

# Youth can help change the world, one policy at a time!

By **Emily Isensee** (03/2007)

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Are you a young person who wants to change the world for the better? Or do you want to help youth you know change the world? Well, that is a big goal; however, you can start working to change U.S. public policy by becoming part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's [Advocacy Network](#) and getting involved with ELCA Advocacy events! Read on to learn how to do these things.

Last summer at the [Lutheran Youth Organization](#) Convention in San Antonio, I wrote a resolution to create a churchwide Lutheran Youth Organization Board liaison to the ELCA Advocacy office. Last fall, after this resolution passed, I was assigned to this position. In this role, I hope to get the young people of our church more involved with advocacy. Over the past couple months I have had the opportunity to learn about advocacy and the church and am eager to share what I have learned with Lutheran youth.

Advocacy is one way we seek to love our neighbor in response to God's love given us in Jesus Christ. We are caring for, standing with, and serving people who are living in poverty and who are suffering when we work for public policies that advance justice, peace, human dignity, and care for the earth.

The ELCA churchwide organization has three advocacy offices: one in Washington that works with Congress, one in New York that works with the United Nations, and another in Pennsylvania that works with the ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility program. Together, these three offices, using the social statements of the church as a guide, effect positive change domestically and internationally. Some of the issues these offices work on include the crisis in Darfur, Sudan, HIV/AIDS, domestic and international hunger and poverty, environmental concerns, and the ONE Campaign to end poverty in our world.

Over my next three years in this position I hope to keep you up to date on ways youth can be more involved with advocacy. **Here are a few ways to start:**

- Join the ELCA Advocacy Network at <http://www.elca.org/advocacy/>.
- Look around the Web site to better understand ELCA advocacy.
- Contact your state advocacy office. Go to <http://www.elca.org/advocacy/state/find.html> to find out how to contact the one nearest you. State offices often have local advocacy days that may be more accessible than the national ones.

While in this position, I will continue to be in touch with each synod and Lutheran youth leaders to keep you up to date on what is going on in the ELCA Advocacy offices and what you can do. Please help me make Lutheran youth more aware of the ministry of advocacy our church is doing.

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“What is advocacy?” ELCA Advocacy Web site.

<http://www.elca.org/advocacy/how/index.html#What%20is%20advocacy>

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