

GRACE

Grace Lutheran School

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“Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.”

I Peter 4:10 NRSV

“It’s hard to believe we did school without this!”

Technology upgrade brings opportunities for individualized instruction

by Gwen Gotsch

Grace School students are working with new Lenovo touch screen laptop computers this year, thanks to a significant technology upgrade supported by last March’s A Graceful Evening fundraiser, as well as a grant from Grace Church’s Legacy of Grace.

Students in 7th and 8th grade are now one-to-one with versatile Lenovo 300 laptops that also function as touch-screen tablets. Each student has a computer which goes home with him or her at night. Students in 5th and 6th grade share a laptop with a user in the other grade, as do 3rd and 4th-graders. While these laptops stay at school, students can access their individual work folders from any computer connected to the internet.

“Differentiation is easier and going on full-time when everyone’s working at their own pace on their laptops,” said junior high math and science teacher Brian Schultz. “The computer network has actually helped me be more organized and do a better job of getting supplemental materials in students’ hands more easily.”

Schultz can view students’ screens as they work on math problems and offer comments, answer questions, and — occasionally — remind them to stay on task. Students work at their



own pace and when assignments are done, they can explore other topics.

Laura Clauss says that her sixth grade students enjoy learning games available online. They review vocabulary words that way and recently studied the geography of Africa with help from a competitive game. Mrs. Clauss also assigns them informational reading at Newsela, a website which publishes news articles adapted from various mainstream content providers. Articles are available at different reading levels and give students practice at a variety of reading skills such as comprehension or analysis.

“I like that computers are so readily available, and students like having a computer that is their own to manage. It’s hard to believe we did school without this,” said Clauss.

Responsibility, patience, and remember to save your work!

Lessons learned while mastering new technology

Eighth graders Owen Augustine, Callah Barnes and Livy Crame and seventh-grader Eunice Ho were interviewed about learning to use the new one-to-one laptops in junior high.

Callah: On the first day when we got our usernames and passwords to the computers, we were told about which websites were blocked, when we could use our computers, and also about certain times when teachers can see our screens.

Owen: If you're doing something that you're not supposed to be doing, the teachers can actually shut your screen off. This also works in a good way. If you have typed something good, they can display your screen onto the big screen in the front of the classroom so that everyone can see it.

Livy: We were told that every day we would have to charge our computers,

make sure that we're taking them home, make sure that all the assignments we have on them are saved and they don't get lost. Everything is a way bigger responsibility than having just your papers and your binder. It's really easy for your computer to be turned off in the wrong way, and you lose a whole essay that you had written the night before.

Sounds like that happened to you?

Livy: I've learned from experience. I save something maybe three times now before I turn off my computer.

Owen: Saving is kind of a habit. I save after every sentence I type.

Callah: We have a firewall, so everything is blocked except for a list of acceptable sites—that would be things like our teacher's website, the school website, different learning resources.

Owen: Even when we're using the laptops at home, there are blocked websites. I think that's good because it keeps everyone focused on their work.

Livy: You can't do anything other than school work.

What was the first big project you did on your laptops?

Owen: We did a summer reading essay for Ms. Wolfanger.

Callah: That was our first time turning in an essay online. We have this program that allows us to turn in all of our work online. We've had some trouble with it syncing between home and school. So in the first few days there was a lot to figure out. Like we'd have half of our vocab work done, we'd save it, and we'd come back to it at home, and it was gone. But it was there at school.



The new laptops have freed up the school's iPad cart for use in first and second grade, where free-reading is a popular online treat. Students can choose fiction or non-fiction. They can read on their own or listen as books are read to them.

Owen: When we took it home we had to connect it to our home wifi. It was kind of like the computer didn't feel safe. It wouldn't open some websites. There are more restrictions that are put on the computer at our houses than at Grace, because at school, teachers can monitor what you're doing.

Callah: We had to change some settings. And we have to be sure our work syncs with the website before we leave school.

Livy: When we were writing our essays Ms. Wolfanger gave us the rubric and little prompts and questions online in OneNote, where our composition folder was stored. We were able to save all the notes we would have done on paper in that folder. We could go back and edit our notes and even copy and paste some things right into the essay instead of having to retype or rewrite them.

A M A Z I N G GRACE

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Each partner was able to go in and edit, so we could work on it at the same time at different houses.

Callah: Ms. Wolfanger has a stylus so that she can write on the document that we've turned in on the computer, so that we can see all of her comments. The screen is like a piece of paper and we can see what she's written.

