

**Great Plains Lutheran High School: Great by God's Grace!**

Philip Janke  
Church History 3031  
James F. Korthals  
12/10/07

## Introduction

On December 2, 1995, something happened in the small building of Bethlehem Ev. Lutheran Church that would change the motto of Great Plains Lutheran High School forever. For 16 long and hard spent years members of the Great Plains Lutheran High School Association worked under the motto, “Great Plains Lutheran High School—A dream, a commitment, and with God’s help, a reality.” They were working under God’s guidance to bring back Christian secondary education to the Dakota-Montana district. In November, 1995, the Great Plains Lutheran High School Board unanimously voted to *recommend* opening GPLHS in Watertown, SD, for the 1996-97 school year.<sup>1</sup> Then, on that cold December day at a special delegates’ meeting of the GPLHS Association it all changed. After a lengthy, and perhaps very emotional discussion, that dream to open a small school on the plains became a reality by an overwhelming vote.<sup>2</sup>

Many of the delegates at that meeting remember it as a very emotional time. For a long time they poured their hearts, minds, and even their money into the process of beginning a Christian high school. “Will this every happen?” “Where will it happen?” “When will it happen?” Those are all questions that must have been on the minds of many people for many years.

It was a very emotional experience when those questions were answered. There was a strong sense of anxious relief; relief because the difficult decision to open was finally made, anxious because there was still a sense of uncertainty. Everyone realized that opening Great Plains had been a huge undertaking. Were they ready for this giant

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<sup>1</sup> *Great Plains Lutheran High School Association Minute Memo*, November 1995.

<sup>2</sup> GPLHS Special Delegate Meeting Minutes, December 2, 1995 indicate the vote to open passed 53-4.

next step? Would they be able to follow through on their decision? With a huge sigh of relief people thought, “Wow! It has finally happened. Ready or not, here we go!”

After eleven years, one can see how God has blessed that decision. Not only did he bless their decision to finally open Great Plains, but he has blessed it in ways that some could hardly imagine and that others only dared to dream. One can see a reflection of that blessing in the theme of Great Plains’ tenth anniversary celebration: “Great Plains Lutheran High School: Great by God’s Grace!”

How has God blessed this little high school? How has it changed? How has it grown? By looking at some important milestones in this school’s first eleven years we can find the answers to those questions. At first glance, those questions may seem somewhat insignificant. When we take a closer look, they are far from that. That is what this paper intends to do. By looking at how the school’s mission, faculty, students, buildings, and the commitment have all changed and grown tremendously, it will become clear that after eleven years, Great Plains Lutheran High School is indeed “Great by God’s Grace.”

## I.

One way to measure the growth and progress of a school is to go back to the reason the school was founded. What was its original purpose? What was its original mission? Knowing the purpose and mission will aid any person in examining a school’s success. A successful school maintains its purpose and mission through adversity and accomplishes the same with God’s blessings. Has the Lord enabled Great Plains to maintain and accomplish its purpose and mission? In his paper “Great Plains Lutheran High School: A Dream, a Commitment and with God’s Help a Reality” Reed M. Degener

included a prayer suggestion for the founders and supporters of Great Plains: “Knowing what the gracious Lord has accomplished through his people, may those same people, as well as others, prayerfully ask the Lord to guide Great Plains Lutheran High School to accomplish its purpose and mission.”<sup>3</sup>

What was that original purpose and mission?

### **Purpose**

Great Plains Lutheran High School was established by the Great Plains Lutheran High School Association to provide a full-time Christian education through the high school years to young people. GPLHS's philosophy of education and its practice and policies are based upon the Holy Scriptures as the inerrant Word of God and centers in Jesus Christ to whom all the Scriptures bear witness. In this Christian setting young people are encouraged by the power and grace of God's Word to submit in grateful obedience to Christ Jesus as Savior and to grow in a life of joyful service to Jesus as Lord. Parents who enroll students should be aware of this Scriptural position and confessional stance, and that by enrolling their children they are placing them under its religious instruction.

### **Mission**

The mission of Great Plains Lutheran High School is to assist Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod congregations, their families, and others in fellowship, nurture our youth for time and eternity by educating the total student—spiritually, intellectually and physically—in a caring Christian environment.

Over the eleven years of the Great Plains' existence, the purpose of the school has not changed a bit. It's most important purpose is to provide a well rounded Christian education. Everything centers on Christ and his life giving and life saving Word. The students have for eleven years been encouraged by the power and grace of God's Word to grow in their life of service to their Lord. That was the school's purpose in the beginning, and the Lord has guided the leaders, faculty, and staff of Great Plains Lutheran High School in maintaining and accomplishing that purpose. When asked how

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<sup>3</sup> Degener, Reed, Great Plains Lutheran High School: A Dream, A Commitment and with God's Help a Reality, (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File, 1998), Pg. 2 of introduction.

God has helped the school overcome the challenges and difficult situations over the years, Principal/Administrator Bert Falak commented, “We go back to the primary purpose. We’re here to give a Christ centered education. That’s why we’re here. The curriculum is centered in God’s Word.”<sup>4</sup>

While the purpose of the school has not changed, its mission statement has. The Student Handbook for the 2007-2008 school year reads:

#### **Mission**

Great Plains Lutheran High School exists to assist parents in equipping young people spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically for life and for eternity by nurturing them with the truth of God's Word in a caring, Christian environment.

The basic mission of Great Plains still remains the same, to provide a well rounded Christian education to educate the whole person in a caring Christian environment. What has changed in the statement is who this education is for. Originally, according to the first mission statement, “Great Plains Lutheran High School is to assist *Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran congregations, their families, and others in fellowship...*” In May, 2003 when the new mission statement was adopted that phrase was removed.<sup>5</sup> Why? The GPLHS Association delegates—upon the suggestion of the then dean and administrator of the school, Pastor Dan Myers—decided that they did not want this type of education to be limited to students who belonged to the WELS or those in fellowship with it. Instead, they wanted this school to serve as a type of outreach mission for students of various backgrounds.<sup>6</sup> When asked how the mission of the school has changed Pastor Myers commented, “At first, it was just for WELS students. The

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mr. Falak November 17, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> GPLHS Annual Meeting Minutes, May 3, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix, *The Evolution of the Mission Statement*.

mission statement said that. I changed that when I got going and we broadened out for outreach.”<sup>7</sup>

In the discussions concerning whether or not to change the mission statement of GPLHS there was some disagreement. Some thought that the school should remain as a school for only WELS students. If you take “WELS and ELS” out of the mission statement, there is a danger that the school will lose its focus, that it will become just another private or Christian school. Others thought the school has a great opportunity to share the gospel with those who don’t know it. Principal Falak stated in an interview,

Fine tuning exactly what our mission is has been a challenge. We are a WELS area Lutheran high school, but [we also] have the idea of reaching out to whomever we can; to share the gospel. So even if someone isn’t WELS, or for that matter, even if they are not Christian, if we can still share [the gospel] with them, why not?<sup>8</sup>

Opinions will differ on this matter as well. It even varies among WELS area Lutheran high schools. These area Lutheran high schools have each been blessed, those that allow for outreach in their mission of the school, and those that don’t. Has the decision to allow for outreach in Great Plains’ mission statement been a blessing?

When one considers that every day God’s Word is proclaimed at Great Plains Lutheran High School one can be sure that the gospel is affecting the hearts of its students. As the angels rejoice over one sinner who repents, so the faculty, staff, and students have rejoiced as they experience the work of the Holy Spirit on their own hearts and witness his work on others’. This writer was privileged to see and hear how the Holy Spirit has worked faith in the hearts of a few students in his one year of service there. There was the girl who came to Great Plains at the urging of her grandparents. When she

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<sup>7</sup> Email interview with Pastor Myers, November 19, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Mr. Falak, November 17, 2007.

was welcomed to the school, she knew about Jesus, but very little. Through the Word which she heard everyday, the Holy Spirit worked faith in her heart to trust in Jesus, who forgives her all her sins. In February of her first year at the school, she was moved to confess her new faith by being confirmed in a WELS congregation. There was much rejoicing over this one new believer. God blessed the change in GPLHS' mission statement.

Then there is the girl who was the topic of the teachers' conversations a number of times. She belonged to a heterodox church and attended regularly. As she attended Great Plains and again, heard the true Word everyday, she came to a realization that what her church was teaching was not the truth. She then initiated conversations with her teachers about this and asked what she could do. Throughout the year, she was eager to share how the Holy Spirit led her to love the truth. God's Word worked in her heart. God blessed the change in GPLHS' mission statement.

One of the biggest changes to the Great Plains campus—enabled in part by the new outreach minded mission statement—has been the addition of South Korean students to GPLHS' student body. This program to send South Korean students to Great Plains started in 2006, when the first two students arrived in January. It actually had its beginning a couple years earlier. In an effort to enable South Korean students to learn English, Pastor Yougha Kim of Seoul Canaan Lutheran Church—an ELS mission in Seoul, Korea—started sending students to WELS high schools. For Pastor Kim, there were a couple of benefits to this program. It enabled his young people to learn English, and it gave him an evangelism tool. By giving South Korean families an opportunity to

send their kids to the United States to learn English, he has been able to share the gospel with these families and encourage them to come to church.

Students were originally sent to Luther Preparatory School and Fox Valley Lutheran High School. In time so many South Korean students wanted to come to America that LPS and Fox Valley could not accept any more. An ELS pastor then introduced Pastor Kim to Pastor Myers, and after some planning, two students were sent to Great Plains in January, 2006. In the fall of that year, a total of eight South Koreans were enrolled, and another joined them in January. In the fall of 2007 thirteen South Koreans were enrolled.

Has God blessed this outreach effort? Yes. In South Korea, the young Seoul Canaan Lutheran Church has gained many of its new members through this program. Pastor Kim's wife Margaret notes in an email that the greatest blessings of this program have been the opportunities to evangelize to non-Christians and to strengthen the faith of those who already are Christians. She also mentioned how the students have changed when they return to South Korea. "We can see that they are grown physically, mentally, and spiritually. They are more mature, more independent. They attend church regularly which they didn't do before."<sup>9</sup> God has blessed the change in Great Plains' mission statement.

