



# Lutheran Education Association

linking, equipping, and affirming educators in Lutheran ministries

7400 Augusta Street  
River Forest, Illinois  
60305-1499

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 26, 2012

Contact: Edward Grube  
Director of Publications/Communications  
Lutheran Education Association (LEA)  
708.209.3453 ed.grube@lea.org

## Melanie Heggemeier Named LEA 2012 Outstanding New Lutheran Early Childhood Teacher

Melanie Heggemeier, preschool teacher at Trinity Lutheran School in Davenport, Iowa, is the LEA Outstanding New Lutheran Early Childhood Teacher for 2012. She was selected to receive this award by LEA's Early Childhood Educators Network leadership and LEA staff. Ms. Heggemeier received a B.S. in elementary education with emphasis in early childhood from Concordia University Nebraska.

In addition to teaching preschool, Ms. Heggemeier directs the middle school fall play, assists in coaching the seventh- and eighth-grade girls' basketball team, and directs the high school youth group drama troupe.

Commenting in support of Ms. Heggemeier's nomination, Trinity's principal said, "From the very beginning, Melanie has demonstrated great teaching skill...The very first time I entered her classroom of 18 preschoolers, I was amazed and delighted to see a very highly accomplished teacher working with the students. An outsider walking into her classroom would never guess that she was a first-year teacher. There is no question as to who is leading in her classroom. Yet, she does not provide leadership without flexibility and consideration for the needs of the learners. Ms. Heggemeier sets high standards for her students and helps them to achieve the benchmark of success. I am blessed to be Melanie's principal. Students and families are blessed by having her as a teacher. Our staff is blessed by her willingness to lead and to get involved."

Ms. Heggemeier's pastor said, "She has actively encouraged parents and her students toward baptism, both teaching what it is and connecting them to our pastoral staff. Ms. Heggemeier's classroom becomes one of the first encounters that [parents and children] have with Christ and His church—or at least a fresh perspective on the church for parents in their adult life."

Speaking of her greatest joys in teaching, Ms. Heggemeier says it is "...watching a student display true understanding of a concept that they didn't know earlier in the year and being part of bringing them and their entire family to a life with Christ." Among her greatest challenges "...is ministering to a family with a different belief system. I see this challenge as a way to strengthen my faith as well as plant the Holy Spirit's seed in their hearts. The main thing I can do...is uplift them in prayer and trust that God will bring them to Him."

###