



FVLA Follower

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

Summer 2008

Principal's Perspective

Newness. Excitement. Passion. Energy. All of these words describe developments in recent months towards designing the future of Lutheran secondary education in the Fox River Valley. Leaders here are responding to the call to plan and initiate progress to develop a school of vision for this area.

A major step in planning has been taken by engaging the services of consultant Mr. Paul Brandt of New Horizons Ministry Consulting in Scottsdale, Arizona. Together with input from area leaders, the vision for a new school that truly meets the needs of the 21st Century learner is being shaped.

What this educational program will specifically value is being carefully studied. A talented and diverse group of people have been involved on a vision task force that is working with Mr. Brandt and the school's chief administrator during the summer months. Included in this group are Jan Burmeister, FVLA assistant principal, and Terry Pfortmiller, chairman of the FVLA Board of Directors and a member of the first four-year graduating class of Valley in 1978. Additional group participants are Kurt Claussner and Ann Short Lesh, also both Valley alumns. Kurt is a member of St. John's Elgin, and Ann leads small group ministry at Good Shepherd Elgin while also currently serving on the FVLA Board of Directors. Bringing wisdom from diverse perspectives and completing this talented group are John Baermann from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Batavia, Dan Tresemer from Rejoice Lutheran Church in Geneva, and Mark Kamrath, who was one of the original staff members of Valley Lutheran

High School when it opened. He is now an instructor of mathematics at the Illinois Math and Science Academy in Aurora.

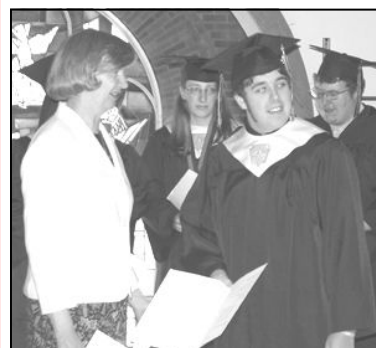
The vision task force met the first week of June to examine the school of vision's emerging values, discuss them, and consider how those values would drive the compelling vision that will shape the planning. The discussion was electrifying as the group shared their passion and wisdom, hopes and direction for the new school. Suggestions that arose from the group work are being used to shape a vision draft, which the group will discuss in August when Mr. Brandt returns for another session of work.

During the first week of June, the consultant also spent several days meeting with a sampling of Lutheran pastors and principals in the Valley to garner their input and suggestions on the direction that planning should take. All input received has been very valuable and extremely helpful.

As the vision is completed in August, basic strategic and business plans will be worked out to propel progress on developing this sustainable model of education. Completion of that phase of work is planned for September 2008. Look for, in the months ahead, updates on work being done and exciting announcements as plans are formed and progress develops.

God has called us to be participants in planning and developing an educational program that is visionary and will truly meet the needs that students have in the years to come. Yes, newness, excitement, passion, and energy, offered by God's grace, are all part of this call.

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Year End Excitement

Prom

Prom was held the first week of May, providing not only a special evening of enjoyment, but also a week of fun-filled activities. This year's theme, *Time of Your Life*, inspired a daily focus relating to time. These included bedtime, summertime, game time, and a time to pray. Students dressed in appropriate attire for each of these days' activities. The day before prom, which was the National Day of Prayer, found students in matching red t-shirts that commemorated the importance of the day for Christians all across the country. That evening, a bonfire held on Valley's property site provided a wonderful time of fellowship. Parents grilled hot dogs as everyone gathered around the bonfire to eat and visit. The week's culminating activity, the prom itself, was held in the idyllic setting of Lord's Park. Parent peek, a prom tradition, gave families an opportunity to take pictures and witness the coronation of the king and queen.



turing their contributions to high school life during their time at FVLA, along with the formal announcement of their post high school plans and scholarship awards. Unique this year was the opportunity to hear the seniors share experiences from their trip to New Orleans along with highlights of all the service projects done by the school during the preceding months.

Graduation

The culmination of the school year was the graduation ceremony for the Class of 2008. The event was a joyous celebration of the accomplishments of a class who has provided exemplary leadership for the school by setting good examples in a variety of areas for others to follow. Salutatorian Alicia Woock welcomed all who came. Later, after the presentation of diplomas, Valedictorian Katherine Unruh reminded those in attendance that "no matter how many things are changing around us, God never changes, never goes away, never leaves us, and never ever stops loving us. No matter how many people we meet in life, or are separated from, we know that God will always be there. And even if we take it for granted now, I pray that some day it might be a saving reminder to us: No matter how much the world around us changes, God will always be there, steadfast as ever." Following the ceremony, family and friends congratulated the graduates, enjoyed refreshments, and were treated to a video remembrance of the class created by Tim Groskopf.



Concert

During the week following prom, the choir presented their annual spring concert. Under the direction of Mrs. Peg Youngren, the choral performers prepared a variety of secular and spiritual music for the enjoyment of the audience. Full choir performances along with featured solos and small group presentations brought variety to the evening. Following the concert, everyone gathered in fellowship over refreshments as they admired a display of student art work prepared by the second semester art class.

Honors Night

An annual tradition is the Honors and Awards Dinner, which occurred during the week preceding graduation. This event was held at The Hickory Stick in Elgin. The evening celebrated publicly the individual accomplishments of students in the areas of athletics, academics, activities, and service. A special highlight of the event was the recognition of each senior, fea-



Class of 2008

Fox Valley Lutheran Academy...

Spanish Students Teach First Graders

Once per week for the last three months of the school year, FVLA Spanish students planned and taught their own Spanish lessons to the first graders of St. John's Lutheran School in Elgin. Coming up with ideas on how to get the concepts across, devising ways to accommodate individual learning needs, and adjusting plans when necessary were all part of the unique experience for the students. Throughout the process, it was amazing to watch the bond develop between the high school students and the younger students they taught.