Great Plains Lutheran High School has as its main mission to equip young people for life and eternity by nurturing them with God's Word. God has blessed that effort. As we examine how Great Plains has grown and changed, we will look at the faculty and staff, the students, the buildings and the supporters, all of which serve to carry out the mission of the school.

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<sup>9</sup> Email interview with Mrs. Margaret Kim, December 5, 2007.



## II.

In order for a school to carry out its mission of equipping young people for life and eternity with God's Word, it needs to have a faculty that is grounded in God's Word and trusts him to produce the results that he knows are best. It is God himself who will bring such a faculty together so that it can carry out his will to train the young people in the truths of his Word.

The first faculty member to be called by God through the GPLHS Association to carry out this task was Pastor Wayne Fischer. Installed as administrator in August, 1995, he was charged with the duties to "1) Promote Christian education by speaking to congregations, elementary schools and interested individuals; 2) Serve as coordinator by organizing and helping establish GPLHS."<sup>10</sup>

Pastor Fischer is often credited as someone with a great vision for Great Plains who faithfully and zealously carried out his task. His ideas for the school were big. His love for this work—to bring such an education to the young people of the Dakota-Montana District—was even greater. That love was matched by his trust that God could accomplish great things for this school. With God's help he had such an impact on starting this school that some say it would not have started without him. He reflected his trust in God in a devotion he delivered on Psalm 121:1-2 for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for the school on June 14, 2006. The devotion had the theme: "GPLHS - Opened With Confident Trust In God." His plans and ideas for Great Plains were often considered too big, too extravagant by some people. Indeed, some of his plans were not put into effect—whether it was because time or money was lacking—but all of his plans were based on that confident trust.

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<sup>10</sup> Degener, 36

Under Pastor Fischer Great Plains had many of its firsts: the first day of school, the first Christmas concert, the first buildings and the first graduation. One might say Pastor Fischer was called to get things going for the school. God saw fit that someone else would keep things going.

When Pastor Fischer accepted a call in 2000 to become the superintendent of Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School, New Ulm, MN, a few tears were shed. But the school had become established and was growing, and God saw fit that a new administrator would see the school through the next transitional stage.

The new administrator was Pastor Daniel Myers. He started as the Dean of students. When Pastor Fischer left for MVL he served as acting Administrator. He was then asked to serve as the schools full time administrator and Dean. It was soon realized that he shared the dreams of Pastor Fischer that Great Plains would become a great school by God's grace. With God's blessing he was able to build on that dream. Like Pastor Fischer, Pastor Myers dreamt big. The school started small with 23 students. Pastor Myers saw no reason the school enrollment could not grow to 100 before the 10<sup>th</sup> year of the school was complete. He saw this as an important number in order for the school to remain viable for the long term future. Not long after he became administrator he made that goal known to the delegates and asked that they make it a priority in their long term plans for the school. By God's grace that goal was accomplished and surpassed.

Pastor Myers was a leader at the school by his own example. The patience and love that he showed ever student is fondly remembered by those who had him as a Dean of students. Many young men wanted to be like him. Others, if asked what a pastor

should be like, would give his name as an example. Pastor Myers also liked to push the students and faculty to the limits of their God given gifts. He expected a lot from them, and they did their best to match his expectations.

Under Pastor Myers Great Plains really started to grow. It grew in student population. Thus, its building space also grew. It grew in its reaching out to the lost world with the gospel through its foreign student program. Its students and staff grew in their faith and trust in God as the school grew.

And then God saw fit that Pastor Myers should go to serve him elsewhere. In 2006 he was called to serve as an administrator for the Lutheran Church in Cameroon. For the students and staff alike it was a sad day when he announced that the Lord led him to take that call. As when Pastor Fischer left, a few tears were shed. But the trust that Pastor Myers showed in God's will for him was instilled in all those around him. Soon they would be able to grow to love a new Dean.

That new Dean is Pastor David Maertz. What will his role be in the history of Great Plains? Only God knows. Pray that with his leadership Great Plains will continue to be Great by God's Grace.

Even before a new Dean was needed, God in his wisdom directed the school's board in a way that would help the school through all its transitions. While Pastor Myers was still at Great Plains his role changed and changed again. It has already been noted that he served as Dean and Administrator. To help in the transitions that God had in his foreknowledge and that everyone else would find out later, he led the board to assign Mr. Bert Falak duties as the Principal of GPLHS.<sup>11</sup> He would be responsible for the faculty and the daily operations of the school, while Pastor Myers remained Administrator and

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<sup>11</sup> GPLHS Annual Meeting Minutes, May 5, 2006.

Dean with a lightened workload. This proved to be a wise decision because it allowed for a smooth transition when Pastor Myers accepted his call to Africa and Pastor Maertz assumed his duties as the Dean of Students. Now, Mr. Falak is serving as principal and administrator that allows Pastor Maertz to dedicate his time to the students as their Dean.

Under these men God blessed the school with a faculty and staff that are just as dedicated and talented as any. When the Great Plains first opened it had four full time faculty members plus part time teachers and other staff. Since then the faculty has also grown in numbers to match the needs of the students. Currently Great Plains has 11 full time teachers, 2 part time and many others on staff. For the 2007-2008 school year there are a total of 29 people on staff, including coaches. That is a significant increase from its first year.

It would be impossible to show how God blessed Great Plains through every one of these teachers and staff members in a paper of this nature. It would take a book. Each of them has served faithfully with the gifts that God gave them according to the assignments given them. Each of them has a unique story that reflects God's goodness to this little high school. Whether it is the school secretary or financial secretary who assist with the behind-the-scenes day to day operations of the school; or the math teachers who have given over 100 students the skills necessary to function in a business oriented world; or the English teachers who relentlessly hone the writing and speaking skills of the future lay people, pastors and teachers of the Wisconsin Synod and the foreign students; or the science teacher who instills in the students a love for the wonderful and amazing creation God has entrusted to our care; or the social studies teachers who explore with them the world they live in; or the music teacher who inspires the young people to sing and play

musical instruments to the glory and praise of God; or the cooks who meticulously prepare meals to nourish the bodies of the students and staff; or all the people who have faithfully and zealously given their time and talents back to the Lord in their service to this school—no matter who it is none of them ever get the credit they deserve. Thank you! The staff has kept things running smoothly. The faculty has led the students to academic scores above state and national averages for years. Yet, I'm sure that all of them would ask that credit be given to the one who gives all things, our Lord and Savior.

Without forgetting about all the faithful work that the entire staff of Great Plains has done, there is one more staff member who needs to be mentioned. She needs to be mentioned because one can not go anywhere to talk to people who are connected to Great Plains without talking about the Dorm Mom, Carla Klug. She is infamous among Great Plains acquaintances for being the lady who “does it all.” When one asks people what she does, they have a puzzled look on their face and then correct your question by saying, “You mean, what doesn't she do.” She is dorm designer and meal preparer. She is, according to her own words, “Mom, bus driver, maintenance and mechanic woman, warden, nurse and cook.”

Carla is in every sense of the word “mom” to all the students in the dorm. The students will readily admit this, their stomachs tell them to. Every graduate who lived in the dorm will fondly remember how she cured their sore throats with her “witches brew.” After athletic events she recalls how she is always exhausted from cheering, because she considers every player her child. If you sit down and talk to her about life at Great Plains, you will quickly realize that she could write a book just based on the antics of the

dorm and driving a less than perfect bus.<sup>12</sup> If you ask her why she keeps doing what she does after 11 years, she'll probably reply "It's because of the kids." Her saddest memories are of students that leave for one reason or another. Her favorite memories are when those students come back to visit and say "hi." May God continue to give her a mother's heart as she cares for the students that the parents entrust to her.

### III.

The main reason for starting Great Plains Lutheran High School was to provide a Christian secondary education to the youth of the Dakota-Montana District. It is all about the students. When looking into the history of a school, all the best stories involve the students in one way or the other. The funniest stories a teacher will tell involve students. The saddest stories the staff reflects on involve students. The most uplifting stories that echo in the hallways of a high school almost always involve the students. Who are they? Where have they come from? How has their education at Great Plains Lutheran High School affected them?

On the first day of school on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1996 GPLHS welcomed 17 freshmen and 6 sophomore students. Twenty three students is not a lot by today's standards. In fact, some teachers would consider that a small class to teach in one room, much less one school. But this was a good number for this new school. The board had determined that "the minimum number of students required to open school should be 20 students which would include at least 6 sophomores."<sup>13</sup>

In May 1999 the first eight graduates of Great Plains Lutheran High School walked across the stage to receive their diplomas. Since that joyous celebration 117 other

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<sup>12</sup> See Appendix *Anecdotes from Carla*

<sup>13</sup> GPLHS Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, August 26, 1995

students have graduated. Some will say that an important milestone for any small high school is when it has over 100 students enrolled in a year. Then the school becomes recognized as a school that is here to stay. Well, not only has Great Plains surpassed that enrollment number, but it has graduated more than that! Thank God for that blessing!

Since then Great Plains has either maintained or increased the enrollment. In the 2006-'07 school year Great Plains reached a milestone when it surpassed 100 students in enrollment. It also graduated its 100<sup>th</sup> student that same year. The following year 116 students were enrolled. Many of the leaders of GPLHS are now looking forward to the next important milestone, 130-140 students. If God blesses the school with this many students they will need to have in place plans for expansion. How will God bless the school; 200 students? More?

The students of Great Plains are from all over the Dakota-Montana District, the western edge of the Minnesota District, Arizona, Alaska, and other states. There have also been a number who have come from outside the United States. Students have come from as far away as South Korea, Germany and Austria. One quarter to one third of the students live in the immediate vicinity of Watertown. Those that do not live in town live in the dormitory on campus. Whether they come from near or far each of them brings their unique God given gifts and personalities to the school and another heart on which the Holy Spirit can work every day.

