

## One for the Thumb by Bruce Braun

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*In the following article, Bruce Braun uses the example of one school to demonstrate how a school's involvement in their community is a credible witness for the Gospel. —editor*

Since their team had previously won four Super Bowl rings, “one for the thumb” was the Pittsburgh Steelers’ rallying cry in the recent Super Bowl. “One for the thumb” is also our focus as we look at a school in ministry.

People from the mitten-shaped lower half of the state of Michigan often show other Michiganders where they live by holding up their right hand and pointing to a place on their palm or fingers. The tip of the thumb is where people from Sebewaing, Michigan, point.

In this small rural town, where a plant processes sugar from beets grown in the Saginaw Valley, is one campus of Christ the King Lutheran School. Students in the lower grades meet at Unionville, six miles south.

This school of 177 students in the Michigan thumb has done a great job of going and telling their community about the greatest love story ever written, the story of God’s unchanging love for His wandering children, you and I.

Their gospel outreach happens both near and far and involves a number of different people. During the annual Sugar Festival Parade, students and parents walk behind their religious-themed float, distributing water bottles that remind others of the “Living Water” found in scripture. The school purchases Bibles for distribution at a family event, and Bibles are taken to homes of people who cannot attend this event.

School chapel offerings benefit local, national and international ministries, such as the local Ronald McDonald House and a local family with a child suffering from leukemia. Food was collected for the community food pantry. This year’s “Hearts for Jesus” offering assists children in Guatemala’s garbage dumps through Servant’s Heart Ministry.

The giving of the students at Christ the King Lutheran School is the living embodiment of Paul’s words in Galatians 6:2, “Carry each other’s burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

School children were recently involved in “Operation Christmas Love,” reaching out to families devastated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Christ the King spearheaded the efforts of several Lutheran Schools to collect gifts, wrapping paper and baking supplies

for families that lost everything in these natural disasters. A local trucking company donated a 17-foot truck which was driven to New Orleans with about 200 baking kits and 1,500 unwrapped toys. Parents in New Orleans were invited to pick out two gifts and then wrap them as presents to their children. Mothers were encouraged to take a baking kit so they could share special treats.

All of this happened because children at Christ the King sensed an opportunity in 1 Corinthians 12:26, “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it.”

Christ the King Lutheran School teaches children to see the world through clear glass, not stained glass windows. While stained glass is beautiful, it shuts us off from seeing the world around us. Clear glass allows us to see the needs of the world and allows the world to see how the church loves others and lives out our mission. ■

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