



# **Good Shepherd eighth-grader Lars Gindler is LESA's "2018 Lutheran Christian Student Leader"**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ST. LOUIS – Lars Gindler, 14, a Glen Carbon eighth-grader at Good Shepherd Lutheran School in Collinsville, will receive the 2018 Lutheran Christian Student Leadership Award.

The St. Louis-based Lutheran Elementary School Association (LESA) selected Gindler to receive the award. The honor recognizes Lutheran elementary school students who demonstrate courage, compassion, leadership, academic achievement and a commitment to their community.

Lars, 14, was nominated for the award by Zac Stegman, Children's Music Director at Good Shepherd, for helping to expand his school's volunteer choir program.

"Lars is a leader in promoting Lutheran Christian values and practices in our school," said Mr. Stegman. "He is constantly looking for opportunities to serve and to teach or explain things to younger students, and he has recruited a number of students for our volunteer choir, which has helped to increase the size and confidence of that ministry."

Lars, who plans to attend Metro East Lutheran High School in the fall, will receive a \$500 scholarship underwritten by the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) as part of his award.

In addition to his choir activities, Lars plays several instruments, including the piano, penny whistle and cello, which he became interested in as a young child after seeing Yo-Yo Ma perform on Sesame Street. He also enjoys performing at local nursing homes. He and his parents, Randy and Kim, live on fourth-generation Gindler Farm in Glen Carbon, where they keep bees, raise Katahdin sheep and grow organic fruits and vegetables. They chronicle their daily farm life at <https://sites.google.com/view/gindlerfarm/home?authuser=0>).

Lars will receive his award Saturday, April 7, 2018, at LESA's 14th Annual "A Night for Kids - Cooking for Kids" Dinner-Auction at Orlando Gardens South. The evening will be presented by Lutheran schools alumnus and Executive Chef Rick Lewis, founder of the acclaimed restaurant Grace Meat + Three and a 2014 James Beard Award Nominee for "Rising Star Chef of the Year." Lewis, who graduated from St. Paul's Lutheran School in Des Peres and Lutheran High School South, will serve a distinctive four-course dinner and a signature cocktail highlighting his newest culinary venture.

The evening will include a tribute to John Diefenbach, the recipient of LESA's 2018 Heritage Award for his lifelong support of Lutheran education. John is a past Chairman and founding member of LESA's Board of Directors. He and his wife Marie live in

Ballwin, Missouri, and are long-time members of Salem Lutheran Church in Affton, where John serves as an Elder. Before retiring in 2014, John worked as an executive in the retail, manufacturing and marketing industries.

Tickets for the event are \$70 per person and tables of 10 are available. The evening includes an open bar with beer selections from Anheuser-Busch, wine selections, and a bourbon tasting hosted by The Wine & Cheese Place. McArthur's Bakery will sweeten the evening with dessert. Auction items include two tickets to the hit Broadway musical "Hamilton" at the Fabulous Fox Theatre. Fox 2's Jeff Bernthal, a Lutheran school alumnus, will emcee.

Tickets can be bought online at [www.LESAstl.org](http://www.LESAstl.org), or by calling the LESA office at 314-200-0790. Sponsorships and Tributes also are available. Contact Katherine (Kit) Auble at 314-200-0797, or [kauble@lesastl.org](mailto:kauble@lesastl.org).

"A Night for Kids" is LESA's largest and most important annual fundraiser. Last year's dinner-auction raised \$196,000 for Lutheran elementary schools in the St. Louis area. Since 2004, LESA has awarded more than \$4.4 million in need-based scholarships to children of all faiths in the St. Louis area.

Nearly 9,000 students of all faiths attend Lutheran schools in the St. Louis Metro Area, making it the second largest private school system in the Bi-State Region. A Recognized Service Organization of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, LESA represents 31 elementary and four high schools, including three National Blue Ribbon Schools and three National Lutheran Exemplary Schools. For more information, visit [www.LESAstl.org](http://www.LESAstl.org).