The first year Great Plains was open, the out of town students had the unique opportunity to live in a house with the "Dorm Mom," Carla Klug. Sixteen 14-15 year old boys and girls shared two bathrooms and four showers. They grew into a unique type of family. They learned how to share each others space, take turns doing chores around the

house, and how to take care of the things God had entrusted to their care. Whether it came to eating supper together, or doing the dishes and other chores after supper, it was easy to see them function as a big family.

Carla, the school staff and volunteers took care of the students well. Yet at the same time they did not have many luxuries to which today's teenagers have grown accustomed. So when they received a new couch from a donor, or a game table or some other gift, they really took care of it.

As the school grew so the space for student housing needed to grow. When they started building the dorm in the summer of 1997, the students' acquired sense of ownership and their desire to help out where needed really showed itself. Many afternoons and weekends you could find the students volunteering their time by helping to set the foundation, back-filling after the foundation was poured, and in many other ways. They were getting a new dorm and they were proud of it!

Since then the school has grown even more. As the student body increased and new classes came in that did not experience building a dorm, that initial sense of ownership and pride in their living quarters started to wane. When a family gets bigger, there is naturally more to take care of and likewise more responsibilities. Carla notes that as the years went on, the students started to take the things God gave them for granted. They didn't always help out as much as before. There may have been the mindset, "Someone else will take care of it." With a growing school, there may be some growing pains. So Carla has found herself teaching the students more and more of the basic life skills. Whether it came to teaching them how to do the dishes or instilling in them the



skill to be reliable in their daily chores, Carla has taught it all. With her help the students continue to learn, grow, and gradually become more responsible.

In January, 2006, just in time for the second semester, Great Plains grew in a way that extended beyond the borders of the United States. The dorm welcomed two students from South Korea. That first semester proved to be a blessing to both the school and the students. The students learned how to interact and share their faith with students very different from themselves. It was a great opportunity for the American students to get a taste of a foreign nation without leaving town. And it gave the South Koreans an American education where they could learn English and the truth of God's Word.

In the fall of 2006 the foreign population of Great Plains grew tremendously. Eight South Koreans were welcomed to the campus where they would have an experience that would change their lives. In a matter of days, the South Koreans were asked to learn a new culture, new customs, new guidelines, and a new language. How did it turn out?

In a very short amount of time, Great Plains realized it had a lot to learn about working with foreign students, and the foreign students realized they had a lot to learn about life at a Lutheran high school in America. How do you assimilate eight South Korean teenagers whose language skills range from excellent to poor? Most of all, it takes patience and understanding. It takes patience as you try to help them speak English as much as possible even though they feel more comfortable speaking Korean with their close friends. It takes patience as you help them understand why certain rules are in place that they don't have in Korea. It takes understanding that they won't always like American food. It takes understanding that they are in most cases brand new Christians

whose level of sanctification still has lots of room to increase. This year of adjustments proved to be a challenge for the students—South Korean and American—and the staff. Out of those challenges God gave great blessings.

When the Koreans were adjusting to American life there were some difficult discipline situations. New Christians do not always understand that there are some things we do not do because God does not allow it. New Christians do not always understand that we do things out of thanks for what Jesus did for us. As the year went on and they heard God's Word every day the Holy Spirit helped them to understand those things. Most importantly, they learned what the forgiveness really means for them.

It is fun to watch friendships form between people of two totally different cultures. It is fun to watch their reaction to each other's food and culture. It is fun to see the staff grow in their love and understanding for these students. It is fun to hear how the Koreans bring their eagerness to hear God's Word back to South Korea. It is fun to imagine how God will cause his Word to work on them in the future.

On American and Koreans alike the devil does not stop terrorizing God's children even though they go to a Christian school. In fact, he works even harder at times. The students at Great Plains struggled with many of the things with which other teenagers struggle. As the years go by the broken families reflect the evidence of sin in this world, and the young high school students are given more crosses to bear. This is an unfortunate fact of life in a sinful world. At times these crosses were too much for them and the students acted out as a result. At other times their own temptations to sin overtook them and they gave in. So over the years there have been a couple suspensions and expulsions.

This is always a sad chapter in a school's history. Pray that God would guide and comfort them with his Word.

But despite the growing pains of this unique family and the daily temptations the devil uses to lead these students astray, God has continued to work on the hearts of these students through his Word. Every evening after supper the students have gathered around God's Word in devotions. They have heard it every day in chapel. Some of this former tutor's favorite memories were the times at nightly bed checks when he would find the students reading a portion of Scripture or a devotion to find answers for their daily struggles. Through his Word God has helped these students fight many of the temptations that come to them and God has preserved their faith. Some of Carla's favorite memories are when the graduates who struggled with temptations in high school return to say thank you for her patience and help. This patience and help can only come from the understanding that Jesus died for their sins too.

That news of sins forgiven has worked in some GPLHS graduates the desire to go on to train for the full time ministry where they can share that news with other people. After the first graduation in 1999, two students went on to Martin Luther College. Since then, as many as 16 Great Plains graduates have attended MLC at once. Of those that started training for the full time ministry, seven have graduated. What a blessing to come out of a new school! May God continue to give more and more GPLHS graduates the desire to dedicate their lives in service to him.

An important aspect of any high school is the way it enables the students to use and develop those God given talents. Whether in academics, arts, or athletics, a good

school will offer a variety of ways for the students to give glory to God by using the talents he has given them. Great Plains has done that since its doors opened.

A favorite memory of a number of people who have close connections to the school was the very first sacred Christmas concert the students performed the first December it was open. Every student participated in this concert to “Celebrate God’s Grace in the Gift of His Son.”<sup>14</sup> Those people are quick to remember that it was not the best concert ever performed. That didn’t matter to them. They were proud of the gift that God had given them with this school. They were excited to praise him for this and all other blessings. And no matter how it sounded, they were overjoyed to witness all the students signing God’s praises in what was their school that so many had worked so hard to begin.

Since that first concert, the choirs at Great Plains have greatly improved. Now there are enough students for a freshman choir, a concert choir, and what is known as the Honor Choir. They have become accustomed to going to WELS choral festivals. They have also been able to take their songs on the road, proclaiming God’s Word in song, giving thanks to God for the school, and giving thanks to the many congregations that support the school.

Students began participating in a band program in 1998. Until January 2007 the band was moved around from room to room for practices. When the science and music addition were completed, they moved into what was thought a large room. As the addition was being planned, the band numbered around 16 players. The year the room was completed, that number jumped to the 30’s because of a scheduling change. What a blessing! Even though the room may now be too small for such a large band, no one is

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<sup>14</sup> Theme of GPLHS’ first Christmas concert, December 1996.

saddened that God has given so many of the students at Great Plains musical talent and the desire to use it.

The students have been able use their God given athletic abilities since the first winter season. Boy's basketball and girl's volleyball were the first sports offered and then track followed in the spring. The first few seasons the boy's basketball team enjoyed some good success, but the games didn't come easy. The talent was there, but the willingness of other teams to play them wasn't. Because Great Plains was a non-accredited school (it took a four grade high school to become accredited—Great Plains didn't have a senior class until its third year) schools had to file extra paperwork just to play them. Since then, the caliber of the teams and the facilities has improved to the point where schools are calling Great Plains for events.

Over the eleven years of athletic participation, the students have enjoyed mixed success. Track and cross-country have enjoyed the most long term success under Coach Greg Diersen, one of the schools first teachers. This is due in part because of the numbers of students eager to participate. But it also is a reflection of their dedication and desire to perform to the best of their abilities. In its third season the boys track team went to state. Had the school been accredited, they would have qualified sooner. In the first year of cross-country the boy's team won third in state. What accomplishments for such a new school! God has blessed their efforts!

Football wasn't added until 2002. It was a tough program to get started because of the numbers needed to put a team together. It was also tough because of the costs involved with all the equipment and the financial situation of GPLHS. After much discussion, it was decided that the benefits outweighed the risks and football was added.

Once football was added it has been good for this school. It put Great Plains on the map in the minds of other local high schools. It gave the students and families a homecoming of the sort that is enjoyed by other schools. It got more people involved in the school. It helped with recruitment. It enabled young men to participate in a school activity who may not otherwise have had that chance. While not everyone can run a 5k or play basketball, there is a wide range of skills that can be used in football. And finally, it promoted sportsmanship that is consistent with their Christian values that other people could observe.

Since it has been added, the young men have enjoyed going out on the field and working together as a team and building camaraderie. They enjoyed their best success the fall of 2007 when they made it into the state playoffs, playing under the theme: “Focus on the Prize!” The prize is Christ, who won heaven for us.

With all the talk about athletic success or benefits of teamwork, there is one thing that makes athletics at Great Plains special. It has given the students tremendous opportunities to witness their faith. The stories that the coaches like to tell the most are when other teams notice how GPLHS students play because of their faith. There are the times other teams noticed how GPLHS students encouraged each other despite the score. There are the times the other teams notice the good sportsmanship shown to a team that isn't so sportsman-like. There are the times a cross-country or track opponent looks at a GPLHS jersey and asks, “Where is Great Plains? What's Lutheran?” The coach then quietly walks away so that he can stand back and watch the athlete explain and witness to them what GPLHS is all about—a Christ centered high school in Watertown, SD. People have been watching the student athletes of this young school, and they've noticed

something different with them compared to the rest of the world. That something different is their faith in action.

#### IV.

In order carry out its mission of assisting parents in equipping young people for life and eternity with the truth of God's Word, Great Plains would need facilities in order to hold classes and to house the out of town students. This is one of the greatest expenses in any school, but it is a necessary expense. By examining the buildings Great Plains has used and built we will see how they have helped the school carry out its mission of teaching these young people God's Word, and how they are evidence of the school's growth.