Callah: In 8th grade science class we did a partner PowerPoint presentation. Each partner was able to go in and edit, so we could work on it at the same time at different houses.

Do you use your computers for research projects?

Eunice: We definitely use them a lot for research. We use them for science especially. For example, we recently finished the topic of viruses. We also did a Puritan project in social studies.

Owen: Ms. Holm [Grace's library media specialist] sets up links for us to go to. The teachers usually try to keep us in .org and .gov websites.

Livy: In history we've been using our laptops a lot. A lot of times we don't have to open our textbooks. We can go to the online version. Ms. Wolfanger even had one of the lessons done in a PowerPoint, so instead of using the textbook we could look at her remake of the chapter and from there we got to go online and see other sources that she had added to the lesson.

Callah: The textbook weighs like 12 or 13 pounds, so it's good that you don't have to take it home.

Livy: Note-takers can stay at their own pace and go back to what they need to see, or stay with the class. You have the option to take notes in OneNote, but most people in our class use [paper] notebooks for notes.



Owen: Sometimes we take tests and quizzes on our computers. It's super helpful for teachers and for us because we get our results right away.

Callah: The problem that's come up is that if there's a small typo in the answer key or if anything's gotten off, then a bunch of people have messed-up grades. Then you have to go back in and change the answer key. That takes a little while, but usually it works pretty well.

Owen: I think the reason it's happening so much this year is that it's new, new to all the teachers, so I think next year they're not going to see those problems.

Eunice: We use the laptops to check our answers in math a lot. Sometimes I'll use the textbook's website to go over some lessons I've done before. There's a nicer view for reviewing for quizzes or a test.

Callah: I'm one of two kids in the 8th grade doing individualized math, so I

If you work faster, if you understand the topic, then you can move on. If not you can stay with the group and get a little more help than you would from the website and your self-teaching.

I've been doing everything through [the Kahn Academy] website where I watch the video and take my quizzes and tests online. When I get stuck, I go to Mr. Schultz for help.

Livy: We still have a structure of what we're supposed to be learning. If you work faster, if you understand the topic, then you can move on. If not you can stay with the group and get a little more help than you would from the website and your self-teaching.

How will your work with computers at Grace help in high school, in life?

Livy: I think this gives us a big lesson in responsibility.

Eunice: Most high schools use new technology. This gives us a familiarity with working with modern technology.

Callah: It's taught us to be able to do more individual work. It's expected that we're able to find everything that we need up on the website.

Eunice: Also, patience. You have to be patient with the computer.

Sophie Amado: Growing into the writing life

By Bill Pullin

Grace Lutheran School graduate Sophie Amado is a professional writer, specializing in creative nonfiction, a genre of writing dedicated to exploring ordinary life in a “not-boring” way. She is currently a content specialist for Groupon in Chicago, and works there as a writer and editor. She also tends bar at Will’s Northwoods Inn in Lakeview, where the televisions are tuned to Packers’ games, and she hosts an open mic reading event at the bar aliveOne in Lincoln Park.

Does this make Sophie seem outgoing, confident, and strong? Would you expect to be told that Sophie struggled in school as a young child? Read on, because Sophie was transformed by her experience at Grace Lutheran School.

Sophie graduated from Grace in 2006, and from Trinity High School in River Forest in 2010. She attended the University of Iowa. After winning a Fulbright scholarship, she taught English to high school students in Madrid for a year and recently completed her Master of Fine Arts degree at Columbia College Chicago.

When she began attending Grace Lutheran School, Sophie was not interested in reading or writing and was not a good test-taker. She spent her early years with a group of students who, as she says, “did things a little slower,” received a little more personal attention, and were blessed by extraordinary amounts of patience and creativity on the part of teachers, especially Maureen O’Connor and the late Carolyn Douma.

Children have plenty of false starts in these early discovery years in school, but the typical extracurricular highlights such as ballet, playing the violin, or soccer rang hollow with Sophie.



Karla Koehne, a Grace School alum and church member, tutored Sophia one-on-one for years, forming an enduring personal connection. Sophie describes Margaret Kruse’s fifth grade class as transformative. (Sophie’s class was the last class to have Miss Kruse as a classroom teacher.) With her State Notebook project, she discovered with surprise how much she liked presenting what she learned about Florida to the younger students at Grace School. Miss Kruse also encouraged Sophie’s class to participate in the Junior Interpreter program at the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio. Imagine what it must be like for a fifth grader to give adults a tour of this must-see destination for architecture buffs! Sophie discovered that she was able to understand, communicate with, and educate others in this very outgoing way. She continues to volunteer as tour guide at the Home and Studio to this day.

