



April 2009

## Hats off to Lutheran Schools!

Recently, I had the privilege to share an afternoon with the students and teachers of St. Paul Lutheran School in Fort Dodge, IA. It was a privilege! It brought back many happy memories of my eight years at Zion Lutheran School in Linn, KS and my years of teaching at St. Paul – Immanuel Lutheran School in Whittemore, IA.

If you want to be where the action is, go to a Lutheran school. Part of the joy is that in every class and part of every daily activity, the love of Jesus can be shared.

First of all, a little quiz for you (you knew that was coming since I was a classroom teacher)

1. How many Lutheran schools are in Iowa District West?
2. Where are the schools located?
3. How many students attend the schools?
4. How many staff?
5. How many Lutheran preschools are in Iowa District West?
6. How many preschoolers are blessed to attend a Lutheran school in IDW?



As part of National Lutheran Schools Week, I was invited by Principal Gene Sommerfeld to lead a hands-on mission outreach with students and teachers in grades 3-8.



I was excited to learn that the staff and students of St. Paul Lutheran School have adopted the mission project of raising \$1,700 for the building supplies for a house in Mexico. I have had the privilege of going to Mexico and helping with the building of two such houses. I am happy that because of the generosity of St. Paul's students and teachers, a family in Mexico will have a new house and better living conditions. That is an amazing gift for a family.

After sharing some experiences I had in helping to build houses in Mexico, we focused on beads and leather. In nearly two hours our happy hands transformed 5,600 beads and 1,200 feet of leather strips into 800 witness bracelets.

The students were taught what each of the colors of the beads represents. At one point in the afternoon, they role played and practiced sharing the information.

It was interesting to see how each table of students worked together to streamline the process and to hear them share their excitement.

After making their first bracelet, they prayed and asked God to bring to mind someone with whom they could share a witness bracelet. In the end, each was given the opportunity to take up to five bracelets to share with family and friends.

The remainder of the bracelets will be distributed at the Clay County and Iowa State Fairs, and to children in Los Angeles and Mexico.



The students of grades 7-8 offered to make another 200 so there will be total 1,000 made. What an outreach! Hundreds of people will learn about the love of Jesus because of these 1,000 bracelets and many St. Paul students had the opportunity to personally witness to their family and friends.

As a follow up, Principal Sommerfeld asked the students with whom they shared their witness.

He reported that one boy witnessed to two neighbors. One of the neighbors is dying of cancer and is on hospice care. Other students said that they shared with their bus driver, Boy Scout leader, confirmation instructor, cousins and neighbors.



P.S. How did you do on the quiz? If you answered all the questions correctly, let me know. I'll send you a big smiley face sticker. ☺

1. Nine Lutheran schools in Iowa District West
2. Trinity, Boone; Clarinda; Zion, Denison; Mt. Olive, Des Moines; St. Paul, Fort Dodge; Zion-St. John, Paullina; St. Paul, Sioux City; Iowa Great Lakes, Spencer and Concordia, Storm Lake
3. These nine schools serve over 800 students
4. Approximately 60 teachers (full and part-time) and administrators.
5. 50 early childhood/preschool ministries
6. Approximately 1500 children

George Barna, who conducts a market research firm specializing in studying the religious beliefs and behavior of Americans, indicates that if a child does not know Jesus as Savior by the time they are thirteen, there is likelihood that they will never know Him. The childhood years are indeed God's window.

Remember to *“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it”* (Proverbs 22:5-7).

Ellie Menz ([ellie.menz@idwlcms.org](mailto:ellie.menz@idwlcms.org) - 515-386-8420)