In 1988 the Great Plains Lutheran High School Association decided that Watertown, SD, would be the home of its future school.<sup>15</sup> In 1990 the Association made its first payment on 40 acres of land on the north side of Watertown purchased from Mrs. Leona Kluck.<sup>16</sup> It was originally planned that the Association would begin building Phase I of its four phase building plan in the fall of 1996 to be finished in time for school to start in the fall of 1997.<sup>17</sup>

As this Association has found out, God often has different plans in mind. It was later decided to move up the projected opening of the school to the fall of 1995. It was discovered that the Watertown school district would possibly vacate one of its elementary school buildings, Grant School, in 1995, opening it up for the Association to lease until it

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<sup>15</sup> *Focus: Dakota-Montana Lutheran High School Newsletter*, June-July, 1988.

<sup>16</sup> *Focus*, October, 1989 and February, 1990.

<sup>17</sup> *Focus*, June, 1992.

could build its own school building. This helped the decision to try to push the opening of the school up to the fall of 1995.<sup>18</sup>

The date for opening the school would change again. The Association was having difficulties calling an Administrator for the school. They began calling for an administrator in 1994. It wasn't until Pastor Fischer was called (the sixth man called) and later installed in August 1995 that they had an administrator. Also, after some construction delays for the Watertown Public School District's new elementary school, the Grant School building would not be available until December, 1995 or January, 1996.<sup>19</sup> Thus, the 1995 opening would not be possible. As God knows best, so this worked out for the better so that they could better plan for the school's opening which would eventually be the fall of 1996.

The first year and a half, the students of Great Plains neither lived nor attended classes on the 40 acre property on the north side of Watertown. The off campus students lived in a house and they attended school at Grant School's building. The house was manageable, but small at times. The classroom building was meant for small in stature grade school children, not growing high school children. So after that first year of school, they were eager to start building their own buildings.

Even before ground was broken in May, 1997 for the first building, the Association celebrated a milestone and blessing from God. On January 31, 1997 the Association held a Land Debt celebration. On that day, Mr. Cameron Buri, the President of the Great Plains Lutheran High School Association Board, presented Mrs. Leona

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<sup>18</sup> *Focus*, June, 1994.

<sup>19</sup> GPLHS Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, March 4, 1995.



Kluck with the final land payment. God blessed Great Plains with a plot of land they could call their own.

The first building to be built on that land was the dorm. This dorm was designed so that parents would feel comfortable leaving their students at a home away from home. It was designed to look like a house. In the beginning planning stages the girls and boys dorms were often referred to as cottages. It was intentionally not supposed to look like a dorm.

In order to build this building where the Association wanted to on their 40 acres of land, they literally had to move a hill. Through many volunteer hours, including a grandfather, father, and son all working at the same time, this task was accomplished.

After many rain delays the dorm was finally ready to be occupied in January, 1998. Many volunteer hours went into building this dorm, and it turned out very nice. Instead of sharing two bathrooms in a house, there was now a bathroom in each dorm room meant for two students. The students would have some privacy. The dorm included an apartment for the dorm mom, a kitchen, lounge and TV areas, game areas, rooms to practice piano or other instruments, and computer stations. Pastor Fischer was someone who stood for excellence. The dorm reflected that. On May 2, 1998 they gave thanks to God for his gifts at the dorm's dedication.<sup>20</sup>

The next step was building an academic center. Before they broke ground, they considered a few different options. They could purchase a vacant church to convert into classroom space. They could build a Miracle Span steel building to temporarily cover

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<sup>20</sup> See Appendix, Watertown Public Opinion Article, *Great Plains Lutheran H.S. dedicates first dorm*. May 4, 1998.

immediate needs until something more permanent could be afforded. Or they could build as soon as possible the original plans they had for the school.

The Association decided buying the church was not in their best interests. As excellent as the original plans for the academic building were, it turned out they were a little more than the association could handle at the time. The original plans called for an approximately 4 million dollar building, including an auditorium on the first floor and a gym on the second floor.<sup>21</sup> Neither time nor money was on their side for such a building. So the Association decided to go through with the plans to build a one story Miracle Span steel building that would give them adequate classroom space for the time being. An interesting note: “Before the meeting adjourned that decided this, there were already commitments for \$20,000 towards the building of the shell of the building so work could be done on it during the winter months.”<sup>22</sup>

Ground was broken for this building in 1998. Despite a few delays here and there, there didn't seem to be any real setbacks in the construction of the building. It was built with the plans to add on to it when needed. In this building were eight classrooms, including a science equipped room, a computer room, and reception and office space. In the fall of 1999 the Great Plains began holding classes in the new building.

Already at the December 4, 1999 GPLHS Delegates meeting it was noted that the school would need a second dorm soon. Great Plains was growing! At this same meeting they stressed the importance of building a gymnasium. It would provide a venue for many of the schools functions.

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<sup>21</sup> *Building on our Foundation: 1 Corinthians 3:11*, a promotional booklet for GPLHS.

<sup>22</sup> GPLHS Special Association Meeting Minutes, June 18, 1998.

The gym, then, would be the next building added to the Great Plains campus. Construction began in May, 2000. Work needed to progress quickly. Great Plains was scheduled to host a WELS Regional Choral Festival in November of that year. When school opened in the fall, they were able to hold the opening service in the gym. That was another grateful day for the GPLHS family, even if there were still large holes in the walls where construction needed to be completed. By the November 4<sup>th</sup> Delegates meeting, the gym was completed.

This addition to the school included the gymnasium itself, but it also included an area for a canteen kitchen, a stage area, and a mezzanine that would eventually be turned into a weight room. The gym addition has been a great blessing for Great Plains because, in a sense, it put them on the map in the community and among area public high schools. Many people continue to be impressed with the facilities this small school in Watertown has. Because Great Plains is centrally located in its athletics conference, it has the opportunity to host many events. This brings in many people to see this little Lutheran high school and gives the Great Plains students and families the chance to witness their faith by their actions.

Since that time the dorm was bursting at the seams. It was at capacity. Then one year, a student joined at semester. That forced the Dean to call a day where all the students switched rooms to make room for this one student. All the girls moved to the boy's side, all the boys moved to the girl's side.

So at a special Association meeting in March, 2006 it was decided to go ahead with a dorm expansion. There had been talk of adding a second dorm building, but it was more feasible to add on to the existing dorm. The plans nearly doubled the dorm in size,

adding more student rooms, another lounge/game room, laundry rooms, and a Tutor's suite. Ground was broken on April 12, 2006, and work progressed quickly.

The schedule for this project was very tight. With God's blessing, there were no major delays in construction. The school was able to get a residency permit—allowing students to live in the finished addition—the day before students arrived for the 2006-2007 school year.

The same year dorm addition was completed the Association approved an expansion to the classroom building. Plans were drawn up for a new science lab/classroom and music room. Construction on this addition began in the fall and was ready to be used shortly after the second semester began. These additions proved to be a blessing because it gave much needed space for the science classes and music department. It also freed up two other classrooms that can be used for other purposes.

In the summer of 2007 workers began and finished yet another building project. This one, however, was not an addition, but a remodeling of the office and reception area in the administration building. The faculty and staff have been raving about this work because it provided the faculty with a much needed conference room, it gave more space to the school and financial secretary, and gave private offices to the Principal and Dean.

There is a general consensus among the delegates of the Great Plains Lutheran High School Association that they will build as the school grows. The school has grown tremendously. Just 11 short years ago, Great Plains was leasing a vacated grade school and housed students in a house in Watertown. Now, they have a dorm that is capable of housing approximately 84 students, a classroom and administration building with state of

the art technology, and gym that is well known by the community. And already, there is talk going on among the delegates about how they can continue expanding.

Has God blessed this school in its growth? He certainly has. He has blessed the school with willing volunteers who have pitched in at every building project. He has blessed them with committed individuals and congregations to help fund all of these expansions. Most importantly, he has blessed everyone with a commitment to do whatever it takes so that the gospel may be proclaimed among his young people.

## V.

A school like Great Plains Lutheran High School does not begin and continue because one person supports it. It must first of all have the blessing of God who gives all things. It must also have the blessings that God enables many individuals and congregations to give to the school. It would be next to impossible to mention all the individuals and congregations that God has moved to support Great Plains. But it might serve well to mention a few of the ways that God has enabled people to support the school.

The first source of support that should be mentioned is all the congregations in the Great Plains Lutheran High School Association. In March 1980, DMLHS (Dakota-Montana High School—the original name of the association) started with 59 individual members and eight member congregations.<sup>23</sup> To the best of this writer's knowledge, the number of member congregations has grown to 48.<sup>24</sup> There are hundreds of individuals who have offered their prayers and financial support of the school, even if they are not members of the Association.

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<sup>23</sup> *History of Great Plains Lutheran High School Association*, [www.gplhs.org](http://www.gplhs.org)

<sup>24</sup> See Appendix *Association Congregations*, [www.gplhs.org](http://www.gplhs.org)

The first couple of years after Great Plains opened there was a question that was on many people's minds. Will we be able to have a school next year? Will we make it one more year? Will we make it through the semester? Financial difficulties are not unique to Great Plains. Many churches and schools have struggled to stay open. At times faculty and staff salaries were delayed. A few times the land payments came down to the wire. But through it all, thick and thin, the Lord has provided.

One way he has provided is through the Development Directors whose task it is to tell people about the school and tell them how by God's grace it is a blessing to others and blessed by others. Pastor Robert Hankwitz was the development director early on in the school's existence. A few years after his resignation Pastor Gerald Geiger accepted the call to serve as Development Director. Each of these men have helped enable many people give hundreds of thousands of dollars and gifts to the school, without which it may not exist.

In 1998 a GPLHS Auxiliary was established to promote interest in the school and to give financial support by supplying funds for needed projects. Around the time the gym was completed a GPLHS Booster Club was also established to support and fund various activities. It does this primarily through concession stand sales. God has blessed the school in many ways through each of these groups. From music supplies to football supplies; from graduation pictures to plaques, each of these contributes to the mission of the school.

