

The FRIEDENSWORD

Camp Friedenswald

Volume 27, Issue 2: October 2019

Camp Friedenswald provides people of all ages the opportunity to grow in relationship with God, self, others and nature.

Reflections from a summer camp pastor: Hearing God's love at Camp Friedenswald by Michael Crosby, pastor, First Mennonite Church Champaign-Urbana

*Nothing I say can explain to you Divine Love,
yet all of creation cannot seem to stop talking about it. -Rumi*

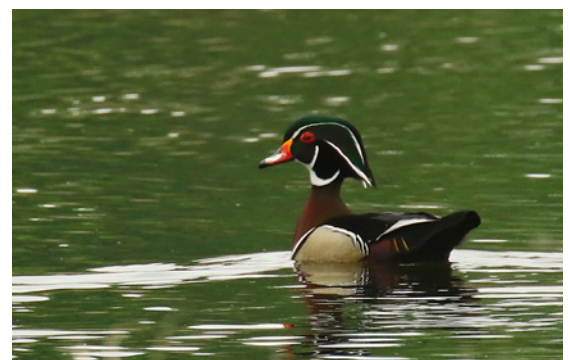
I am new to the Friedenswald ecosystem – this summer's family camp being only my third time on the grounds, and my first weeklong Camp experience – but I find myself captivated by the confluence of bioregions at the Peaceful Woods. From the old growth beech and maple forests to the fen to the flowering prairie and oak savannah, from the North Cabins to the ultimate frisbee field on the Lower Flat and the diving board on Shavehead Lake, Friedenswald is home to many habitats, a place where creatures of all kinds live in close connection. In the language of Celtic spirituality, **Camp is a “thin place,” sacred ground where the veil between heaven and earth wears away, where sacred and ordinary blend together like the shore giving way to the water.** The biodiversity of Friedenswald is holiness you can touch and smell and see and hear.

This summer's camp theme was active peacemaking. It was a joy to share with campers of all ages about the radical hospitality of Jesus, the work of self-care in justice-making (love your neighbor as *yourself*), and the powerful activism of people like Dolores Huerta. Meeting outside, under the walnuts and hickories, also provides a perfect opportunity to root a commitment to active peacemaking in a robust theology of interdependence.

Consider the underappreciated beaver. Since the arrival of European colonizers on Turtle Island (North America), beavers have been aggressively hunted and trapped, or killed by annoyed landowners. But these aquatic rodents are what biologists call a keystone species: their flourishing creates the conditions for the flourishing of countless others. Beaver dams create ideal wetland habitats for fish and birds. They generate watering holes for larger animals, filter toxins out of the water, slow streams to prevent soil erosion, and encourage vegetation that feeds deer and attracts pollinators. The creation of wetlands controls seasonal flooding in dry regions and helps to replenish aquifers. Beavers are sanctuary creatures; **simply by being who God made them to be, they create refuge for others.**

During the week of family camp, I was moved by the summer sanctuary community created at Friedenswald, where the staff gave my young children the kind of loving attention that makes people come alive with a profound sense of being safe and valued. Here was a place of radical hospitality, where

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Nature photo credit, pages 1-2, Allan Blunt

Year-round Staff

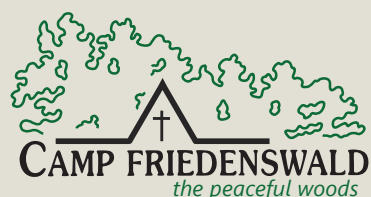
Vicki Archer, *Dishwasher*
 Eric Emerson, *Food Service Assistant*
 Jonathan Fridley, *Facilities Director*
 Andrea Golden, *Bookkeeper*
 Naomi Graber Leary, *Program Director*
 Vicky Solano Hawkins, *Housekeeper*
 Amy Huser, *Sustainability & Outdoor Education Director*
 Kevin Leary, *Program Coordinator*
 Jenna Liechty Martin, *Executive Director*
 Skye McKinnell, *Sustainability Intern*
 Amber Parker, *Housekeeper*
 Anita & Paul Pawelski, *Guest Hosts*
 Deb Sprunger Martens, *Guest Group Coordinator*
 Ellie Solano, *Food Service Director*

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Contact us:

15406 Watercress Way
 Cassopolis, MI 49031
 269-476-9744
 info@friedenswald.org
 www.friedenswald.org



a person could find refuge and in the process discover the sacred calling to be a refuge for others.

