

Diverse Paths Lead Students to CHS



HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

by Rev. Dr. Wayne Wilke
Director Concordia House Studies

Students at the Concordia House of Studies (CHS) arrive at different times in their lives, having traveled different paths before they reach the decision to begin taking classes. The people and events that influence their decision are also diverse. As you read about this month's featured student, note how God worked in her life to lead her. Like several

other CHS students, Kate Walker was involved in a Christian mission/service project that had a strong influence on her spiritual formation.

This month I have asked Kate Walker to share her story. Kate was born in Louisville, KY, but moved to Maryland, and then to Jacksonville, FL during her early elementary school years. She graduated from Stanton College Prep High in 2001. In Fall of that year, she enrolled at Concordia University in Austin, Texas.

Kate moved back to Florida to complete her college education at the University of Central Florida, where she could also enroll in the Concordia House of Studies. This move also made it possible for her to participate in a short term mission trip to Tanzania, Africa with members of her home church, Grace Lutheran in Jacksonville. Kate will complete her college education at UCF in 2006 and will also receive her Lutheran Teacher Diploma through CHS.

Kate, what led you to begin taking courses with the Concordia House of Studies?

Really I believe that it was all in God's plans for me to be enrolled in CHS. I began studying to be a full time church worker in Austin and even when circumstances changed, God kept opening doors for me to be able to fulfill what he has set out for me to do.

Who were the people that influenced you to make this decision?

Again, there was really no one direct person who influenced me to make the decision to enroll in CHS. I feel that it was another avenue that God was providing for me showing me that he still wanted me to continue down the path that he had set out for me and that his plans concerning my life had not changed.

What led you to make the decision to enter full-time church work? What factors informed your decision that the Lord is calling you into full-time service as a Lutheran Teacher?

While I was in Texas I was studying to be a Director of Christian Education (DCE).

During school I got a job at a nearby church as their DCE. At this time I was also an assistant in a pre-K classroom. Having these two experiences parallel to one another, it was clear to see where my heart truly was and that God had given me a passion for teaching young children.

Again, when I was debating the decision to change my position from Director of Christian Education to Lutheran Teacher, I consulted my pastor, Rick Engel, and he fully supported my decision, further showing me that teaching was what God truly wanted me to do.

One other experience that truly touched my life was my trip to Africa. There our team refurbished a medical clinic and experienced everyday life with the last indigenous African tribe in Tanzania -- the Masai. It was in this place thousands of miles from home that God once again reaffirmed to me my passion for working with his young children. Even though we did not share the same skin color or language or living conditions, we shared the same God, and this was enough to overcome any difference between us.

How does your experience with the Lutheran Student Fellowship (LSF) group at Hope interact with your CHS experience?

The LSF group offered me an amazing foundation of people when I first arrived in Orlando. They became my classmates at CHS and even my room mates. Having this phenomenal breadth of people around me helped me keep focused and on the path that God wanted me to be on.

What do you value most about your experience in the Concordia House of Studies?

The thing that I value the most about the CHS is the fact that your classes are a very tight knit group of people. The students care for one another and have similar passions in life making friendships with them very

close. The fact that you are now classmates with people who will be your future co-workers is a rare opportunity to get to know them and share a common experience with them.

Would you encourage others to enroll in the Concordia House of Studies?

Yes, I would definitely encourage ANYONE who has a desire to grow closer to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to take these classes. I believe that there is a misconception that the CHS is only for those interested in full time church work. Even though that is one of the goals of this program, it should not exclude or discourage anyone else from considering enrolling. These classes are a phenomenal opportunity to simply grow and learn in your own personal faith.

Do you have any advice for others who may be considering taking CHS courses?

The only advice that I could give someone who is considering enrolling in CHS classes is to **do it!** I know that a lot of people think that they are too busy and they really do not have time right now and they can always do it later. I think that is important for them to know that the professors of this course realize that you do have a life outside of this course and they do understand that. The professors relate to you on an amazing level and work with you and your schedule without sacrificing the quality if the learning that you get from this program. Anyone looking to simply learn more in knowledge and grow a greater love for Christ should definitely consider taking these courses. If you feel the Lord may be calling you into full-time service in the church and would like additional information about how the Concordia House of Studies may be helpful to you, please contact Dr. Wayne Wilke, Director of CHS. You can call him in Orlando locally at 407-857-5556, ext 5, toll free at 877-457-5556, ext. 5, or via e-mail at wwilke@flga-lcms.org. □



New Year Brings New Growth Opportunities



LWML NEWS

By Margie Smith
Communications Coordinator
Florida Georgia District LWML

It's a new year, and Lutheran Women in Mission have a new opportunity for growth. The Florida-Georgia District Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) is offering four workshops around the district called "Leaders for Tomorrow." Every woman can benefit from becoming a stronger leader. These workshops are designed for Christian leaders, and offer valuable information for any person who occupies a leadership role — within the district, zone, unit LWML, or within each congregation!

The cost of \$10 per person covers materials and lunch. Sign up for a workshop near you.

- January 14, 2006 at St John Lutheran Church-Ocala, FL
- January 21, 2006 at Redeemer Lutheran Church-Melbourne, FL
- March 11, 2006 at Ascension Lutheran Church-Atlanta, GA
- March 18, 2006 at Lake Wales Lutheran Church-Lake Wales, FL

The Florida-Georgia District LWML has provided more than \$116,000 in mission grants for the 2004-2005 biennium. The current grants are:

- Scholarships for Pastoral Students
- Scholarships for Church Worker Students
- Lutheran Braille Workers – Four Work Centers
- Hands with Hammers and Hearts, Cumming, GA
- Peer Ministry - University Lutheran Church and Student Center, Tallahassee, FL — Supporting Seniors' Independence – Miami, FL
- Spreading the Gospel through Education – Winter Haven, FL
- Christ Lutheran Hispanic Mission – East Point, GA
- Growing the Mission through Education Centers - Russia
- International Student Ministry
- Eyeglass Edger, MOST Ministries
- CAME – Reaching the 97% of Unchurched FL/GA Asians
- Help Train Ethnic Immigrant Pastors
- Growing the Mission in Guatemala

Now it is time to begin thinking about what we will

support for the 2006-2008 biennium. The deadline for Mission Grant Proposals is **March 15, 2006**. If you have a project that is mission in nature, "reaching the unreached for Christ," consider requesting a grant from the district LWML.

For grant guidelines and forms, contact Desiree Mann, Vice President for Mission Grants, 3946 St John Street, Apt 45, Jacksonville, FL 32205; phone: 904-388-7668; email: dmm0926@bellsouth.net. The guidelines and forms may also be downloaded from our website: flgalwml.com. Grant proposals accepted for ballot will be selected at our convention in September. □

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