



Sam Yetter with his service dog, Sitka.

## LEO Club Makes a Difference in Child's Life

By CHELSEA MARTIN  
Senior

The St. John Neumann LEO Club has always been an organization ready to come to the aid of others when any help, small or large, is needed.

During the 2008-09 school year, the LEO Club, in the midst of several other service projects, decided to help a young boy, 3 year old Sam Yetter, who has Phelan-McDermid Syndrome, to obtain a service dog. Phelan-McDermid Syndrome is a rare genetic disorder that halts the development of the nervous system.

According to information obtained on the Web site, samyetter.com, Phelan-McDermid Syndrome, otherwise known as 22q13, is a rare genetic anomaly caused by the absence of genes at the tip of the long-arm of the 22nd chromosome.

Phelan-McDermid is one of the rarest and under-diagnosed developmental syndromes in children today. Phelan-McDermid Syndrome is caused by the absence or loss of genes at the tip of the 22nd chromosome,

with lack of the Shank3 or P r o S A P 2 gene suspected as the primary cause of the symptoms associated with the syndrome. This gene plays a pivotal role in development

of the human nervous system, including the brain, and loss of this genetic component prevents proper nervous system construction during fetal development.

There is a wide range of severity of symptoms observed in people with the deletion, but most exhibit moderate to severe developmental delays, physically and intellectually, but especially in speaking and communicating.

Young Sam Yetter was diagnosed with this disorder in 2007. He is unable to speak and often has seizures. Although Sam and his family live in South Carolina, they have many relatives in the Williamsport area. Those relatives began a campaign locally to help raise money for the purchase of a service dog that is able to alert Sam's parents of an oncoming seizure.

I became aware of this campaign and introduced my fellow St. John Neumann LEOs to Sam's compelling story. The LEOs were all in favor of launching fundraisers to help Sam's family in their quest for a service dog.

Representatives from the LEO Club began educating the students at our school about Sam's illness and all of the students were eager to help. Boxes were placed in each homeroom and students were consistently making contributions to this worthy cause.

The campaign in the homerooms raised \$104 for Sam. At the same time, the LEO Club was conducting a recycled can drive called "Cans for a Cause." This fundraiser netted more than \$600 for Sam's cause.

With the money raised from the students, Cans for a Cause and private donations, the Neumann LEO Club was able to send Sam's family \$1,000 to aid in the purchase of his service dog.

In May, Sam's family was notified that Sitka, a golden retriever from the Alaska litter, would be Sam's new service dog. Sam and his family traveled to Xenia, Ohio, in June for the two weeks of training classes with the new four-legged friend.

The St. John Neumann LEO Club was honored to be able to assist the Yetter family in the purchase of Sitka.

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A closer look inside our schools from the students' perspective

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This page was created by students at St. John Neumann Regional Academy

## Survivor shares his story

### Holocaust Survivor Discusses Dachau Concentration Camp

By PHILLIP TROMETTER  
Senior

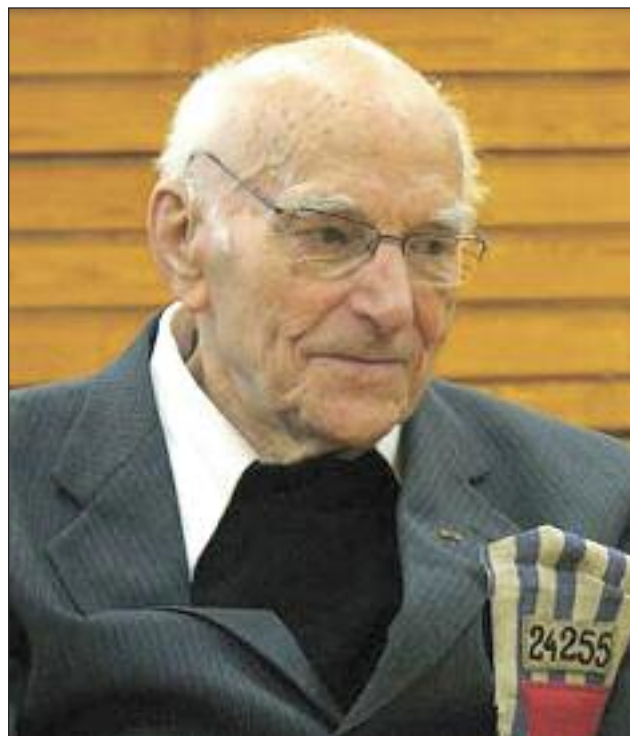
The stage was set at St. John Neumann Regional Academy for the arrival of Father Hermann Scheipers, one of the few remaining survivors of the Dachau concentration camp.

To greet the distinguished Catholic priest who survived the Holocaust were members of St. John Neumann's High School Student Council, the honorable Mayor Gabriel J. Campana, SJNRA Governance Board President Frank Pellegrino and Steven J. Moff, associate professor of business administration-marketing at Pennsylvania College of Technology, who helped to arrange for Scheipers' visit to the U.S.