The thing about biodiversity is that it tends not to thrive in the well-groomed spaces associated with suburban landscape architecture. **Mutual flourishing happens best in the borderlands where bioregions bump up against each other**, or in the chaos of beaver-felled trees whose branches hang into the water giving cover for breeding trout. **It happens best when multiple generations of Jesus-followers dance around a campfire in a place called Mosquito Hollow**, every biting mosquito a reminder to active-peacemakers-in-training that **no one is too small to make a difference.**

The Indian author and activist Arundhati Roy said, "Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing." We need "thin places" where we can go to listen. Places where the people and the butterflies and the beeches collaborate to teach us about God's enduring love, which goes on breathing like the eternal lifecycle of a forest perpetually resurrected through death and new growth. **Next time you're at camp, breathe deeply and listen.**

What word do you hear from the Foxglove and the Milkweed,
 The Blue Wild Indigo,
 The Pale Purple Coneflower, the Coreopsis, and the Clover?
 Have you heard tell of the fragrant Spicebush and its friend the Swallowtail?
 If you get close enough to the Spotted St. John's Wort to see its dotted petals,
 Can you hear it whispering sweet sustenance to the bumblebees
 and the Gray Half-Spot moths?

What of Grandmother Beech, passing wisdom – and nutrition – through her roots
 to the next generation?
 Or maybe that's the dinner bell you hear, the sounds of the kitchen staff
 passing pizza to hungry campers.

Do you hear the Mitchell's satyr squeal with joy as he alights on sage?
 It's easily confused with the sound of a child as she flies off the waterslide,
 or the shout of the proud parent watching.

No matter. The butterflies and the campers and the staffers and the exhaling compost pile –
 none seem to stop talking about God's great love.

Program Calendar

Fall 2019

Oct 18-20 – Men's Retreat
 Nov 1-3 – Craft Retreat

Winter 2020

Jan 3-5 – High School Winter Camp
 Jan 10-12 – Jr High Winter Camp
 Feb 14-16 – Family Winter Camp
 Mar 6-8 – Craft Retreat



Summer 2020

June 14-19* – High School Camp (9-12 grade)
 June 21-25** – Pre Junior Camp (3-4 grade)
 June 25-27*** – Primary Camp (1-2 grade)
 June 28-July 3* – Jr High Camp (7-8 grade)
 July 5-10* – Junior Camp (5-6 grade)
 July 13-17 – Family Camp I (Music)
 July 18-19 – Builders Weekend
 July 20-24 – Family Camp II

*Note the change in start-date for youth camps, which will run Sunday – Friday

**Note the change in start/end date (Sunday-Thursday)

*** Note the change in start/end date (Thursday-Saturday)

Summer Reflection

by Lydia Chappell Deckert, summer assistant program director

It was a Tuesday night I think. Sometime this past fall. A group of familiar faces were gathered around Thai food. Naomi [Leary, program director] was making her rounds to different colleges for recruitment. It was a wonderful time for all of us to sit and reflect. We talked about plans for future adventures and reflected on the adventures that many of us had shared the previous summer. I told people that after my summer as the Waterfront Director I was ready to move on. I mean, after two summers at camp I should probably find an internship or something that could, ya know, give me some professional experience for the “real world.” After I was done sharing I locked eyes with Naomi. She asked me rather forcefully if I wanted to help her get some cookies from her car for everyone.

What do you do when a wild-eyed Naomi corners you and tells you that she’s pregnant? You laugh, you squeal, you hug her, and you agree to go to camp. I’m too soft for my own good. Or so I thought.

My mom once told me that working at camp was kind of like giving birth. When you’re in the middle of it you’re hot, uncomfortable, exhausted beyond belief, and sometimes you want your mom. At the end of the day, when you look back, you remember the laughter, the blur of new faces, and overwhelming feeling of joy and strength as you dance and sing and shout and revel in the beauty of this world. I’m still not sure the two experiences of giving birth and working at camp are completely comparable but I think I understand the metaphor.

I can safely say, that my job as Summer Assistant Program Director provided me with more experience than any one internship could possibly provide.