As time went on at Grace School, Sophie continued to find her pathway to success. In junior high, language arts

People of all different backgrounds share their stories at the live reading programs hosted at aliveOne in Lincoln Park.

teacher Lisa Wolfanger introduced her to the young-adult novels of Joan Bauer, and guided her in writing book reports that had clarity and accuracy as well as personal meaning. This process encouraged Sophie to step away from what she calls the “cozy things” that didn’t take much out of her, and take on challenging work for which she had a passion.

Trinity High School, an all-girls school, helped Sophie to focus on educational and extracurricular discoveries. Sophie edited the school paper at Trinity, dipping her brush into the publishing business.

The University of Iowa, Sophie’s college choice, is the home of a truly distinguished broad-based graduate writing program. At the undergraduate level, Sophie distinguished herself in teaching writing to high school students through an organization called the Iowa

Sophie Amado, continued on page 5



Sophie Amado, *continued from page 4*

Youth Writing Program. As a teaching assistant to the late Donna Parsons, she explored J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels with students and learned important lessons about herself and about the life of a writer. She learned that writing is teaching, that what satisfies you is a success, no matter how much it pays, and that your passions should tell you where to go with your career. Sophie graduated from the University of Iowa with a BA in English and Spanish, Her Fulbright Scholarship gave her the opportunity to meet, work, live with and learn from the people of Spain, sharing daily experiences, particularly in the classroom where she taught English.

Chicago is home for Sophie, and after teaching in Spain she came back to pursue a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Nonfiction Writing from Columbia College Chicago. While there, she taught undergraduate writing and rhetoric. She is currently the Creative Nonfiction Editor at Arcturus, an online literary magazine of new perspectives in fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, and hybrid genres, and an assistant editor at Hotel Amerika, a literary journal for emerging writers.

Sophie's bartending in Chicago is more than a part-time job for her. It is an important part of her career. Dealing with the variety of groups and individuals coming to a bar—and leaving it, she cannot help but observe, enjoy, analyze, and express all the forms that humanity takes in this setting. Her fascinating essay "Threadmoons," published by Aji Magazine (ajimagazine.com), is an example of her expressing what this world is like and trying to make sense of it. Also, the live reading series that she conducts at aliveOne in Lincoln Park does indeed bring writing to life as writers share works out loud in front

Lately, I try to think about what I've been doing, what has stopped me in my tracks or what I have ignored. I remember when I was five I was afraid, like many five-year-olds, of monsters under the bed. My mom used to take a Shaklee spray bottle filled with water and spray under my bed to send the monsters away. I didn't know it was water and I thought it worked. I wish there was a monster spray-bottle for the world. I could have used one on 9/11. I could have used one when I went up to that clown in preschool or the day I started noticing empty shoes and scattered twigs on the ground.

I wonder what you were doing during those days.

—excerpt from "Memory Space" by Sophie Amado, gravelmag.com

of an engaged and curious audience. The format is five different readers, including Sophie, taking turns sharing their written thoughts with a group of listeners who, typically, come to the bar more for the writing than for the liquid refreshment.

Powerful memories of Grace School that are part of Sophie's resumé include the following:

- Being baptized at age six by Pastor Bruce Modahl.
- The enthralling story-telling of Pastor Modahl in chapel messages that caught the attention even of young children.
- Being part of the Christmas Eve service, forming the candlelit cross with fellow students, and singing Christmas music in the sanctuary.
- The patience and love of the teachers and tutors who helped Sophie grow from a child who struggled in school to a person who is fearless, adventurous, and a great storyteller.

Sophie had to discover her talent for herself, but the teachers at Grace Lutheran School put her in a place where she could see where she needed to go.

Visit sophieamado.wixsite.com/sophieamado to read Sophie's writing.

Grace Church and School CALENDAR

Thanksgiving Day worship, Nov. 22, 10 a.m.

Advent-Christmas Concert, Dec. 16, 4 p.m.

Christmas Eve worship, Dec. 24:

Lessons and carols led by the children of Grace, 4:15 and 6 p.m.

Holy Communion, 8 p.m.

