



# FVLA Follower

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

Spring 2007

## Principal's Perspective

Looking into the future and seeing a vision of vitality in school and offering stimulates actions taken today. Seeing a building built, a school serving the church and community, and a faculty daily leading students to a more solid relationship with their Creator is all part of that active vision. Regardless of whether we look far into the future or walk into the classrooms of FVLA today, faith building is where we must start because all else has little meaning unless that is first true. It is the foundation upon which we build our lives and establish this educational ministry.

Next a pursuit of excellence in providing a quality Christian education is imperative. Every Lutheran school ascribes to that belief. The question for each must become...what can this school do better than any other that will set them apart and move them towards being great? In pondering that, I am convinced that this Lutheran high school can give **Better Opportunity. More Growth.**

In a society that values *more* of everything, the lists of possessions and desires become long; however, a certain shallowness results. Talk to anyone and see how, when reflecting, they say that is true. Depth is lacking in many people in their commitments, work ethics, and relationships. We are a society surrounded with *more* opportunities everywhere, but they aren't *better* opportunities. High school students don't need more distractions of shallow pursuits; instead, they need nurturing and encouragement. They need connection to God and calm, confident servant leaders to surround them. They need to be taught teamwork and leadership and be motivated to work hard and to persevere so that they may learn and grow. Those are things that Valley is doing right now and is committed to develop in exemplary manner in the future. Our leadership development program is already yielding astounding results in the confidence of our students to lead others

and in awareness and respect shown. Courses are taught that address these skills. Opportunities are given to practice them. What is the result from this **Better Opportunity?** Students are showing **More Growth** in areas that count. They are developing as servant leaders who are serving as counselors for younger students at a weekend retreat or bringing joy and assistance to senior citizens who know that what the students are learning is what really is most important in life.

The future is without limit. Commitment to providing that **Better Opportunity** is driving the quality and distinctiveness this Lutheran high school does and will provide. The many students that will be drawn to that **Better Opportunity** will exhibit **More Growth**. That is our heritage, that is our future...that is what we are presently doing. You'll find evidence of it in the articles you read in this edition of the Follower.

## Focus on the Staff—Hannah Gurnett

Miss Hannah Gurnett is currently in her third year at FVLA having started in the fall of 2004 following her graduation from Concordia University Wisconsin with a B.A. in English. For her, the most important aspect of teaching is making students active participants in their learning. She brings this philosophy to the activities and projects in each of her classes, hoping to equip her students with the ability to process, think, and apply what they have learned beyond the classroom.

At FVLA she teaches all English and literature classes as well as a speech course she has created. Beyond her classroom responsibilities, she has served as school photographer and yearbook editor, as well as assistant volleyball coach and director of the Student Ambassador Leadership Team.

Hannah is currently planning her wedding to Pete Froehlich, who is a history and art teacher. The two met at Concordia University Wisconsin where they will be married in September.

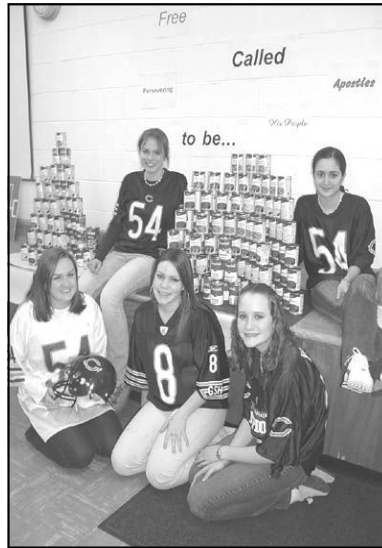
## Empowerment Through Servant Leadership

FVLA dedicates itself to empowering students as servant leaders. The school's mission is to prepare individuals to live their vocation as disciples of Christ in service to God and to others. Building upon the foundation of God's action towards us, the program works to bring alive the current school year theme of *Called to be...* Teaching about vocation and calling is receiving special emphasis with monthly chapel themes further developing the topic along with a theology class end-of-semester emphasis on the doctrine of vocation.

