



Left to Tell author Immaculee Ilibagiza surrounded by three Valley students in 2013.



Megan Mattichak and Emily Gohm display two packed shoeboxes.



Evan Engelhardt, Brady Sting, Collin Engelhardt, Jonah Kuep, & Ethan Pittman are ready to pack their shoeboxes.

We are the Hands of Jesus

Valley's Global Awareness Club Embraces Ministry of Service

We are the hands of Jesus.

At Valley Lutheran, students have many opportunities to grow in their faith and share the love of Jesus, often showing this through their service to others. The Global Awareness Club (GAC) has embraced sharing the love of Jesus through their service to others in both a local and global arena.

Valley's GAC began in 2013. But the story of how it began is anything but traditional! In 2013, Valley students were assigned *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust* by Immaculee Ilibagiza as their summer reading book. Most students came back to school in the fall ready to discuss the book and continue on with their high school studies.

But not all. For some students, *Left to Tell* was so impactful that they wanted to bring the author, Immaculee, to Valley for a presentation. And that they did. Approaching home congregations for donations, and fundraising among the Valley family and student body, the group of students helped raise funds to fly and host Immaculee. On October 1, 2013,

Immaculee shared her personal tale of surviving the genocide of the Rwandan Holocaust.

So moved by her presentation, this group of students pursued ways in which they could continue to make an impact and share God's love through service to those near and far. Students continued to meet together, eventually creating an official name for their group, Global Awareness Club. While the teacher leadership has changed throughout the years, the club's mission from Mark 12:30-31 has stayed the same: "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these."

For the members of the GAC, loving God and our neighbor go hand in hand. In 2017, the club tied 150 blankets for children in foster care throughout the Saginaw area. In 2018, the club tied 50 fleece blankets and created prayer journals that were distributed to children in a small village in Alaska by Saginaw area LCMS members traveling on a mission trip.

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Choral Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 15th at 3 pm

St. John Lutheran Church
1664 Amelith Road, Bay City

Featuring: Golden Voice, Handbell Choir,
Mixed Chorus, and Brass Ensemble

Wrestling (with God)

In Genesis 32, there is a story of Jacob wrestling with God. Jacob spent the night wrestling a man (God, really), during which the man touched Jacob's hip socket and it became dislocated. Toward daybreak, Jacob asked this man for a blessing, and he was renamed "Israel."

But what significance does this have in relation to us today, in 2019? Just as Jacob wrestled with God, we spend much of our lives wrestling with God, too. We may not wrestle quite as literally as Jacob did through the night, but we constantly have real-life

Devotion from Eli Frank's Theology III "Jacob and Me" paper. Eli is a junior and a St. Lorenz graduate.

struggles that we try to defeat on our own. Only we can't.

Praise be to God that He willingly sent his Son, our Savior, into the world that first Christmas long ago. Praise be that our Savior grew up, knowing full well that He would take our struggles and burdens to the cross. In His death our sins were defeated and buried with Jesus. In His resurrection, our sins were wiped away, our slate laid clean.

Jacob's name changed to "Israel" which means "wrestles with God." Through our baptism, our name changed as well – to "Child of God."

Praise be to God that even though we remain sinful, while we still struggle daily with sin and temptation, that we are not alone! God is with us on our journey through life, guiding and protecting us along the way. It might not be in the way we expect, but He has a plan for us each and every step along our journey.

Take heart this Christmas season, rejoicing in the birth of our Savior, who wrestled us out of the grip of Satan and into the loving arms of our Heavenly Father.

Senior Honored Nationally



Valley Lutheran senior **Lillian Holman** was named a Commended Student in the 2020 National Merit Scholarship Program. Holman placed among the top three

percent of more than 1.6 million students who entered the competition by taking the 2018 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test.

"Lillian pushes herself to go beyond what is expected of her. She consistently looks for learning opportunities," said Academic Dean **Dr. Lisa Meyers**. "Lillian is such a hard worker, I'm excited for her to receive this commendation."

Upcoming Events

Choral Christmas Concert

St. John Lutheran Church
1664 Amelith Road, Bay City
Sunday, Dec. 15 at 3 pm

Booster Club Chicken BBQ

Valley Lutheran High School
Sun., Jan. 12, 11 am to 1:30 pm

Clue Dinner/Auction

Apple Mountain Conference Center
Saturday, Feb. 29 at 5 pm
visit vlhsauction.com for more info

Wait, There's More?

We can't fit all of Valley's news in this edition of Valley Vision. Our website contains more articles and pictures!

Visit vlhs.com for:

- Fall Sports Accolades
- Grandparent & Special Friends Visitor Day Recap
- GROWING Campaign Update

Like us on Facebook for the most up-to-date information about VL and the 2019-2020 school year.

[Facebook.com/ValleyLutheranSaginaw](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyLutheranSaginaw)

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As we approach the Christmas season, the Global Awareness Club is busy preparing for Valley's annual participation in Operation Christmas Child. Operation Christmas Child is an international Christmas gift program where children from underprivileged countries receive a shoebox full of items. This year, the GAC anticipates that Valley students will pack 200+ shoeboxes for boys and girls ages two to twelve for international distribution. Valley students work together in their family group* (see note) to collect shoebox items and culminate the collection with a school-wide "packing party."

Packed boxes are transported to a local collection agency from which they are shipped around the globe. Recipients of the shoeboxes are also given an invitation to join in a 12-lesson discipleship course. When a child graduates from these twelve lessons, they are given their own (often their family's first) New Testament Bible.

"Being in Global Awareness Club is a really important part of being a student here at Valley. And, Operation Christmas Child is an important part of GAC," shared senior GAC leader

Megan Mattichak, "It is so cool to come together as a school and serve others and pack all these shoeboxes. It's a fun way to share the Gospel to children in a different country who may not have heard it any other way."

Valley's Global Awareness Club celebrates being the hands of Jesus, where being of service to others means being able to share the Gospel with children around the world. GAC celebrates the support from the student body, because these shoeboxes are not just a box. These shoeboxes are love, these shoeboxes are hope, these shoeboxes are joy. And that's what Valley is about. Being the hands of Jesus.

This Christmas season, may the love of Christ surround you and your family. Merry Christmas from Valley's Global Awareness Club, and the entire Valley family!

* (note): A Valley family group is made up of one lead teacher and students from each of the four grades. As seniors graduate, family groups add incoming freshmen, maintaining about 15 students per group. Students remain in the same family group with the same lead teacher all four years at Valley.