This job is hard. I have said this to myself more times than I can count this summer. As I walk next to a 6-foot 200 pound high school camper as he breathes heavy in uncontrollable anger, as I accompany him throughout the evening, as he falls apart and I stand next to him saying “I’m right here, you are safe” I think, this job is hard. As I try to figure out the logistical challenges of having seven staff suddenly fall sick in the middle of the week, I think, this job is hard. As I sit on the phone with CPS and my heart rests in my throat I think, this job is hard. As I sit with an eleven-year-old and listen to her as she feels angry, as she feels weird and out of place, as she feels attacked and scared as she grows, I think, this job is hard and I am so grateful.

I am grateful to read Prince Caspian to a nine-year-old who was spooked by the storm and left out from a game of Mafia. I am grateful as I hold the hands of a seven-year-old as she dips her toes in the swamp for the first time. I am grateful as I delicately hold the attention of 50 kids who are brimming with excitement and nerves for their first night at camp. I am grateful as I watch a high school camper finally pass his green test. His joy is contagious. I am grateful when I hold Elsie’s hand and scream because Naomi is in labor and we are strong and scared but ready.

This place is a sanctuary. This place is brimming with opportunities for growth, for connection, and joy. I am beyond grateful for the time I have spent here, for the people I have met, for the kids that I have interacted with, for the opportunities to grow and learn more than I ever thought I could in one summer. I feel so fortunate to call this place and these people home. I feel so fortunate that Naomi asked me to help carry in some cookies from her car.



Lydia is pictured at top, followed by scenes of campers and staff throughout the summer.

5 things to know about summer 2019

Whether you missed your “Friedenswald fix” this summer, or want to relive some of your best memories, here’s a glimpse into what summer held:

- 1 The theme **Making Peace** guided our worship. As is tradition (at least in more recent years), summer staff wrote the theme song which had campers singing, “For God is in community, we got to practice radical hospitality and make peace!” To listen, check out <https://youtu.be/wZrQQfQkly4>
- 2 We worked at **reducing food waste** – and had fun doing it! After each meal, campers collected uneaten food from their table and weighed it. For many, it became a friendly competition as well as one way of making peace in our daily lives. High school campers took it to a whole new level with nearly **ZERO** food waste for the entire week! (Pictured below: Cricket cookies were a fun new activity which included a conversation about the food we eat and where it comes from.)
- 3 Campers had the opportunity to join in a community art project – **painting peace poles**! The colorful poles hold the message “May peace prevail on earth” in twelve languages. The completed project will be installed, so be sure to check them out next time you’re at Camp.
- 4 **Family camps were FULL!** With over 110 campers each of the two weeks, there was a sense of community and reconnecting with family and friends, new and old. For the second year in a row, Family Camp I was “Music Camp” – with Jim Heiks to lead us in filling the peaceful woods with singing!
- 5 **The bus is back!** Well, kind of. While we don’t have a “Friedenswald bus” to travel to the far corners of the Midwest, we did team up with Eighth Street Mennonite Church to offer transportation to camp from the Goshen/Elkhart area. This initiative helped parents, as well as reduced the number of vehicles driving to/from Elkhart County throughout the summer.



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Staff Transitions

After fourteen years of serving good food as a food service assistant, **Vicky Solano Hawkins**, is leaving the kitchen. Vicky and her two young adult daughters, Beca and Paulina, have lived at Camp Friedenswald since 2005 and have been an integral part of the camp community. While they will be missed, we aren't saying farewell, as Vicky will continue working in housekeeping year-round at Camp. **Thank you** for the countless chicken BBQ dinners and cinnamon rolls, Vicky!

We are excited to welcome **Eric Emerson** (below right) as the new food service assistant. Eric will join Ellie Solano, food service director, in the kitchen. An Oregon native, Eric comes to Camp via Berne, IN, where he served as executive chef at Swiss Village. He brings experience in the food service and catering industry, along with skills in construction and building. He is joined by his wife, Heather Emerson, and children Evan (12), Ianthe (8), and Arlo (5). **Welcome, Emerson family!**