Working beyond teaching vocation, the school's curriculum offers classes that focus on teamwork building and leadership skill development. Several of John Maxwell's books are required reading as the students not only learn these skills formally but also are engaged in experiential activities that help them realize the importance of teamwork and serving others. Jan Burmeister, assistant principal and developer of the leadership curriculum states, "Using Maxwell's book on teamwork has had a tremendous impact on our student body. Students are beginning to more clearly see others and not just themselves. As they become more aware

are willing to do to help."

Specific activities which have helped realize student potential include opportunities for individuals to be involved in making decisions by choosing where to direct the service efforts. Members of the Student Activities Council raised money, bought, and sent personal supplies to



of others and their needs, they also become more service-minded. We've found that teaching leadership skills to a servant-minded person gives them inner confidence, and we are amazed at what they

soldiers in Iraq. The National Honor Society annually sponsors a "Souper Bowl" in which cans of food are donated to the local food pantry. Many students have volunteered to work throughout the year at sports tournaments, in recruiting work, and on numerous other committees. Assisting with the kindergarten class at St. John's Lutheran School in Elgin was both meaningful and enjoyable to the high school students. Finally, all students participated in FVLA's "Day of Giving", a day in which students and faculty raked and did a variety of yard work tasks for senior citizens who need help in maintaining their homes. A follow-up spring activity serving senior citizens is currently being planned.

These programs, projects, and activities help FVLA realize its goal of equipping young adults with the confidence and skills to become Christian leaders in the workplace and community, lay leaders in the church, and professional church workers, thereby making them influential in the global community.

### FVLA Staff

#### Principal

Janet Zimdahl

#### Asst. Principal

Janet Burmeister

#### Teachers

Rev. Hannibal Frederich

Hannah Gurnett

David Kuhfahl

Kathy O'Connor

Jean Rahn

Peg Youngren

#### Support Staff

Merilee Werrbach

### Things New

Newness is always exciting, and there are several things that have a new look around FVLA. The school information packet has been redesigned and printed in two colors to upgrade quality and give a clearer representation of FVLA to prospective families. Included in the latest packet is the newly-initiated scholarship program which offers financial aid for potential students who excel in the areas of academics and leadership or show commitment to be future leaders in the church.

Besides bringing a contemporary look to the school information packet, the administration, staff, and Board of Directors have worked together to fine tune the vision, philosophy, values, and mission statements to provide the solid foundation and dynamic force behind the ministry.

The school's website has also been redesigned. It now includes daily prayer requests for FVLA and other area ministries, and it is loaded with pictures that bring alive the school year theme and the activities in which students participate. Visit the site at [www.fvla.com](http://www.fvla.com) to view the vitality of the program.

*Fox Valley Lutheran Academy...*

## Students Lead Middle School Retreat



FVLA recently sponsored a weekend retreat at Walcamp for area middle school students. Sixteen sixth, seventh, and eighth graders from five different schools attended the event planned and organized by Hannah Gurnett, Valley's English teacher. Three current FVLA students and two alumni served as counselors who led the group in Bible studies, small group activities, and discussions of the theme "Called to be..." A special feature of the weekend was the Group Initiatives Course which was led by Walcamp director, Deon Hull, a 1982 Valley graduate who enjoyed serving a special role in an event sponsored by his alma mater.

1 Corinthians 7:23-24 was the basis for the Bible studies and gave the younger students a chance to see the high school leaders live their faith and realize how important sharing that faith is. By experiencing trust and community building activities, those who attended formed new friendships. One eighth grader summed her reaction up by saying, "This has been the best weekend of my life."

The high school students also experienced a wonderful opportunity to put into action the concepts they have learned in their leadership class. Comments from the student leaders included, "It was a great opportunity to openly share my faith with younger students and influence them in a positive way." "I really appreciated the chance to be a leader for God and help the students know God in a different way." "It was so awesome to see the rules of John Maxwell in action and discuss with Walcamp's director building teamwork and developing leadership."

