

## Annual Fund Development

Stacy Hoeft, Director of School Ministries, Van Lunen Fellow 2012-13

Living Word Lutheran School, Rochester, MI

[www.livword.net](http://www.livword.net)

Consultant: Don Distelberg



### What I did:

Living Word Lutheran School is a PK-8 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod school serving about 150 students in Rochester, MI. The school has been a ministry of Living Word Lutheran Church since 2003. Living Word Lutheran Church and School carries a \$5 million mortgage debt and has no reserve money. Many of our students come to Living Word in need of financial aid, but in recent years that has not been possible. An annual fund development was necessary to make funding available specifically for scholarships, not to go to the general fund.

*The Noah Fund* was developed as an annual financial development plan (AFDP). Just as Noah was called, and so heeded that call, to prepare for the future, the people of Living Word Church and School have been called for the same purpose. This AFDP was structured to put money in reserves to provide financial aid for deserving families of the future.

### What did I learn?

In the past five years our church and school has had to make some very difficult decisions. We have implemented a reduction in force, entered into a capital campaign, and seen a decline in enrollment. Asking people to contribute towards an annual fund is difficult in a church and school that is so very young (both in ministry and congregants) and who has also been operating in “survival mode”. Living Word has no “old money” and our alumni are only in high school and college. However, this process made it clear that there *are* people within the church and school community and the community-at-large who are willing to donate towards a specific purpose when relationships are cultivated. Relationships take time though, so this will be an ongoing process involving numerous people involved in the work.

### What Difference Did It Make?

- Created an AFDP, now known as *The Noah Fund* to be driven primarily by the Director of School Ministries with the support of the Board of Education.
- *The Noah Fund* provided direction in embracing new fundraising strategies for the school, including personal solicitation, special events, and mail appeals.
- Raised \$45,000 of a \$53,000 goal.
- Established relationships with donors who will continue to be partners.
- The tuition of at least ten students will be supported by this effort.