Over the years, many people have contributed large amounts of money to support the mission of the school. It didn't all come at once. But it did come. Some substantial loans have been paid off, and some new loans have been acquired. When celebrating the

10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school, many people were encouraged to give “birthday presents.” God blessed this effort and opened the hearts of many to contribute. It was at this time that it was announced that a bank loan was completely paid off, loans with churches and individuals were substantially reduced, and \$300,000 was given towards the dorm and academic building additions.

Great Plains has not lived on a few large donations alone, but on many smaller but no less loving gifts. One such example of a spontaneous gift came on the opening weekend of the school. Someone had donated a half of a cow to the school, and it would arrive on the weekend. The dorm did not yet have a freezer big enough to store the meat. That afternoon, a lady arrived with a freezer in her truck that she thought she would donate to the school. As it turns out, the timing couldn't have been better. There are numerous other stories similar to that where God has led people to support the school at just the right time. Whether it was with couches or food, maintenance equipment or sports equipment, God has blessed Great Plains through his people.

Underneath every good school is a foundation of fervent and dedicated supporters. This support comes in various ways, as has been mentioned. Great Plains has those who strongly support it in prayer, in encouragement, in commitment, and in funds. Of the many individual and congregation supporters (there are too many to list individually), there is one that is delighted to serve in the background, yet stands out as one that supports the school in a very significant way. This supporter of Great Plains Lutheran High School is the “little thrift store that could,” Good Stewards, Inc.

Good Stewards, Inc., or GSI as it is affectionately known, was founded upon the idea of Mr. Roger Frey. Almost simultaneous to the opening and growing of Great Plains

Lutheran High School, GSI has also opened and grown. This thrift store has committed 75% of its profits towards the support of GPLHS. Already after its first year of business, GSI was blessed by God to be able to contribute \$11,000 dollars. Since then, GSI has contributed over \$630,000 towards GPLHS, including over \$130,000 dollars in 2006! All this has come from items donated to the store by individuals from all over Watertown and even the Dakota-Montana District. This money has gone towards many things that are important for the school to function: student financial aid, technology for the students learning, bleachers in the gymnasium, black-top pavement for the parking lot (a new blessing for GPLHS!), materials for the classroom, and various other academic and athletic supplies. Through this store, God has provided some very unexpected, yet overflowing blessings.<sup>25</sup>

At the beginning there were some concerns about GSI. Not only did people wonder if it would be able to support itself and last long enough to be a blessing to GPLHS, they also wondered if a thrift store is something the church should be involved in. The debate about whether a church or Christian school should use a store as a means of some support (which includes people outside of our fellowship indirectly supporting the school) may always exist.

There is, however, no debate as to how much GSI has been a blessing from God, both to GPLHS and the community.<sup>26</sup> Since its opening, GSI has out-grown its original home and has moved into a larger building. In 2004 the store moved from a store front building on 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SE in Watertown to an old NAPA store on Kemp Ave. In 2007 it was able to pay off the purchase price of the building and own it outright, while still

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<sup>25</sup> For a history of GSI see Appendix, *Good Stewards, Inc.*

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix *Good Stewards, Inc. Projects, 1996-2006, GSI Projects Summary, and An Ode to GSI.*



contributing 75% of its profits towards GPLHS. It now has two paid employees and many willing volunteers.

Will GSI be able to continue the amount of support that it has contributed to GPLHS? Only God knows and only time will tell. In the mean time, mounds of donated items continue to collect in and outside (overflowing) the store, and many prayers of thanks are directed heaven-ward for this overflowing blessing from God.

### **Conclusion**

“Great Plains Lutheran High School—Great by God’s Grace.” It is indeed by God’s grace that Great Plains Lutheran High School has become what it is today. When it opened it was a small school. It had no buildings to call its own. There were a lot of uncertainties. By God’s grace, that has changed. Over one hundred young people have gone through its doors and heard God’s Word every day. Great Plains sits on a beautiful campus on the north side of Watertown, SD, with some very nice facilities. Not only has God removed the uncertainty of whether the school will stay open, they are looking to grow.

“Great Plains Lutheran High School—Great by God’s Grace.” Has God enabled Great Plains to carry out its mission? The last 11 years show that he has. Since the day it opened, students have sat at Jesus’ feet and listened to his Word in chapel and in class. The faculty has been committed to educating the students to the best of their God given abilities, and he has blessed their efforts. Through daily encouragements the students have lived their lives out of love and thanks to God. From day one many people have committed to supporting this school so that its caring, Christian environment would remain for many generations. Many people look forward to the day the second

generation of students walk through the hallways of Great Plains. It is only by God's grace that they are able to imagine that. After eleven years, that day grows closer and closer. By God's great grace, that too will happen at Great Plains Lutheran High School.

**S.D.G.**

## Appendix 1 The Evolution of the Mission Statement

The current mission statement of Great Plains Lutheran High School since its inception is:

*The mission of Great Plains Lutheran High School is to assist Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod congregations, their families, and others in fellowship, nurture our youth for time and for eternity by educating the total student—spiritually, intellectually and physically—in a caring Christian environment.*

Watertown has an awareness group that trains business people about Watertown. This group asked us to make a presentation to them. Since the administrator was gone at the Area Lutheran High School Principals Meeting, Mr. Bert Falak addressed the group. After sharing the mission statement with the business people, they plied him with questions as to the availability of the school for students other than WELS people. They were convinced on the basis of the mission statement that it was a closed-door group for WELS only.

After being perceived as a closed door community, the faculty discussed the situation and did not want to send a message of exclusivity to the community. Through the administrator, the concerns were shared with the Board and the Board allowed the faculty to work on a new mission statement.

After much discussion and deliberation over wording, keeping the mission intact and still opening the doors for evangelism opportunities, the faculty presented this proposal to the Board.

*Great Plains Lutheran High School exists to equip students for life and for eternity by partnering with parents in training their children spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically in a caring Christian environment.*

Concern was expressed by the pastors on the Board about the use of partnership. They noted that you could not partner with parents who were not in a faith relationship with Jesus Christ and for concern over fellowship issues.

The faculty then rewrote the mission statement in this way.

*Great Plains Lutheran High School exists to equip students for life and for eternity by training young people spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically in a caring Christian environment.*

This mission statement was accepted by the Board as the mission statement for the school pending approval of the delegates at the Delegate Meeting on November 2, 2002. Today we present it to you for your consideration and approval.

Some important items to keep in mind are detailed on the next page.

## Evolution of the Mission Statement – page 2

All supporting documents in the handbook on page 2 and on page 3 will stay virtually untouched. In other words, the background and setting in which this mission statement is placed has not changed. The wording of the mission statement has been changed so as to allow people on the outside to see that we are open to evangelism.

This does not mean:

- That we will recruit from Missouri Synod, ELCA or any other Lutheran schools.
- That we will recruit from any other religion.
- That we will change our fellowship policies or principles in any way.
- That we will change the primary focus of the school from serving WELS students and their families.
- That we will seek to change any of the foundational principles of the school and its purpose.
- That we will become a reform school for those unmanageable anywhere else.

This does mean that:

- We will present an evangelism oriented invitation to the unchurched to join us.
- We will actively consider the opportunities we have to influence our community by reaching out to the unchurched as we have opportunity through Jesus Cares, Teens in Ministry and other ways to contact the unchurched.
- The five-year plan of the Board will be sensitive to the opportunities to reach out to others with the message of salvation through our school.
- Any student who might be led to attend school here will attend chapel, religion classes and sign an agreement not to cause problems in areas where they may disagree or misunderstand.
- We will pray that God may use the school to reach the lost, even if only one, so that they may enjoy heaven by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

## Appendix 2

### Anecdotes from Carla

Here are some stories I have thought of since talking to you.

One major change I have seen is going from brown bag lunches; packing their own each day-to having lunches catered at dorm where they had to walk from school to dorm rain, mud, and snow. Then we catered lunches in lobby at school with me hauling cookies and fruit daily. I would fix full meal every Thursday and haul it to school on my trusty cart from the dorm, sometimes shoveling snow as I went so could get through. Now we fix lunches right at school serving 2 lunches daily. Our newest addition is a used convection oven that makes "Crispy Fries" students are thrilled and so is the cooks.

People ask if I'm a teacher I say no but I try to teach daily living skills. Here are some I've tried to show:

At old dorm where we sat for family style meals.

Manners How to pass food at the table some are only for themselves.

One student grabbed turkey off platter by the hand full. I said you don't use your hand so he threw the meat back on the platter full of turkey.

Another meal was macaroni and cheese and slices of ham. We were eating and one of the boys took his fork he was eating with and stuck it in the mac n cheese bowl for another bite after he had licked his fingers too. I looked up all the other kids were sitting with their mouths open waiting to see what I was going to do. THINK FAST I grabbed the bowl of mac n cheese dumped the whole thing on his plate and said no one else wants it after you put your dirty fork in it. We all got up cleared table and let him sit with his full plate. He sat for along time Finally he goes I can't eat all this.

Other skills they come without that at times prove interesting:

How to use a snow shovel

How to vaccum some never figure this out

Hand dish washing and laundry-Can my silk boxers bewashed?

put garbage in trashcan Not on floor

How to fry an egg and let them though some away because they broke the yoke.

Give driving lessons

Funny game story: 1st year boys basketball game. Everybody could be on team that wanted no matter how much skill. During a game last guy on bench was put in as sub. Hardly knew which way to run or go. He was fouled so got to shot freethrow 1 in 1. They had to get him to the freethrow line. Using a crazy form he launched the ball and made the shot. The gym exploded in cheering and clapping so he struts of the floor and they had to go get him for his second shot. I don't think he ever made another basket in his career

During the flood of '97 we took the students to a Mexican trailer court to help with flooded homes. While we hauled belongings from one trailer to another the neighbors sat on their steps watching us work smoking pot. It was a realization lesson for us. the kids could not believe how many people live in one trailer house and how messy they were and the fact that they just watched us work hard didn't say thank you We got back to the dorm and the talk was about how lucky we are and they hadn't realized it. It really made them do some thinking. Then we had to all go get shots because we had been in flood remains and water

Your first bus ran well just didn't have alot of uphill power or get up and go. We had several laughs at my ability to be passed by others all the time. We finally passed someone for the first time and cheers broke out, even if it was only a tractor and load of hay.

