

The FRIEDENSWORD

Camp Friedenswald

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

Seeing Friedenswald Bubble Up: A reflection from a camp pastor

by Melissa Florer-Bixler, pastor of Raleigh Mennonite Church

Last Sunday my son was picked for “hymn tag.” Each week in the summer someone stands up during worship and shares a song that has been important to them. We then sing the song together. And when my child was chosen to share his important song it was no surprise that the selection was something he heard around campfire at Friedenswald.

My son wasn’t the only person whose “hymn tag” brought up the importance of camp. The descriptions of different church member’s experiences of faith nurtured at camp reminded me of what I’d seen at Friedenswald as camp pastor a few months before: community, belonging, friendship, and love.

As we sang my child’s camp song I was reminded of the rich memories that were made this summer: popping popcorn in a giant kettle, learning to start a fire from flint, zooming down a giant slip’n’slide, squishing into lake mud.

But I also remembered the stories we shared, the stories of God’s love that led other people to follow after Jesus, people called from their lives who, sensing something different, something holy about this man from Nazareth. One of my favorite parts of sharing these stories with campers was asking the children what they heard in the stories. Together we wondered about what these stories could mean.

I remember the gasps as they discovered that Mary, the mother of God, was not too much older than them. I remember the curiosity of wondering what the angel Gabriel looked like. I remember asking together how we could imagine a world where God’s love ran free. I remember pausing to listen, smell, and look at the good creation given to us, to stop for a few minutes of silence and give thanks.

Woven into silliness, scavenger hunts, friendship bracelets, and Rice Krispies sculptures are the story of a place where we can make space for these questions, open ourselves up for praise, and make a way for God’s love to find its way back to us.

So much of this weaving happens among the camp staff, especially the counselors who hold together the fierce emotions of homesickness and desire for independence that come with being at camp for the first time. If there is a physical manifestation of the love of God, people who our campers want to be like, friends in whom they see God’s love echoing back, I suspect it is in these young people who spend their summer caring for our children.

I’m looking forward to seeing Friedenswald bubble up in our church and in our home, to see the space of love and freedom cultivated at camp continue to flow through our lives into the years to come.



Top: Melissa Florer-Bixler speaks with campers during Morning Watch.
Bottom: Briana Koontz, Luke Rush, and Rheagan Schuler creating Friendship Bracelets.



2018 Summer Staff

A big thank you to this year's energetic, creative, and hard-working summer staff, who together worked tirelessly to make camp happen all summer long!

Pictured in back row: Jacqueline Kelley-Cogdell, Andrew Nussbaum, Katie Shank, Elsie Koop Liechty, Wai Vorlasane

Third row: Luke Rush, Justin Berg, Julian Harnish, Douglas Nester, Daniel Nisly-Nagele, Ethan Miller

Second row: Zury Lemus, Lydia Chappell Deckert, Elizabeth Nisly, Sarah Rush, Ben Fox

Front row: Shianne Harrison, Jill Steinmetz, Payton Gallery, Holly Wetzell, Abigail Greaser, Isaac Wiebe Andreas

Year-round Staff

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

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Contact us:

15406 Watercress Way
Cassopolis, MI 49031
269-476-9744
camp@friedenswald.org
Friedenswald.org



Cinnamon Rolls from Camp's Kitchen

The best way to learn the secrets behind this recipe is to volunteer with Ellie Solano and Vicky Solano Hawkins in the kitchen!

Camp Friedenswald Cinnamon Rolls

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ c warm water (105°-110° F)

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ c sugar

4 T yeast

Combine above ingredients in mixing bowl & stir gently. Let stand until bubbles form.

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ c milk

1 c shortening (Crisco)

Add the milk and shortening, one at a time, and mix to the water mixture.

4 T salt

5 eggs, beaten

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ c mashed potatoes (leftover from Sunday's dinner)

Combine the above three ingredients and then add and mix them to the water mixture. Switch to dough hook.

11-12 c all-purpose flour

Add flour, a little at a time, to the wet mixture. Mix on medium speed for 10 minutes.