Candlelight Holy Communion, 10:45 p.m. (music at 10:30)

Christmas Day worship, Dec. 25, 10 a.m.

New Year's Eve worship, Dec. 31, 7 p.m.

New Year's Day worship, Jan. 1, 10 a.m.

Epiphany worship and Bach cantata, Jan. 6, 10 a.m.

GPO Chili Cook-Off and Family Fun Friday, Feb. 1, 6 p.m.

Lutheran Schools Week, March 11-15

Grandparents Day, March 15

A Graceful Evening, March 16, 6 p.m.

Easter Sunday worship, April 21, 8:30 and 11 a.m.

Confirmation Witness service, May 4, 7 p.m.

Confirmation, May 5, 11 a.m.

Grade 1-4 musical, May 17, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Eighth grade “shepherds” learn how to teach and lead

On a Tuesday morning a few weeks into the school year, teams of eighth grade “shepherds” fanned out into the classrooms of Grace Lutheran School, from the lower-level junior kindergarten room to the seventh-grade classroom next door to their own. Their assignment was to explain the GLS Student Pledge to the younger students and help them think about what they would do to welcome and respect all students at Grace Lutheran School. The shepherds brought a project with them that asked students to finish the sentence “I will —” with promises that related to the school pledge.

“Everyone was smiling when they came back,” said eighth grade homeroom teacher Lisa Wolfanger. In the debriefing session that followed the activity, students reported both successes and challenges.

“It took a while to get them to talk,” said one student. “Then once they did, we had to get them to focus. It was uncomfortable when they were all so quiet.”

“It felt like we were teachers. They paid attention to us!” said Annie Claire Wilson, who enjoyed her team’s time with Senior Kindergarten.

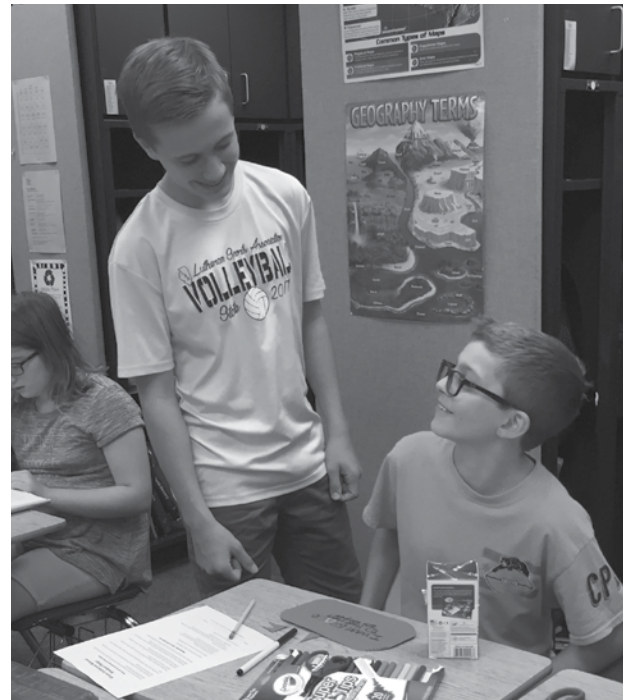
Most students returned from this initial teaching experience with a greater appreciation for the skills of their own teachers. Many had run out of things to

say and do well before the period was over—an experience familiar to novice teachers. Newly appreciative of the day-in and day-out work of teachers, an amazed Emmett Southfield asked Ms. Wolfanger, “How do you plan all this?”

Last to return to the eighth-grade classroom was the junior kindergarten team, and they were a bit frazzled. They had enjoyed the little ones, but had also learned that four-year-old children have very short attention spans.

The responses from younger students about what they will do to build up the school community included such things as “I will play with everyone,” “I will share,” and “I will love my friends.” The sheep, stars, clouds, hearts and other shapes that held these promises are now massed together on the bulletin board that students pass first thing every morning on the way to their classrooms.

The bulletin board also includes longer statements signed by the eighth graders, for example, “I will not stand by when someone is bullied with words or actions. They will know they are not



“I will not stand by when someone is bullied with words or actions. They will know they are not alone.” Not just another religion class assignment—it was a public promise to be leaders and good role models.

alone.” These were the first contributions posted, and Ms. Wolfanger said that being asked to sign their names to these statements made students think carefully about what they said. This was not just another religion class assignment—it was a public promise to be leaders and good role models.