One year Dean Myers told the students they were getting uniforms to wear, had them picking them out of books and sounded so serious, he had them worried. He kept it up for months, so on April Fools Day They had a mom make matching skirts and they all went to school in uniform guys and gals. They made front page news that day.

Year end water fights have become something they look forward to and always get someone wet that wasn't planning on being part of it. Of course we always have the story of Cindy Trying to spray Travis in the kitchen for picking on her .She said I'm Going to get you Travis. He seen what was going to happen so he encouraged her to get him wet. She was holding spray nozzel backwards so when she finally dare do it she sprayed herself in the face with three other boy classmates watching from other side of counter. She didn't live that down for awhile.

The first fall in this dorm with the hay just out back brought the mice in. they would get stuck in the dishwasher door with only the tail hanging out for me to find . Then one morning there was one in the kichen running around I screamed for two boys to come help. They chased it out from freezer right at me I got it, smashed it under my foot. At old dorm the mice were in the walls I would have to go in rooms at night and pound the walls to scare them so they would quit making scratching noises. I'll have you know I don't like mice but had to look brave. Then I had a Tutor that got his finger in the mouse trap 2 times trying to set it after I told him not to put his finger there. Liz and I laughed til tears came.

While building the class rooms some phone lines got wet and sent a 911 call at midnight after a big rain. Officers came and had to walk around the new building. It was clay and mud. When they came back up to dorm they were full of mud knee down. They had to hose off before getting in their cars.

I have seen many growing pains and laughs though the years.

These are a few of the stories that stick out in my memory. Hope they help give you a vision of GPLHS Growing over the years.

Appendix 3

Watertown Public Opinion Article, Great Plains Lutheran H. S. dedicates first dorm. May 4, 1998

*This article appeared in the Monday, May 4 issue of the Watertown Public Opinion.*

**Great Plains Lutheran H.S. dedicates first dorm**

By WAYNE SPECHT  
P.O. Staff Writer

With a snip of the obligatory ribbon, Great Plains Lutheran High School faculty, staff and students dedicated a new dormitory Saturday at the school's new campus in northeast Watertown.

Development Director Robert Hankwitz said completion of the 14,000 square-foot dormitory, which can house 44 students and cost just under \$1 million, marks the first phase of what will become a permanent campus located on 40 acres between Highway 81 and 14th Avenue NE.

"We have always been led by a strong commitment to Lutheran secondary education with the support of the prayers and offerings of over 6,400 members in 38 Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod congregations."

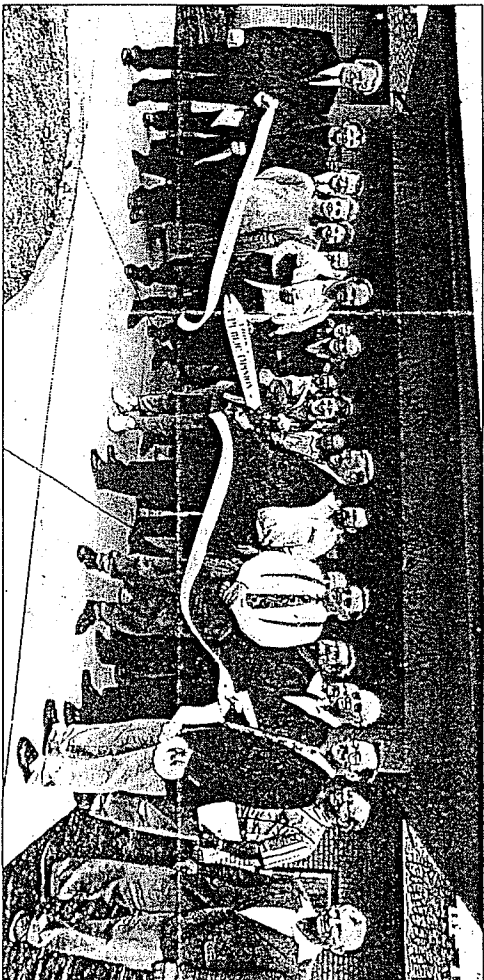
Each room in the new dormitory provides a 12-foot by 20-foot living area for two students and is furnished with a bathroom.

The building also features a common areas for greeting visitors, watching television, a music practice area, study room, laundry, offices and private living quarters for residence assistants and a supervisor.

Puetz Construction of Mitchell was the general contractor and the building's design was developed by snifoss architects of Fargo.

Construction of future campus structures is expected to continue during the next several years and work on the

*Saturday, May 2*  
*the first phase of a four building program*  
*Northern Watertown*



*Return to Great Plains LHS*

**NEW DORMITORY DEDICATED** — With a snip of the obligatory ribbon, Great Plains Lutheran High School board development director, Carla Klug, residence supervisor, Pastor Wayne Fischer, school administrator, and Great Plains Board President Cameron Burt, (Public Opinion photo by Wayne Specht)

entire \$7.5 million campus is expected to be completed in the next decade. Hankwitz said next on the drawing board is the \$4 million main building consisting of classrooms, gymnasium, library, a cafeteria and administrative offices.

After the main building is completed, another dormitory and athletic fields will complete the campus. Presently, Great Plains Lutheran

High School leases space in the former Grant Elementary School from the Watertown School District. Now in the second year of operation, the school teaches 33 students in grades 9th, 10th and 11th grades. A 12th grade will be added for the 1998-99 school year.

The school's student body is expected to grow to between 50 and 60 students for the 1998-99 school year with

30 to 35 of them living in the new dormitory. *South Dakota, Wyoming, Western Minnesota and Canada attend classes here.*  
Founded in 1966, Great Plains Lutheran High School is one of 21 Lutheran high schools belonging to the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

*this has not yet been done and is my intention to*

**Appendix 4  
Association Congregations**

<b>City &amp; State</b>	<b>Congregation</b>	<b>Communicants</b>	<b>Elementary School</b>
Aberdeen, SD	Trinity	320	38
Akaska, SD	Zion	43	
Bismarck, ND	Our Savior	151	
Bison, SD	Christ	67	
Bowdle, SD	St. John	79	
Brookings, SD	Our Savior	336	
Carson, ND	Trinity	63	
Clark, SD	Peace	72	
Clear Lake, SD	Trinity	314	
Dawson, MN	Living Water	33	
Dupree, SD	First English	18	
Elgin, ND	Immanuel	55	
Elkton, SD	Trinity	111	
Faith, SD	St. Paul	9	
Gary, SD	First	133	
Glenham, SD	St. Jacobi	66	
Glenwood, MN	Calvary	71	
Goodwin, SD	St. Peter	86	
Great Falls, MT	Mountain View	94	
Hendricks, MN	Trinity	47	
Henry, SD	St. Paul	84	
Johnson, MN	Trinity	93	
Lake Benton, MN	St. John	265	
Luverne, MN	Bethany	120	
Mandan, ND	Redeemer	216	
McIntosh, SD	St. Paul	34	
Milbank, SD	Peace	76	
Mitchell, SD	Ascension	62	



Mobridge, SD	Zion	195	16
Moorhead, MN	Ascension	135	
Morristown, SD	Christ	45	
Mound City, SD	St. Paul	53	
Pierre, SD	Redeemer	65	
Pipestone, MN	Good Shepherd	49	
Rapid City, SD	St. Paul	575	69
Raymond, SD	Bethlehem	61	
Roscoe, SD	St. Paul	226	
Sheridan, WY	Valley	49	
Sioux Falls, SD	Bethel	271	22
Sioux Falls, SD	Good Shepherd	412	60
South Shore, SD	Our Savior	274	
Summit, SD	St. John	54	
Tappen, ND	St. John	213	
Watertown, SD	Bethlehem	185	
Watertown, SD	St. Martin	1153	131
West Fargo, ND	Shepherd of the Valley	93	
Willow Lake, SD	Willow Lake Ev.	86	
Yankton, SD	Prince of Peace	62	
<b>48</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>7374</b>	<b>336</b>

## Appendix 5 Good Stewards, Inc.

How did it all come about? Let its founder and president tell the story:

### **Dakota-Montana District Newsletter**

Feb - Mar. 1997 Issue  
GSI Thrift

About a year ago, the thought of a thrift store in Watertown, SD was just a dream. Some thought it was an idea worth pursuing and 17 people met in Watertown to organize Good Stewards Inc. By all outward appearances, it was not a very auspicious start. We postponed the date of the organizational meeting one week because of the minus 30 degree weather. (Some folks thought we were too soft...we did not know what a tough winter was!) But a board was chosen and plans went forward with the goal of opening a thrift store to benefit Great Plains Lutheran High School and other organizations.

An attorney and an accounting firm both donated their time to help form our nonprofit corporation and to obtain the IRS tax exemption. With the help of these two firms, we likely saved many hundreds of dollars in fees.

A location was found, store fixtures were purchased and donated, a manager (Betty Peterson) and assistant manager (Doris Schamens) were hired. "GSI Thrift" was chosen for the name of the store. All of the pieces seemed to be falling into place. But one question remained, "Would this plan actually work?"

As things moved ahead toward the actual opening of the store, the expenses seemed to pile up. Individuals delayed submitting bills because the checkbook balance was too low to cover them all. We were able to borrow \$2,000 from the Northwestern Lutheran Academy Alumni Association. Later, we paid back the loan.

The donations of articles to be sold started coming in--at first a trickle, then a flood. The first week of June the store opened and sales averaged about \$135 per day.

Oh, it won't last, no doubt some thought. But anyone visiting the store now would have trouble finding an empty spot on a shelf or rack (or sometimes even a spot on the floor) to put more items to be sold. Volunteers are donating countless hours of their time sorting and pricing merchandise to sell.

