



## How the Mission Endowment Fund Grant Recipients are CHANGING LIVES

### First Lutheran Church/Longview, Texas – The Success Center 2021 AND 2022 Grant Recipient

In January 2021, out of their love for children and the sensitivity to educational setbacks which has left behind so many young people, the **Success Center** was launched at First Lutheran in Longview. The Success Center, providing one-on-one, individualized tutoring and mentoring, soon maxed out enrollment with 21 students. On any given Tuesday and Thursday, 17-20 students receive instruction from the 19 dedicated volunteers and support staff who give countless volunteer hours. The Mission Endowment Fund has supported First Lutheran's ministry for two years. The Success Center is one of the many ministries which changes lives in the name of Jesus Christ.



Mr. John Parsons, Director of the Success Center, says, "When launching this program, the main goal of our tutoring center was to be highly relational and to truly care about the success of those being served in whatever unique form was needed. We have achieved this through the hard work of our tutors. Our program has made a difference."

**Don't Forget!!**  
*Getting to Know the*  
**MEF Sunday is**  
scheduled for May  
15 in your  
congregation



John further states, “We attribute our high student retention/attendance rate to the consistency and depth of the tutor and student relationships over time. “This month a parent told us that one of our students has improved in school and the teachers have acknowledged it. Additionally, his behavior has made a dramatic turnaround. He is being sent home with praises instead of being in the principal’s office. Our tutors show up every week and have single handedly solicited a change in this child’s life as well as many others. It does not go unrecognized!”



Each tutor has two students with whom they are intentionally matched. While the matching process can be inherently messy, once a match is established, we do everything possible to maintain that match. the tutor becomes the primary driver of that student’s educational support plan. It is a point of pride for the staff that some of our students are still working with the same tutor given to them on the day the Success Center first began. We appreciate our tutors and all they do for our students.



***If you are considering a program of this kind at your church, here is some advice from John and his staff:***

- It is a big undertaking, so I wouldn’t go into it lightly, but know that in the end, it will transform your congregation in ways you can’t imagine.
- Have your priorities straight, only start a center if your SINGULAR goal is to help to kids educationally.
- Be prepared for things to be messy. Be prepared to care about these kids. Be prepared to be changed by these kids.
- Name and claim the kids as a part of your children’s ministry, but don’t expect them to be a part of your Sunday crowd. Resist (as in make it policy) the urge to advertise your church or church events to them.
- Be prepared to devote at least 10-15 hours a week exclusively to the administration of the center.
- Have your mission, vision, values, guiding principles, & governing policies set and clear before you spend one penny, before you send out one flyer, before you welcome one kid into the program.

