
History of School Health Services

Created with the efforts & support of members of the Alumni LSN

In September of 1988, the original grant proposal was submitted to the Lutheran Charities Foundation (now the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis) as a joint effort of the Alumni Association of the Lutheran Medical Center School of Nursing (now Alumni Association of the Lutheran School of Nursing [LSN]) and the St. Louis County Lutheran Principals.

The leading force from the Alumni Association was Viola Kuecker, LSN class of 1946. She found that the St. Louis City Health Department provided many services to the parochial school students in the city limits, but St. Louis County provided none. Some schools had mothers who were willing to volunteer time to develop a recordkeeping system for the school's health information and provide occasional first aid and advice, but there was little organization or support for these schools and volunteers.

There were multiple people who supported her efforts: Larry Brown, Principal; Duane Hingst, Director of Schools for the LCMS; Pat Stelzer, LSN class of 1947; Harold Melzer; and Barbara Reitz, RN, LSN class of 1965. This list names only a few. The first grant written was not approved, but this determined group strengthened the proposal and won approval and funding in November of 1990. With that accomplished, they marched forward with enrolling schools and hiring; the school year of 1991-1992 was the first year for the program in the Lutheran grade schools.

At that time the Lutheran Charities Foundation provided a grant of \$80,000 for the preparation phase and year one. For the first number of years the Foundation kindly supported this program; however, as with most grants, we were expected to become self-supporting over the years.

The schools that contract for nursing services via the program now have to provide most of the support costs. We make every effort to keep the costs under control and yet pay our nurses a fair wage.



Viola "Vi" (Kassel) Kuecker ('46)

“I remember serving as chairman of the committee that developed the initial proposal for a School Health Nursing Program, with paid staff, in the Lutheran elementary and preschool classes of St. Louis County; this is now well-established.”

— Vi Kuecker, 2013

To help with these costs we provide CPR/AED instructions to our non-member churches and schools for a fee. We are further supported by generous funding from the Missouri District Office in exchange for consultation to the non-member and out-state schools.

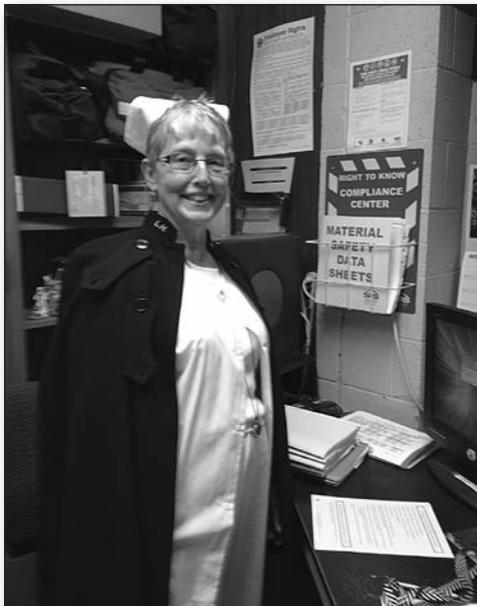
Lori Christiansen recently wrote a grant application for a dental health program but had no success getting funding.

Also, we are greatly helped by the support from our Alumni Association. This legacy that you have created is something for all of you to take pride in.

School Health Services News

We now work under the wing of the Lutheran Association for Special Education (LASE) and have a dedicated School Health Services Advisory Committee. This committee is comprised of Dennis Gehrke, Director of Missouri District Lutheran Schools and the Chairperson; Janet Leet, Christ Community Lutheran School Elementary Principal; Jana Meyer, RN; Judy Ruf, Treasurer of LASE; and Judy Kupferle, Director of School Health Services.

This committee has worked together to review and improve the job description of our School Nurses; do an annual review document; create the job description for the Director of the School Health Program; and produce an annual review document for this position. We have also just completed a policy manual for the program.



Judy Ott Kupferle dressed for a 60's day at school to celebrate an anniversary of the school.



Next we plan to improve our system of accountability at the LASE office and look into the issues to be addressed as our preschools are greatly expanding. Also, we need to develop a succession plan for the Director's position and/or for building up leaders from within.

We have several schools that have shown an interest in joining the program and others that hope to increase their nursing hours (schools can contract for various hours of nursing service, as suits their budget constraints). Even with the tight budgets our schools have, they place great value on the program and its nurses and services.

I hope this helps you understand what a great program you are all a part of as members of the Alumni Association of the Lutheran School of Nursing.

Thank you all very much,

Judy Kupferle, *Class of 1964*
Director of School Health Services