 supporters of Lutheran ministry annually attend this event. Alumni from over 30 graduating classes of Valley join both current and alumni parents along with others supportive of this Lutheran secondary education in enjoying a truly delightful evening together. For those who cannot attend, advertising in the auction booklet or donating items for bidding proves very helpful to the overall success of this important fundraiser. Further information on how to donate or to make a reservation for the \$50 per person ticket can be made by calling the school office at 847-468-8207 or downloading the auction flier from www.fvla.com.

Contact FVLA at:

Fox Valley Lutheran Academy
220 Division Street
Elgin, IL 60120

Tel. 847-468-8207
Fax 847-742-2930

Website: www.fvla.com
Email: info@fvla.com

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Fox Valley Lutheran Academy

220 Division Street
Elgin, IL 60120



**Annual
Dinner
Auction
April 22**

Non-Profit
Organization
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