As we think how far things have come in just one year's time, it is truly

amazing, isn't it? But should it be so amazing?

We have given of our time, our talents, our treasures. And the Lord has given to us in return. The Lord's blessing has exceeded our expectation. He hasn't scrimped or shorted us. He has poured his blessing out on us.

This first year of operation (June - December) was only 7 months. The total gross sales were over \$36,000 with about half of that amount used to pay expenses. Even with all the rough winter weather, GSI Thrift was profitable the first two months of 1997.

Good Stewards Inc. held its first annual meeting on March 9, 1997. The decision was made to disperse a total of \$12,000. The weekly "The Lord's Day Radio Broadcast" sponsored by Trinity Lutheran Church, Clear Lake received \$1,000. Great Plains Lutheran High School received \$11,000--\$1,100 for general operations, \$2,200 for endowment financial assistance, \$2,200 for direct financial assistance, and \$5,500 for special projects. The special projects selected to purchase include 1) choir risers, 2) a video camera, 3) a display board, and 4) a small science lab.

...

We want to thank everyone for all the many items they have given to the store. We accept almost anything. Right now we could use more non-clothing items such as: furniture, garden tools, electrical items, beds and bedding, TV's, and almost any baby item. In general, household articles sell very well. All of the donations have helped make GSI Thrift very successful!

We thank the Lord for all these blessings.

Roger R. Frey, President  
Good Stewards Inc. d/b/a GSI Thrift

**Appendix 6**  
**Good Stewards, Inc. Projects 1996-2006**

**1996 Net Income**

<b>Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School</b>	
General Operations	\$1,100
Direct Financial Assistance	\$2,200
Endowment Financial Assistance	\$2,200
<b>GPLHS Projects</b>	
- choir risers	\$1,100
- video camera	\$1,200
- display board	\$1,000
- science lab setup	\$2,000
- chairs	\$200
<b>Total GPLHS Projects</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>
<b>Total Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>
<b>Distributions to Other Groups ('96 Net Income)</b>	
The Lord's Day Radio Broadcast	\$1,000
<b>Total Distributions to All</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>
Approved March 9, 1997	

**1997 Net Income**

<b>Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School</b>	
General Operations	\$2,500
Direct Financial Assistance	\$2,500
Endowment Financial Assistance	\$2,500
<b>GPLHS Projects</b>	
- Miscellaneous - popcorn popper; 3 CD/tape players	\$1,600
- Athletic Department - high jump equipment	\$2,000
- Music Department - choir gowns; piano	\$6,200
- German Department	\$500
- English/Speech Department	\$500
- Science Department	\$2,000
- Dorm - coffee pot; snow blower	\$2,000
<b>Total GPLHS Projects</b>	<b>\$14,800</b>

Total Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School	\$22,300
<b>Distributions to Other Groups ('97 Net Income)</b>	
- WELS Lutheran for Life	\$500
- The Lord's Day Radio Broadcast	\$500
- Dakota-Montana WELS Fellowship Retreat	\$1,000
- Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Yankton, SD	\$1,500
- Campus Ministry USD, Vermillion, SD	\$500
- *Nebraska Ev. Lutheran High School	\$500
Total Distributions to Other Groups	\$4,500
Total Distributions to All	\$26,800
Approved March 8, 1998	

### 1998 Net Income

<b>Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School</b>	
Friends Fund (Academic Center Up-Front Money)	\$10,000
General Operations	\$2,500
Direct Financial Assistance	\$2,500
Endowment Financial Assistance	\$2,500
<b>GPLHS Projects</b>	
- Bus	\$4,600
- Folding Machine - office	\$900
- Athletic Department	\$500
- Music Department	\$4,200
- Foreign Language Department	\$500
- Math Department	\$300
- English/Speech Department	\$500
- Science Department	\$3,000
- Storage Shed - dorm	\$1,000
Total GPLHS Projects	\$15,500
Total Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School	\$33,000
<b>Distributions to Other Groups ('98 Net Income)</b>	
- The Lord's Day Radio Broadcast	\$500
- Dakota-Montana WELS Fellowship Retreat	\$1,000

- Vermillion Exploratory (USD)	\$1,000	
- Peridot Lutheran Elementary School, Arizona	\$500	
Total Distributions to Other Groups		\$3,000
Total Distributions to All		<b>\$36,000</b>
Approved March 7, 1999		

## 1999 Net Income

<b>Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School</b>		
Building On Our Foundation (1 of 10)		\$10,000
Direct Financial Assistance Fund		\$3,500
Gymnasium Fund (direct up-front gift)		\$10,000
Gymnasium Fund (wood floor)		\$8,000
<b>GPLHS Projects</b>		
- Four drawer fireproof file	\$1,100	
- Fine Arts Department	\$300	
- Foreign Language Department	\$250	
- Language Arts Department	\$500	
- Math Department	\$250	
- Science Department	\$450	
- Social Studies Department	\$800	
- Library	\$1,000	
- Dorm	\$2,000	
- Custodial	\$300	
- Athletic Department	\$1,050	
Total GPLHS Projects		\$8,000
Total Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School		<b>\$39,500</b>
<b>Distributions to Other Groups ('99 Net Income)</b>		
- Camp Luther - Eastern Conference	\$500	
- The Lord's Day Radio Broadcast	\$500	
- Family Retreat Commission (D-M)	\$500	

- Yankton/Vermillion Exploratory	\$1,000	
Total Distributions to Other Groups		\$2,500
<b>Total Distributions to All</b>		<b>\$42,000</b>
Approved February 27, 2000		

## 2000 Net Income

<b>Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School</b>		
Building On Our Foundation (2 of 10)	\$10,000	
Bleachers	\$35,000	
Total Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School		<b>\$45,000</b>
<b>Distributions to Other Groups (2000 Net Income)</b>		
- Camp Luther (Eastern Conference)	\$500	
- The Lord's Day Radio Broadcast	\$500	
- Family Fellowship Retreat (D-M)	\$500	
- Yankton/Vermillion Exploratory	\$1,000	
Total Distributions to Other Groups		\$2,500
<b>Total Distributions to All</b>		<b>\$47,500</b>
Approved March 5, 2001		

## 2001 Net Income

<b>Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School</b>		
Building On Our Foundation (3 of 10)	\$10,000	
Bleachers	\$10,000	
Other	\$11,760	
Total Distributions to Great Plains Lutheran High School		<b>\$31,760</b>
<b>Distributions to Other Groups (2001 Net Income)</b>		
- Camp Luther (Eastern Conference)	\$500	
<b>Total Distributions to All</b>		<b>\$32,260</b>

Approved February 24, 2002

**2002 Net Income**

<b>Yankton/Vermillion Outreach</b>	<b>\$ 1,500</b>
<b>Black Hills Family Retreat</b>	<b>\$ 750</b>
<b>Camp Luther</b>	<b>\$ 750</b>
<b>Lord's Day Radio Broadcast</b>	<b>\$ 500</b>
<b>Great Plains Lutheran High School:</b>	<b>\$ 56,000</b>
Building on our Foundation (4 of 10)	\$ 10,000
Used Van / Vehicle	\$ 12,000
Scholarships	\$ 10,000
GPLHS Debt Reduction	\$ 5,000
Other	\$ 19,000
<b>Total Disbursement</b>	<b>\$ 60,000</b>

**2003 Net Income**

<b>Yankton/Vermillion Outreach (Pastor Steve Geiger)</b>	<b>2,000</b>
<b>Lord's Day Radio Broadcast</b>	<b>750</b>
<b>Camp Luther</b>	<b>750</b>
<b>Marriage Retreat (held at GPLHS)</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>SubTotal</b>	<b>\$ 3,750</b>
<b>Great Plains Lutheran High School:</b>	
Building on our Foundation (5 of 10)	10,000
Student Financial	10,000
Storage Shed	35,000
Outside lighting for campus	7,000
Materials to redo gym floor	3,000
Laptop, DVD player, DVD recorder, CD burner	1,750
Risograph	1,000
Athletic Trainer	1,000
Summer Athletic Camps (for all of team)	1,500
Volleyball spike machine	1,000
Science Lab materials	4,025
<b>GPLHS Total</b>	<b>75,275</b>
<b>Total Disbursement</b>	<b>\$79,025</b>



Approved February 29, 2004 (8th Annual Meeting)

**2004 Net Income**

<b>Yankton/Vermillion Outreach</b>	2,000
<b>Lutheran Institutional Ministries Association</b>	1,500
<b>Family Retreat</b>	750
<b>Lord's Day Radio Broadcast</b>	500
<b>Camp Luther</b>	500
<b>Vicar Program</b>	400
<b>SubTotal</b>	<b>\$5,650</b>
<b>Great Plains Lutheran High School:</b>	
Building on our Foundation (5 of 10)	10,000
Direct Student Aid	10,800
Bleachers	46,872
Defibrillator	2,500
Fireproof Cabinet	3,500
LCD Projector	2,000
Science	3,500
English	250
Foreign Language	250
Math	100
Physical Ed	250
Track & Field	400
Golf	100
Football	500
<b>GPLHS Total</b>	<b>\$ 81,022</b>
<b>Total Disbursement</b>	<b>\$86,672</b>

Approved March 6, 2005 (9th Annual Meeting)

**2005 Net Income**

<b>Lutheran Institutional Ministries Association</b>	\$3,000
<b>Black Hills Family Retreat</b>	2,000
<b>Lord's Day Radio Broadcast</b>	1,000
<b>Camp Luther</b>	500
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$6,500</b>

## Great Plains Lutheran High School:

Building on our Foundation (6 of 10)	\$10,000
Direct Student Aid	10,000
Parking Lot	40,000
Computers	33,217
Dishwasher (Dorm)	4,200
Basketball	500
Football	600
Golf	200
Spanish	300
English	500
Math	300
Music	500
Physical Ed	300
Religion	200
Science	1,000
Track & Field	500
Volleyball	300
Social Studies	300
Project TIM	500
Promotional Items	500
Special Events	500
Debt Reduction	2,000
	<b>GPLHS Total</b>
	<b>\$ 106,417</b>
<b>Total Disbursement</b>	<b>\$112,917</b>