Mrs. Jean Rahn, FVLA Spanish teacher who directed the program, summed up what she felt was so beneficial about the project. "It was tremendously gratifying to me to

see our FVLA Spanish students develop into real teachers who were able to identify the needs of their first grade students and develop materials and lessons which were appropriate for them. Both the "big kids" and the first graders anxiously looked forward to their Spanish lessons, and this day became the focal point of the week for both groups. A feeling of trust, respect, and friendship developed between the two groups as they grew in ways that neither I nor Michele Huske, the first grade teacher, ever expected!"

This is another one of the unique opportunities that FVLA offers to empower the leaders of tomorrow to be disciples of Christ serving God and others.

Seniors Share Impact of New Orleans Servant Event

In January four FVLA seniors joined members of a variety of Northern Illinois District congregations to spend a week rebuilding houses and churches in New Orleans. The experience had its special impact on each one of them as is illustrated by the stories shared in their own words.

Katherine Unruh:

The personal experience that I received when we went to New Orleans was nothing that I could have come close to in the classroom. I would encourage anyone to take the opportunity and go to New Orleans – or any mission trip – if they ever get the chance. The least it can do is open your eyes to a world you didn't know before – and there is no telling what kind of impact it can have on others, or your faith. This trip will continuously remind me that if you don't take the plunge, and try something new – you'll have no idea what you are missing out on. Just trust God – and He'll lead you to all the best places!

Alicia Woock:

This was one of the greatest things I've ever done in my entire life. When Hurricane Katrina hit, it was all over the news for a while and really had no direct affect on me. But, when I arrived there and heard stories of people who survived the hurricane, I realized that I have life pretty easy. I can't even begin to imagine how people get through events like this. The experience has changed me. I think differently, and I'm more aware of other things going on around me. Two images stick with me from the trip, the first being a boat. There was a parking lot we passed every time we came or went to camp. Weeds were growing in the parking lot that had a chain fence around the property. There was a Firestone building with glass for the front of the store, and one window was shattered with a small hole in the window. In the center of it all was a boat sitting on its side. This

was just so odd to me that after two years, nobody had taken time to take away the boat. The second image was at a house where I was hooking up an outlet. I looked out the window in the mud and saw some Legos just peeking through. They were toys of the children who had lived there and are now in a different state because their house was entirely destroyed except for the frame.

Tim Groskopf:

Going down to New Orleans was definitely a once in a life time experience! The major event that stands out in my head is going to church Sunday morning. This church was a really small southern church next to Camp Restore. While the congregation without visitors was tiny, it was overflowing with all of us there. When we all prayed the Lord's Prayer, it was an eye opener. Hearing all those people from across the country joining in on the same prayer made me realize that Christianity is bigger than just the region we live in. Even though we live 15 hours away from them, we share the common bond of hopes, sorrows, dreams, and joys.

Trisha Parker:

Looking back at the trip to New Orleans I find it amazing. Our team's task for the week was to rebuild the altar of a church. They had a picture of what it looked like before the storm, and they wanted it as similar as possible. When we finished nailing all the boards up to the wall and had the chance to look at the final project, it amazed me. Right there it hit me that, when the members of that church see their old altar back, a little piece of their life is put back together again. Their hope of having a normal life becomes more clear. It felt wonderful to be part of something as strong as that.

... giving each student a greater opportunity to excel

Tech Appeal

Celebrating a successful school year motivates planning for the coming year. As FVLA examines ways to expand learning opportunities for students, priority has been given to making additional technology tools available. A new school laptop will diversify the presentation capability for staff and students. Replacing one of the office computers will expand the capacity for creative publication development, and a new color laser printer will help produce envisioned promotional material. As appeal funds provide additional financial resources, the purchase and installation of a SMART board in one of the classrooms is planned. Coupled with the leadership provided by one of our staff members pursuing a master's degree in technology, this device will give limitless connection to global learning opportunities and improve the way educational material is presented.

Donors who invest some of their gift dollars in this appeal will serve an important role in heightening student curiosity by facilitating their ability to access information and produce quality presentations about what they've discovered. This is a wonderful opportunity to empower the leaders of tomorrow by equipping them with both the skills they need and the foundation of faith necessary to impact the families, churches, and communities in which they will live. Gifts can be sent to the school and marked **Tech Appeal**. Thank you to all who help!

Auction Success

The 24th annual dinner auction was held on April 19th at the Holiday Inn in Elgin. 161 Valley supporters attended, enjoyed a fine meal with delightful fellowship, and listened to visionary plans for the future while raising important funds for the school. After all matching dollars for individual donations are received, along with Thrivent chapter matches, the final profit for the evening will be about \$38,000. FVLA is especially grateful to the Thrivent Care in Regions program which donated \$2,500 in support of the event. A sincere thank you is also given to all whose hard work, planning, and attendance made the occasion so successful.

Next year's auction will be a very special evening as it marks the 25th anniversary of this annual event. Planning has already begun with the auction committee choosing April 18, 2009 as the date and The Centre of Elgin as the place for this extraordinary evening of celebration. Those who have been involved with Valley over the years will want to mark this date on their calendar as the school commemorates how its 35 year tradition meets a new and very stimulating vision for the future.

Help shape the planning of this important event. Plan now to attend and gather a group of friends to come along; then indicate a willingness to assist by calling the school office at 847-468-8207.

Contact FVLA at:

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Summer 2008

Fox Valley Lutheran Academy

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**First day
of class:
Aug. 21, 2008**

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