Father Scheipers spoke to the entire student body and faculty at the High School's Catholic Community Center about his time at the concentration camp in Dachau. The priest spoke with help of Claudia, a German-English speaking translator, but this in no way detracted from the effect he had on the students and faculty.

Everyone was hushed as the Father spoke of the Nazi S.S. officers who were brutal towards him and the other prisoners, often times beating him and singling him out because of his Catholic faith.

A question came up from one of the students in the audience, who asked, "Father, how did you survive nearly four years in a concentration camp, with death all around you? How did you stay sane?"



Father Scheipers answers questions from students and staff.



Father Hermann Scheipers holds a piece of his prisoner's garment that identifies his prisoner number, and a red triangle, signifying he was a political prisoner.

Father Scheipers responded quickly and without hesitation, "God is the only reason I survived my ordeal. God prepared me for this by starving me after World War I. So when I came to Dachau, I was well prepared for the lack of food and nutrition, and unsanitary living conditions."

It was obvious that Father Scheipers was still carrying on his priestly duties, even at the age of 95, by expressing his relationship with God during the hardest times of his life. This hit home for many of the students, faculty and dignitaries listening to the priest speak about his trial at Dachau.

Nevertheless, Father Scheipers is a happy man. When he would laugh, everyone would get a smile on their face and when he would smile, everyone became excited to hear more. Because of the great rapport that Father Scheipers establishes with his audience, many students compared Father Scheipers with their own grandpa.

After the final bell rang, Father received a standing ovation from everyone in attendance, as all seemed truly moved by his story. While some students had to catch their bus or ride home, many others stayed to ask direct questions to the father. I asked him two specific questions for the purpose of this article.

My first question was "Do you think that the Catholic Church did enough during the Holocaust to save lives or even stop Hitler?"

Father Scheipers responded, "Many people criticize the church for not doing 'enough'. But what is enough? The Pope did not want to endanger more lives by trying to go in there and save people. The Vatican was especially known for helping to smuggle thousands of people away from

the S.S. and the concentration camps."

I followed with this question; "Father, the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, claims that the Holocaust was a hoax. What is your opinion on the Iranian president's claims?"

Father responded, "The Iranian government is doing exactly what the Nazi party did. They are lying to the people. The Iranian president is lying in the same way that Hitler did, because Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is falsifying fact for his own motives."

As he was preparing to leave our school, students and faculty thanked him for coming, and articulated how they appreciated his stories. I was the last one to talk to him. I went up to the Father almost in tears and told him that my grandfather fought in World War II, and he would have been honored to meet him in person.

I started to become emotional, realizing that my grandfather fought in the war for Father Scheipers' freedom. Father Scheipers, with his warm smile and affectionate eyes, looked right at me and said (via translator) that he is thankful for what my grandfather did. He smiled again and was escorted out.

As he left, I realized that I just spoke with history, knowing that I will probably never see him again. Listening to Father Scheipers was listening to history and seeing history. Personally, I have never had a more rewarding, valuable and emotional experience as I had looking into the eyes of such a humble and holy man.

The presence of Father Scheipers helped me to realize the horrors of the holocaust; just how evil it was and painful for its victims. Nevertheless, as a Catholic, Father Scheipers also helped me to understand more fully the meaning of "God is with us".

Even at 95 years old, Father still tells vivid stories about his past, and he works for Christ with the same vigor as a new priest. It was indeed an honor and privilege for St. John Neumann Regional Academy to host such a special man.

His stories will live on in all of us who had the fortunate opportunity to learn from him.

## SJNRA Celebrates Poetry Contest Winners

By OLIVIA PIERCE  
AND HOLLY WOLFE  
sixth graders

In May 2009, fifth and sixth grade students at St. John Neumann Regional Academy participated in a poetry contest entitled, "Creative Communications, A Celebration of Young Writers."

More than half of the submissions by SJNRA participating students were chosen to be published in the Creative Communications anthology, "A Celebration of Poets for Pennsylvania."

Our school was given the Poetic Achievement Award for the high number of students whose entries were of exceptionally high merit.

This award is given only to the top 10 percent of schools that entered the contest.



Fifth and sixth grade SJNRA students who won the Creative Communications Spring Poetry contest.

The SJNRA poets who had their poems published are:

• Grade 5 — Jessica Mattiace.

• Grade 6 — Isaac Beiter, Lia Bozza, Tye Grimes, Amanda Lisi, Annelyse Matzinger, Macayla McFadden, Alexan-

dra Mertes, Katherine Palski, Olivia Pierce, Andrew Roman and Holly Wolfe.

In talking to some of the students, we found they were very excited about their achievements, as well as those of our school.

"It was such a privilege to receive an award like that," said Holly Wolfe.

Lia Bozza said, "I felt overjoyed."

"I felt grateful, surprised and poetic!" was Isaac Beiter's response.

We hope that we can have even more students win the poetry contest next spring.

We are happy that so many of our students won the contest, but we feel especially grateful that we gave St. John Neumann Regional Academy the special honor of being in the top 10 percent of winners.