Consider David marching into battle, Moses leading the Israelites with Aaron at his side, or the spread of the Gospel in the early Christian church, starting with just twelve Apostles. In each example, ordinary people believed in God’s all-encompassing power.

That sort of impact isn’t just in the past though; God continues to impact His creation and that is clearly evident in Milwaukee and Racine. But at first it might not look that way. Violence is a regular occurrence, unemployment is the norm, and just over half of minority students in poverty graduate from high school. This is all reality, but not the only one.

Another is that an undeterred belief in Christ’s power drives teachers like Mrs. Gilbert-Mitchell to elicit deep, relevant discussion in her middle school English and Language Arts lessons, and Mr. Jagler to use humor and a contagious smile to connect with each student, or Mrs. Strege to intentionally motivate, track, and guide students as they engage in computer-based personalized learning. And then there are countless teachers like Ms. Mentink and Ms. Gottowski, who build a classroom community that children are eager to go to, or there is Mr. Speck, who builds community through the love of Christian music every morning. In every one of these cases, belief drives action.

As a network, belief led us to implement computer-based personalized learning for 100% of our students in addition to regular classroom instruction. Many students grew more than a grade level on average in these programs. Strong belief also led us to implement an entirely new English, reading and writing curriculum, and God has blessed it. Our network of schools has seen a 32% growth in reading, meaning our students have grown 32% faster than the national average. Our recent state assessment also indicates that a number of LUMIN schools have made significant, well above average growth, during this last year.

We also learned last year that Sherman Park and Northwest Lutheran are in the top 5% of schools in Milwaukee in math and reading proficiency, respectively, among 80/80 schools, schools whose student body is comprised of at least 80% African American students and 80% living below the poverty line.

All these matter, but nothing as much as this: 100% of our students learn about the love of Christ each day. Christ is celebrated in our buildings every day. The reality of this rang especially true this year at the passing of one of our beloved staff members. As one of our students reflected and mourned, she wrote, “Say hi to Jesus.” With that certainty and boldness, this young lady captured our confidence in God’s power.

We still have work to do and the 2017-18 school year will bring more bold moves, some of which you will hear about throughout this year. None of this, however, is possible without your thoughts, prayers and support. Thank you for having the belief to walk boldly with us.
One of the most important services we provide to our students is assistance with selecting an appropriate high school following their graduation from a LUMIN School. This is critically important given the practical realities of choosing an 8th grade graduate who is just 14 years old. As all parents know, young teenagers can be very impressionable. The Character Education Program delivered in LUMIN schools is a first class; however, the trajectory of student learning can quickly be disrupted, and even permanently destroyed, if a 14 year old child attends a low performing high school or begins to associate with and be influenced by the wrong crowd.

We understand these dynamics extremely well which is why our Student and Family Services team invests a ton of time each year connecting directly with middle school students who have the potential to attend high schools in Milwaukee and Racine. Our priority in this regard is Lutheran high schools first, other Christian high schools second, and high performing secular high schools third. We invite recruiters from these high schools to make presentations to students and their families, how we have our students and families attend events at the high schools, and help all parties navigate the various testing regimens and enrollment processes.

How are we doing in this regard? Annually, we graduate just over 100 students from 8th grade. This past school year, 49% of the graduates enrolled in a non-Lutheran high school and another 25% in a non-Lutheran Christian high school. The combined total of 74% is the highest percentage we have ever achieved in our history (we are usually between 60% and 70%). Our north side schools typically send about 30 graduates to Milwaukee Lutheran High School. St. Martin has become a major feeder school to Martin Luther High School. This past school year, Renaissance School achieved the distinction of having 100% of its 8th grade graduates enroll in a Christian high school.

We probe for the opportunities we have in LUMIN schools to launch so many young children, growing up in difficult urban environments, into our high schools, and help all parties navigate the various testing regimens and enrollment processes.

Renaissance School will expand operations for the 2017-18 school year by opening a new school in Racine. The facility is located at 1510 Villa Street on the campus of St. Richard of Chichester Catholic Parish.

This past school year, Renaissance served K through 3rd grade students at its main campus located at 6150 Taylor Avenue, Racine. The school serves through 8th grade students at its new facility in Kenosha. St. Peter’s remote location in Kenosha was challenging because all Renaissance students participate in the Racine Parental Choice Program and reside within the boundaries of the Racine Unified School District. These circumstances required Renaissance to own a small fleet of school buses and employ drivers to daily transport students back and forth from St. Peter’s. This was an expensive program and made for long days for the students involved. St. Richard’s parish school closed many years ago and the building has housed several nonprofit tenants over the years, the most recent of which vacated the premises earlier this year. In recent years, Renaissance has addressed various deferred building maintenance issues and funded a significant number of upgrades and improvements to the facility.

Renaissance School – Villa (as the new campus will now be known) will serve students in K4 through 8th grade. The Villa campus will include middle school students who previously attended the St. Peter campus in Kenosha. Renaissance School – Villa will now serve K4 through 4th grade students. The combined capacity of the two facilities is approximately 450 students, an increase of more than 100 students from the previous Villa School building. Renaissance School’s combined campus of the two campuses this past school year was approximately 300 students.

According to Dick Leobs, President and CEO of LUMIN, “We are excited by the opportunity to consolidate all operations of Renaissance School in Racine and to serve our families with a campus located much closer to the heart of Racine. In addition, the Villa building will be used to provide a Christian education to more children in the community.”
WHAT’S INSIDE:
• BELIEF DRIVES BOLD ACTION IN ACADEMICS
• LUMIN WELCOMES NEW ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP
• RENAISSANCE SCHOOL EXPANDS

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Sharing the Peace and Love of Christ During Tragedy

We know many students come to LUMIN schools with absolutely no knowledge or understanding of the Christian faith. Thus, we have the awesome opportunity and responsibility to share the Gospel message with them. When the faith of the Parson family was rocked two years ago, the family of Pilgrim Lutheran School had such an opportunity. After a sudden illness, Roxanne and her two children, Nicholas and Abigail, found themselves without a husband and father, and grief and despair followed. “It was difficult for the family as Mrs. Parson lost a husband and the kids lost a dad,” recalls Kimberly Poe, Dean of Students. “Yet, they continued to come to school and persevered through it all.” Pilgrim Lutheran was a place of peace and refuge. The school staff, students and families stepped in and wrapped their arms around the Parsons with prayers, love and support.

It has been two years since the tragedy. This year, Nick will attend 8th grade and Abby will be in 2nd grade. “Pilgrim Lutheran is a phenomenal school,” says Roxanne. “They have awesome teachers and great academics. The thing I like the most about Pilgrim Lutheran is the small group setting. They make teaching individualized for each student, so the child gets just what he needs. I love the school and my children do too!"

The academics we teach in our schools are vitally important because students need an excellent education if they are to be productive citizens during their earthly lives. But what makes life worth living, especially when a child loses a father? In LUMIN, we know that developing the faith lives of our students and teaching them about Jesus is what is really important.

Names have been changed to protect the privacy of the family.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

SHARE!  Follow us and tell your friends  facebook.com/LUMINSchools  @LUMINSchools

TOUR!  Schedule a field trip to witness the power of a LUMIN School Education at work

DONATE!  Become a LUMINary (3-yr. financial commitment), volunteer your time or share your resources

PARTNER!  Host us at your church or organization or sponsor a fundraising event for LUMIN Schools

PRAY!  For our mission to transform lives

For more information on how you can be a part of the LUMIN Schools Ministry, call 414-354-5126.