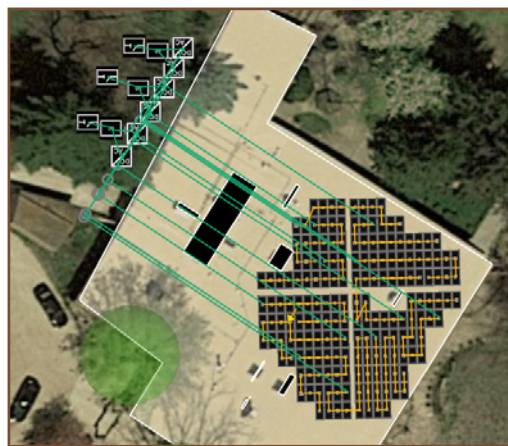


We thank **Isaac Godshalk** (left) for his year of voluntary service as sustainability intern! Isaac assisted with land management, outdoor education instruction, and moving us forward in our sustainability goals. He was also instrumental in completing the new trail map and hiking guide. Thank you, Isaac!

We've welcomed **Skye McKinnel**, a recent Goshen College graduate, into the VS position for the '19-20 year.



Solar & Energy Initiative



Over the past two years, we've been working towards reducing our energy use at Camp through LED lighting, motion sensors, sustainable purchasing, changing our habits – and more! (You can read the full plan and progress report on our website.) The next step in our sustainability journey leads us to the **Solar & Energy Initiative** – a project that not only brings a source of renewable energy to Friedenswald, but also helps us use the energy in more efficient ways.

By the time you're reading this issue of The Friedensword, the **180 solar panels** will be generating energy to power the Dining Hall, cabins, and other facilities on main camp. The estimated production of the panels will **save over 68,000 kWh of energy annually** – roughly 25% of Camp's total energy use. Not only will the panels bring a cleaner, renewable source of energy to Camp, but they will also reduce our annual electric expenses, freeing up resources to pour back into Camp's mission!

Wellspring Solar (Shipshewana, Indiana) installed the array with the help of several committed volunteers. The next time you're at Friedenswald, be sure to look up! If it's a sunny day, you'll be dining under lights powered by the sun.

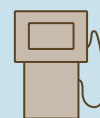
The second and equally important component of the Solar & Energy Initiative is to increase energy efficiencies across Camp's facilities. Through increased attic insulation, replacing three old furnaces in staff housing, along with select windows and doors, we will seek to reduce the amount of energy needed to heat and cool buildings.

As of writing, **over \$185,000** has been given or pledged towards this initiative! Once again, Camp's Builders responded to the need with generosity and enthusiasm. We are incredibly grateful for the support that these gifts represent. Any additional gifts towards the Solar & Energy Initiative will allow us to expand the number of energy efficiency measures completed. Thank you for joining us in helping to be better stewards of God's good Creation. Any additional gifts towards the Solar & Energy Initiative will allow us to expand our efforts.

The estimated amount of energy saved annually is equivalent to:

5,411

Gallons
of gasoline
consumed



5.8

Homes' energy
use for one year



A BIG THANK YOU TO OUR SUMMER STAFF OF 2019!




Front Row (L-R): Daniel Nisly-Nagele (Monticello, IL), Samantha Speicher (Goshen, IN), Elsie Koop Liechty (Goshen, IN), Shianne Harrison (Elkhart, IN), Carol Miranda (Honduras), Abigail Greaser (Goshen, IN), Syreeta Moore (Goshen, IN)

Middle Row (L-R): Erin Bontrager (New Paris, IN), Ethan Miller (Goshen, IN), Jessie Landis (Croghan, NY), Lydia Chappell Deckert (Newton, KS), Isaac Wiebe Andreas (Bluffton, OH), Amanda Van Leeuwen (Niles, MI), Miranda Schirch Goldberg (Harrisonburg, VA), Kate Szambecki (Newton, KS), Suzanna Griest (Oak Park, IL), Ben Reichenbach (North Manchester, IN), Haley Kirkton (Goshen, IN)

Back Row (L-R): Cade Fisher (Goshen, IN), Douglas Nester (Bluffton, OH), Justin Berg (Goshen, IN), Josh Liechty (Archbold, OH), Hilario Chivale (Mozambique), Caroline Robling-Griest (Oak Park, IL), Andy Chappell Deckert (Newton, KS), Estefany Ramirez Morfa (Dominican Republic), Christopher Hamish (Bluffton, OH), Jonas Beachy (Grants Pass, OR), Oscar Suarez (Columbia)

Not Pictured: Andrew Nussbaum (Galena, OH)

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