Proposed (10th Annual Meeting)

### 2006 Net Income

Little Lambs Christian Pre-School, West Fargo, ND	\$2,000
Black Hills Family Retreat (Dakota-Montana Dist.)	2,000
Lord's Day Radio Broadcast	1,500
Camp Luther	600
	<b>Other Projects Subtotal</b>
	<b>\$6,100</b>

## Great Plains Lutheran High School:

Direct Student Aid	\$10,000
Student Aid	5,000
Endowment Fund	4,000
WEB	1,000
Computer Lab	5,000
Promethean Active Boards (4)	8,000
Textbooks	3,000
Video Camera	500
Accounting Teaching Aids	1,500
Art Teaching Aids	2,000
English Teaching Aids and Books	3,000
Journalism Digital Cameras (2)	700
Math Teaching Aids	1,000
Music Equipment	4,500
Physical Education Equipment	2,000
Religion Teaching Software	1,000
Science Computers and Equipment	20,000
Microscopes	3,500
Science Teaching Tables	1,000
Skeleton	550
Science Models	250
Social Studies Teaching Aids	2,000
Spanish Teaching Aids	1,000
Athletic Table	1,000
Gym Floor	6,000
Athletic Score Table	4,000
Athletic Squat Rack	1,000
Athletic Video Editing Equipment	3,000
Basketball Equipment	2,000
Football Equipment	2,000
Drama Materials	2,000
Oral Interpretation Materials	1,000
Pole Vault Poles	2,000

Volleyball Equipment	2,000
Baby Changing Tables (2)	375
Coat Racks	800
Vacuum Cleaners (2)	800
Paper Folding Machine	750
Enclosed Bulletin Board	200
Stove in Dorm	500
<b>GPLHS Subtotal</b>	<b>\$ 109,925</b>
<b>GPLHS Mortgage Payments (during the year)</b>	<b>\$27,578.31</b>
<b>GPLHS Total</b>	<b>\$137,503.31</b>
<b>Total Disbursement</b>	<b>\$143,603.31</b>

Proposed (11th Annual Meeting)

**Appendix 7  
GSI Projects Summary**

Good Stewards Inc Projects	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	*2006	Totals
Great Plains Lutheran High School	\$11,000	\$22,300	\$33,000	\$39,500	\$45,000	\$31,760	\$56,500	\$75,275	\$81,022	\$106,417	\$137,503	\$639,277
Distributions to Other Groups												\$ -
The Lord's Day Radio Broadcast	\$ 1,000	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 750	\$ 500	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 7,250
Family Fellowship Retreat (D-M)		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 750		\$ 750	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 8,500
Camp Luther (Eastern Conference)				\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 600	\$ 4,600
Little Lamb Christian Pre-school, W Fargo, ND											\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Lutheran Institutional Ministries Association									\$ 1,500	\$ 3,000		\$ 4,500
Yankton/Vermillion Outreach		\$ 2,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000		\$ 1,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000			\$ 10,500
Marriage Retreat (held at GPLHS)							\$ 250					\$ 250
Vicar Program									\$ 400			\$ 400
WELS Lutherans for Life		\$ 500										\$ 500
Nebraska Lutheran High School		\$ 500										\$ 500
Peridot Lutheran Elementary School, AZ			\$ 500									\$ 500
Total Distributions to Other Groups	\$ 1,000	\$ 4,500	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 500	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,750	\$ 5,650	\$ 6,500	\$ 6,100	\$ 39,500
Total Distributions to All	\$12,000	\$26,800	\$36,000	\$42,000	\$47,500	\$32,260	\$60,000	\$79,025	\$86,672	\$112,917	\$143,603	\$678,777
												\$678,777

## Appendix 8 An Ode to GSI

*The following is an article written by a Watertown public school student, Abby J. Her paper was titled **An Ode to GSI** and she shared her article with us at the store. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did.*

This is my ode to GSI Thrift Store. My friends and I have awarded this store as our favorite place in the world. While I started shopping there in ninth grade for dress up days for things like Ki-Yi and random t-shirts with “South Dakota Children’s Theater” printed on them for practice, GSI is now where I buy most of my clothes.

I had no idea spending \$30 at a thrift store was even possible until this year. It even seems a bit silly to have spent so much, but when one thinks about how much stuff can really be purchased for the money, it is worth it. My parents don’t seem to have a problem with my addiction to “thrifting” because of the money I save. Although my mom did tell my friend I was looking too “GSI”. However, right after that she complimented my friend for the blazer she was wearing and asked her where she bought it. The answer, of course, was “GSI”. My friend and I always laugh at her mom because she always asks the question, “Is that a GSI?” She asks it in a way one would ask if something is straight form “Milan” or “Paris“, not from a thrift store.

From leggings and skirts to purses and jewelry, one can find anything at GSI. My favorite item I have ever bought from GSI are my infamous “Gretchen” sunglasses, they were old lady sunglasses that looked like they were modern and designed to look old-fashioned. The name of the previous owner was imprinted on them, hence the name. The most depressing moment of my summer was probably when I lost them. I love spicing up a normal outfit with something vintage from GSI. One can either dress the items up or down.

Although I may look a little different by wearing these slightly-worn clothes, some people appreciate them such as my friends in my math class who always ask the question, “What is Abbey wearing today?” or my friend who always stops me in the hall and makes me remove my coat to show her what I’m wearing. When shopping at the Mall of America, four people stopped to tell me they like my purple plaid shirt from GSI. I also felt a feeling of accomplishment when I saw little boy sweaters being used as boleros in Urban Outfitters with a \$60 price tag on them. About four months before, my friends and I decided we were not going to fall into the bolero trend like the rest of the girls on the planet, but decided to put our own twist to the trend by wearing button-up children’s sweaters. I had to call my friend immediately and tell her Urban Outfitters must have heard of our idea!

While other thrift stores are great, they just don’t compare to GSI. GSI is the perfect size, and it is full of deals, but allows one to cover the whole store so you don’t miss anything. I’ve also found other thrift stores are overpriced. No matter how cool a vintage shirt may be, I just don’t feel like paying \$12 for something that has already been used quite a few times. Plus, I think the ladies who work at GSI are the nicest people I’ve ever met.

I could not hold back my joy when someone from Fargo complimented my polo shirt I wore in my senior pictures and wanted to know where I bought it. I had to, unfortunately, tell

her I bought it at GSI, my local thrift store. Wearing clothes from GSI gives one Priceless moments like these and great memories. Whenever I go with my friends, it is always a race to see who finds what. GSI is definitely my favorite place in the world!

## Appendix 9

### GPLHS Teachers 1996/'97-2005/'06

1996-1997  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Diersen, Kelly A.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Fischer, Mary  
 Fischer, Rev. Wayne  
 Weelborg, Jodi

1997-1998  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Beth A.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Fischer, Mary  
 Fischer, Rev. Wayne  
 Pederson, Renae  
 Weelborg, Jodi

1998-1999  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Fischer, Mary  
 Fischer, Rev. Wayne  
 Jaeger, Jayne  
 Jaeger, Gene  
 Pinski, Rich  
 Kanzenbach, Judy  
 Kanzenbach, Richard  
 Weelborg, Jodi

1999-2000  
 Chandler, Rosanne  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Fischer, Mary  
 Fischer, Rev. Wayne  
 Jaeger, Jayne  
 Jaeger, Gene  
 Kanzenbach, Richard  
 Pinski, Rich  
 Schwanz, Brian  
 Weelborg, Jodi

2000-2001  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Gut, Kyle  
 Hohenstein, Joan

Jaeger, Jayne  
 Jaeger, Gene  
 Kanzenbach, Richard  
 Lemke, Tracy  
 Myers, Rev. Dan  
 Myers, Peggy  
 Pinski, Rich  
 Schaffer, Mark  
 Weelborg, Jodi

2001-2002  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Gut, Kyle  
 Jaeger, Jayne  
 Jaeger, Gene  
 Kanzenbach, Richard  
 Lemke, Tracy  
 Myers, Rev. Dan  
 Myers, Peggy

2002-2003  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Jaeger, Jayne  
 Jaeger, Gene  
 Kanzenbach, Richard  
 Lemke, Tracy  
 Moldenhauer, Mark  
 Myers, Rev. Dan  
 Myers, Peggy

2003-2004  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Jaeger, Jayne  
 Jaeger, Gene  
 Kanzenbach, Richard  
 Lemke, Tracy  
 Moldenhauer, Mark  
 Myers, Rev. Dan  
 Myers, Peggy

2004-2005  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Hill, Daniel  
 Jaeger, Gene

Kanzenbach, Richard  
 Lemke, Tracy  
 Manthey, Jessica  
 Myers, Rev. Dan  
 Myers, Peggy

2005-2006  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Hill, Daniel  
 Jaeger, Gene  
 Kanzenbach, Richard  
 Lemke, Tracy  
 Manthey, Jessica  
 Myers, Rev. Dan  
 Myers, Peggy

2006-2007  
 Diersen, Gregory T.  
 Falak, Bert  
 Guthmiller, Linda  
 Jaeger, Gene  
 Jaeger, Jayne  
 Janke, Philip  
 Karbula, Julie  
 Martens, Eric  
 Myers, Rev. Dan  
 Myers, Dave  
 Myers, Peggy  
 Park, Rev. Tom  
 Renner, Sharon

Dorm Supervisor  
 Carla Klug (1995- )

Financial Assistant  
 Liz Arndt (1995- )

Secretaries  
 Debra Pieschke  
 Theresa Schaffer  
 Karen Miller

Development Directors  
 Rev. Rob Hankwitz (1996-1998)  
 Rev. Gerald Geiger (2001- )



**Appendix 10**  
**GPLHS 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary DVD**