

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT: 2009-2010 LUTHERAN SCHOOLS WEEK

Each year for Lutheran Schools Week we select a project that will benefit one of our schools or early childhood education centers. This year we have chosen Oak Grove Lutheran School, which offers early childhood education through grade 12 in Fargo, North Dakota. Our 2009-2010 service project will help support the recovery of Oak Grove School's flood devastated middle and high school campus.

Your collected monies should be sent to:

Kathryn Baker
ATT: LSW Service Project
Vocation and Education unit, ELCA
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

Please make all checks payable to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and note on the memo line of your check "VE Service Project LSW." This will ensure that your check goes to the correct fund. Offerings toward this service learning project will be received through May 14, 2010.

Below are some web resources related to the flooding that could be used as resources for discussion about the river:

www.oakgrovelutheran.com
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_Red_River_flood
www.ndsu.edu/fargoflood/
www.boston.com/bigpicture/2009/03/red_river_flooding.html
www.ndsu.edu/fargo_geology/fargoflood.htm

Please read the story below to learn about the damage to the school. The flood was a serious financial blow to the school, as you can imagine. Just think about how your school or center would fair if you were in this situation.

Red River of the North Floods Oak Grove Lutheran School

"Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it."
(Song of Solomon 8:7a)

Oak Grove Lutheran School's middle and high school campus rests amid a beautiful park setting along the Red River in Fargo, North Dakota. That river is usually quiet and peaceful, but it became flooded and ferocious in March 2009 during the spring thaw.

The Fargo area received a great deal of rain in the fall of 2008. That, coupled with a record-setting snowfall in the winter, set the Red River Valley up for a flood

fight in the spring. Oak Grove Lutheran School, along with the City of Fargo, started planning early for spring flooding. Diligent efforts were taken to ensure the safety of the community and Oak Grove's campus. When the river started to rise in March, the school was prepared, but could not know the full extent of the threat.

In a matter of days, the river rose to a record level of nearly 41 feet. Despite efforts by staff, students, and volunteers to stave off rising flood waters, around 1:15 a.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2009, Oak Grove Lutheran School suffered a breach in the school's permanent steel cofferdam, which protected the north side of the campus at 124 North Terrace in Fargo. The breach caused Benson Hall and Jackson Hall, the campus's two main classroom buildings, to be flooded. Benson Hall sustained overwhelming damage to the basement and first floor, while Jackson Hall took on water in the lower level.

Due to the efforts volunteers took prior to evacuation, the water was prevented from totally inundating campus. In the morning, it was found that the water had not continued into campus and the three remaining buildings on campus could be saved. Due to the efforts of the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Guard, Oak Grove staff, and Oak Grove community members, water was pumped out of the center of campus and prevented from traveling any further into campus.

With two months left in the school year, Oak Grove's 300 middle and high school students were without a school. Graciously, the Fargo Public School system offered an open wing of their ninth grade center for Oak Grove to use for the remainder of the school year. Oak Grove used the open classrooms and three portable classrooms for grades 6-12 and relocated administrative offices to Oak Grove's elementary school in south Fargo, while recovery efforts began at the flooded campus.

The financial scope and extent of Oak Grove's flood recovery effort is sizeable. Oak Grove is in the process of flood mitigation with FEMA, the State of North Dakota, the City of Fargo, as well as insurance companies; however, the entirety of the overall cost of the flood effort will not be covered by the above the groups. With total estimated costs of around \$1.7-\$2.0 million, Oak Grove's responsibility, estimated at more than \$250,000, will be a significant burden on the school. If you would like to help with Oak Grove's flood recovery effort (outside of our service project offerings), please contact the Oak Grove Advancement Office at 701-237-0212 or visit www.oakgrovelutheran.com to e-give online, or write: Oak Grove Lutheran Schools, 124 N Terrace, Fargo, ND 58102.

Oak Grove Lutheran School continues to rebuild its middle and high school campus after the devastating effects of the flood of 2009. Tremendous progress has been made toward recovery, but much damage remains. Thank you for your help through our Lutheran Schools Week Service Learning Project.