Shepherd activities will continue throughout the school year. In October eighth graders talked with younger students about World Vision, the Christian not-for-profit that is the focus of this year’s chapel offerings and the service project associated with Walk With Grace, the all-school walkathon.

“We are all one in the body of Jesus Christ,” says the GLS Student Pledge, composed by the Grace Lutheran School Class of 2015.

Students promise to:

- respect and accept others’ differences.
- seek to include everyone in work and play
- use God-pleasing language, words to encourage and support others.
- stand up for others and help or seek help from an adult when someone is being bullied or hurt.
- be honest and do my best in school.

S C H O O L N E W S

Walk With Grace raises \$25,000 for Grace School and World Vision

On October 5, Grace students, teachers, and parents participated in the 7th annual Walk with Grace walkathon. For the first time in the history of the walk, the weather kept students indoors, walking through the halls of the church and school, up stairs and down. Everyone had a good time despite the storms outside.

More than \$25,000 was raised at the Walk. Proceeds support the operation budget of the school, with a ten percent tithe going to World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization. During the week of the Walk students also packed hygiene kits for distribution by World Vision.

Walk With Grace is one of three fundraising streams for the school; the others are A Graceful Evening and the Annual Fund for Grace School.

Getting the word out. Grace Lutheran School is working with Dr. Rick Newberry of Enrollment Catalyst on improving marketing and enrollment strategies. Dr. Newberry spent two days in September meeting with Grace School's faculty, staff and parents. He also conducted an online anonymous survey of parents. The results showed that Grace had one of the highest rates of parent satisfaction of the over 400 private schools he has worked with. This provides a strong base for developing a good word of mouth campaign about the school.

New religion curriculum. Through the years teachers have found that published materials available for religion instruction in private Christian schools often do not meet the unique needs of the Grace Lutheran School community. A group of current and recently retired teachers is now working on developing a new religion curriculum for use at Grace and potentially for sharing with other schools. Assisted by GLS alum Dr. Jan Westrick of Valparaiso University, they have constructed a curriculum outline and are working on the first lessons, with the hope of testing them in classrooms during the 2018-19 school year. A grant from Grace Church's Legacy of Grace endowment is funding the project.

Fall test scores. Each year students in grades 2-8 take MAP tests in the fall, winter, and spring. Results are used to guide teachers in individualizing instruction. On the recent round of MAP testing, **every one** of our 46 seventh and eighth grade students scored above the national average on the language usage (writing) test. These students also did very well in the other two areas, with 89% scoring above the national average in reading, and 86% scoring above the national average in mathematics.

Cross country teams compete at the state and national levels. Eighth-grader Owen Augustine placed third at the Lutheran Sports Association (LSA) state cross country meet on October 13, earning All-State honors and breaking his own school record. He led the boys team to a third-place finish. Seventh graders Anna Scholtens and Alyse Ryniewicz also earned All-State honors by placing in the top 15; the girls team finished 5th in state. The next Saturday, October 20, a cold and blustery day, the Grace runners competed with teams and individuals representing 61 schools at the national meet at Concordia University in Mequon, Wisconsin. Grace boys placed 9th overall at nationals, and the girls placed 14th. "Grace runners exceeded my expectations all year," said coach Rich Brooks, "especially at the championship meets."



Tickets are \$100 per person, \$950 for a table of ten. They go on sale in January at GraceRiverForest.org.

The biggest annual fundraiser for Grace Lutheran School, A Graceful Evening includes a jovial cocktail hour, delicious sit-down dinner, an awards presentation, and lively after-party!

Show your support for the school and bid on special auction items; raise your paddle during the fund-a-need auction; meet with old friends and make a few new ones along the way.

Sponsorship

Gold \$2,500. Includes a full table at the event and a full-page ad in the program.

Silver \$1,000. Includes two tickets to the event and a full-page ad in the program.

Supporter \$250-\$999. Includes a full-page ad in the program.

Advertise in the program book

Full page	\$200
Half page	\$125
Quarter-page	\$75

Donate an auction item

Tickets, gift certificates, unique experiences, private parties, classes — we welcome your donations!

For more information contact the event chairs at agracefulevening@gmail.com.



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Boys volleyball takes second in state

The boys volleyball team finished up a strong season by competing at the LSA state volleyball tournament, November 2-4 in Springfield. They brought home a second-place trophy. Eighth-graders Gabe Becerra and Emmanuel Matel-Sanchez were named to the all-state team. The team is coached by P. E. teacher Kristi Underhill.