Since FVLA is dedicated to giving its students meaningful opportunities to experience growth as servant leaders, this event served as another chance to bring these experiences to life. Hannah Gurnett summed up her impression of the impact the high school leaders had by saying, "They are amazing leaders, truly blessed by God. To watch them lead a Bible study and see how their whole being showed their love for the Lord was astounding."

FVLA is grateful to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for their monetary assistance in supporting the weekend. Their grant made it possible to keep costs affordable for those who attended.



## From The Heart of Alumni Alan Loeb ('85)

Alan Loeb is a 1985 VLHS graduate. He and his wife Kristi are members of Lord of Life Church in LaFox, IL. After his graduation from high school, he received a degree in business management from Concordia University. Since then, he has been involved with a number of different businesses, most recently as a financial associate with Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Alan is the newest member of the FVLA Board of Directors and reflects on his high school experience, connecting it with the need today for continued development of a strong Lutheran high school in the Fox Valley area.

*"Twenty-two years ago I was in my last semester at Valley Lutheran High School.*

*Ronald Reagan was President, the Love Boat was still on T.V., I-88 was Illinois Rt. 5, and the Bears had never played in a Super Bowl. I don't have accurate numbers, but my guess is that the Fox Valley area is almost twice as populated as it was then. Through all the changes that have come over the years, some things are still the same. I believe we still have, and always will have, the need for a Christ centered, quality high school education. Many graduates of Valley Lutheran/Fox Valley are now teaching the next generation about the importance of a quality Christian education. I remain in contact with quite a few of my classmates. Although the years have aged us, I couldn't be more proud of who these people have become.*

*I believe that the person I am today and the morals and ethics that I have were strongly influenced in my time spent at Valley. Although we may not have had a vast course selection, state of the art amenities, or the area's premier sports venues, we had something public schools could not offer. We had a faculty and staff committed to teaching young people to become leaders of men, loving spouses, caring parents, and witnesses to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

*I pray the Lord continues to bless this institution with people committed to teaching His word and ready to mold future leaders in our community."*

*... giving each student a greater opportunity to excel*

## Seminar Job Shadow Privilege

Seminar 2 is a new course offered this year for all juniors and seniors. Part of the curriculum for the first semester included researching various colleges and professions. Students spent some time on [lutherancolleges.org](http://lutherancolleges.org) which is a web site that highlights information about Lutheran higher education. Simultaneously, students studied websites which compared various professions of interest, noting the coursework or majors they required, and taking some tests to learn about their personality traits.

Following these activities, students were given the unique privilege to set up and spend a half day shadowing someone who was currently doing a job that interested them. Junior, Katherine Unruh (Immanuel, Dundee) commented "I got a chance to see the entire environment." Matt Thilk (Immanuel, Bartlett) stated that "I met brand new people, was exposed to an office environment, and was able to speak computer lingo." "I learned that there are a lot more things to jobs than expected" was the response of Tim Groskopf (St. John's, Algonquin). Junior Alicia Woock (St. John's, Elgin) can't wait to go again "because it was an awesome day that gave me a whole new way of looking at my future."

## Annual Dinner Auction Approaches

FVLA's 23rd annual dinner auction will be held on Saturday, April 21st, at St. Andrew's Country Club in West Chicago with the evening's activities revolving around the theme *Building for Tomorrow*. The excitement begins at 4:30 P.M. with the silent auction. This offers a wonderful time for fellowship and gives attendees the chance to stroll through the auction arena and bid on a great 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 an update for all attendees on the school's future plans followed by the excitement of the live auction.

More than 200 supporters of Lutheran ministry annually attend this event. Alumni from over 30 graduating classes of the school join both current and alumni parents, along with others supportive of Lutheran secondary education, in finding the dinner to be a most enjoyable time. For those who cannot attend, advertising in the auction booklet or donating items for bidding is 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.

### Contact FVLA at:

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## Spring 2007

### *Fox Valley Lutheran Academy*

220 Division Street  
Elgin, IL 60120



**Annual  
Dinner  
Auction  
April 21**

Non-Profit  
Organization  
**U.S. Postage  
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