



Shaping the Future



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LEA #teacherstoteachers

New Lutheran Junior Honor Association



By Denise Rice

Lutheran Junior Honor Association (LJHA) is a new organization under the umbrella of LEA that is designed for students in grades 5–8. LEA commissioned the organization in response to comments on the MIDnet and LEADnet listservs when teachers and principals asked about an alternative to National Junior Honor Society. They wanted an organization that honored academics but also reflected the importance of emphasizing service and discipleship among students.

In January 2020, LEA formed a task force consisting of Shirley Geiss, Keith GeRue, Ann Ryherd, Suzan Winkelman, and myself (chair) to explore the feasibility of an organization and to create one, if possible. The task force completed its work in late April, and LEA is pleased that not only is LJHA created, but it is also [accepting applications](#) for chapters.

Why do we need an honors organization?

Such groups exist as places for members to grow leadership skills, perform service hours, and share common interests. In a Lutheran school, our mission as teachers is to help our students grow into the young men and women God wants them to be, and we feel that LJHA can be a part of this mission. Therefore, the task force's first priority was to create the pillars, or supports, on which the association would be based. In the case of LJHA, we encourage Lutheran schools to recognize students who excel in service, discipleship, leadership, and academics.

The LJHA task force then established a set of guidelines for schools to assist with the creation of a school chapter. They kept these broad and general in order to accommodate the differences in Lutheran schools across the nation. At the same time, we recognize that some schools are members of other clubs, such as an honor society or service organization. We hope they will choose to be a part of the Lutheran Junior Honor Association.

In creating the association, the task force chose Philippians 4:8 (ESV) as the guiding Bible verse for the chapters. *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”* We chose this because it lists important concepts for believers, and these are areas where students can focus on things that please God. Also, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we seek to follow a life of service and discipleship. This verse helps center students as they serve the secular world as part of LJHA. It gives them guidance, as they are imitators of Christ in their activities. The motto for LJHA is *“Learn to Serve. Follow to Lead.”* The logo is distinctly Lutheran but also shows the pillars as well.

While detailed [guidelines and documents are online](#), here is the basic information you need if your school would like to start a chapter.

- Choose a faculty advisor(s) and faculty panel.
- Create chapter policies in accordance with the guidelines set forth by the task force. Basic information needed is:
 - Selection of student member requirements
 - Officers, methods of election, and duties for the chapter
 - Number of meetings and activities
 - Service project requirements
- [Apply for membership](#). The chartering fee is \$150. Yearly renewals after the first year are \$75. You may apply at any time, but please consider doing so before the school year begins.
- Publicize this new opportunity.
- Distribute application forms.

In a Lutheran school, our mission as teachers is to help our students grow into the young men and women God wants them to be, and we feel that LJHA can be a part of this mission.

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Review, Reflect, Resolve

Which of your students might benefit most from LJHA?
How might your school benefit?
What means might you use to fund the initial charter and ongoing costs?

Other articles you might be interested in in this issue of **Shaping the Future**:

Dear New Teacher
by Anne Thies and Cynthia Thies (Feature)

Learning is Fun!
by Allyson Hoger (ETnet)

Being Mindful in the Middle: Called to Serve
by Paula Myers (MIDnet)

Overcoming Failure through Authentic Feedback
by David Bahr (SECnet)

- Accept and evaluate applications.
- Notify those accepted for membership.
- Hold first meeting.
- Make sure your chapter policies are on file with the LJHA task force.

If you currently have an organization in place, you can easily “transfer” to LJHA. Just fill out the application form, send in your chapter policies, and pay the chartering fee. Your students will automatically be members of LJHA.

After your school applies and is accepted, you will receive a letter and certificate showing you are a member. The task force is cognizant that the association needs to have value, but we are also aware that schools have budgetary concerns. We will offer some items at no cost, such as the ability to make membership cards (template will be provided), and the logo if you wish to make a t-shirt for your chapter. At the same time, some items may incur a cost such as membership pins and other items. In addition, our plan is to have a national recognition program for outstanding members. These features will be unveiled in early fall. Furthermore, we will provide a method for chapters to communicate with one another and exchange ideas.

Finally, the task force is interested in your ideas to make this a valuable resource for your school and students. Send your ideas to Denise Rice, Director of Educational Resources for LEA at denise.rice@lea.org.

The task force’s prayer is that we can unite students across the nation to intentionally serve others as Christ served us. We want to encourage the students in our Lutheran schools to develop their academic, leadership, and discipleship skills as well as to serve excellently in their vocation as students. We are hopeful that the LJHA will help in the pursuit of these endeavors.

Unite students across the nation to intentionally serve others as Christ served us.

Denise Rice is the director of educational resources for Lutheran Education Association She also served as chair on the Lutheran Junior Honor Association task force.



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