Let dough rise until it doubles (approximately) in size. Punch down & roll out on well-floured surface. Roll out with rolling pin into a rectangular shape, adding flour as needed to keep dough from sticking. Brush with melted butter, sprinkle generously with brown sugar and cinnamon. Roll dough lengthwise, creating one long roll. Slice roll into 1" thick slices.

Prepare baking pans with butter, brown sugar, and cinnamon sprinkled in the bottom. Lay slices in pan cut sides up. Allow to rise again until double.

Bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until lightly brown. Makes approximately 4 dozen.

Enjoy with a cup of coffee and a good friend!



The Peaceful Woods: A Pause on the Journey

by Susie Huser

Have you noticed the breeze lately? Extra rustling among the leaves, extra cooling across your summer skin? The calendar may try to explain this delightful phenomenon by telling you autumn is here, but the truth is this: All of Camp Friedenswald – its people, the woods, its non-human inhabitants – is breathing a sigh so deeply satisfied it's twisting maple leaves in Vermont, tickling mountain goat chins in Montana, giving alligators goosebumps in the Everglades, and making Joshua trees whisper. It's hard to believe that just a few months ago we introduced the summer staff. Now – 700 songs, 440 campers, 700 BBQ chicken meals, 70 swamp hikes, hundreds of trips down the slip n' slide, about a million popcorn kernels*, and a much deserved mental-health-week later – fall programs are underway, and another busy Outdoor Ed season is just around the corner.

Another successful summer season in the books! Year-round and summer staff graciously took time to reflect on and share their various experiences over those intense weeks, and it's clear once again that everyone at Camp is blessed to have the opportunity to touch so many lives. This is something we've mentioned in the past, but because it produces such continuous enrichment and growth, it bears repeating: Enabling and encouraging growth in others, we experience growth ourselves. So, beyond the BBQ chicken dinners, slip n' slide, daily songs, games of Capture the Flag, and popcorn campfires, what from this summer will stay with Camp staff into the future, one small tessera set into the continuously evolving mosaic that is life-in-progress? Here's a portion of what staff had to say, but only a portion. There are more stories to share than will fit in a *Friedensword*, so we'd encourage you to talk with any of our summer staff to hear first-hand how this summer impacted them.

Witnessing strength, compassion, and understanding among campers is something that several summer staff mentioned as being an especially meaningful part of their summer camp experience. In the words of one of our summer staff members, "Spending a summer watching campers grow towards lives that are fuller, [we are] reminded of the great beauty and profound meaning that growth provides." Another summer staff member referenced devotions during high school week as a memorable and impressive example of tolerance. As this staff member recalled, the group discussed challenging, potentially polarizing topics like terror, school shootings, and immigration without breaking into a heated arguments – despite the presence of conflicting perspectives and the limited amount of time many of the campers had known each other.

It's fulfilling to see Camp's core values embraced and demonstrated among camp guests; in the above case, for example, we find the core values of peace, hospitality, and community in the campers' peaceful interactions, earnest love for the world and for each other, and preservation of a hospitable, welcoming atmosphere. It's also incredibly meaningful to be part of an organization that nurtures and promotes such important practices. For Program Director Naomi Leary, witnessing and being a part of the transformation one camper underwent within this comfortable, nurturing community is a favorite and especially touching and summer memory. Similarly, according to a summer staff member, the special ability to "bring people together from far and near and provide opportunities for genuine interaction and relationship" – to create an incubating space for growth in individuals and community – is one of Camp's greatest gifts.

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Pictured from top: High School Campers complete "The Wall;" Camp pastor Teri Steinmetz and Eleanor Hirschler; Norah George-Miller on the teambuilding course; Carson Golden, Isaya Magatti, and Dylan Quint make Rainbow Bread.

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Community: A complex concept that at its most basic involves togetherness. Encouraging community through facilitating relationships was consistently mentioned as something that staff will remember from the 2018 summer season. Community creates comfort for one summer staff member, who shared the following:

“I have always found comfort here at Friedenswald and certainly have felt that again this summer. It has also been very meaningful to see others find their own comfort throughout the summer. From youth campers willing to lend a hand, to younger campers getting excited about friendship bracelets and singing at quest, to Junior High campers caring deeply for one another, I have seen love extended in a peaceful way countless times this summer.”

Yet another summer staff member found community in reflecting on this summer’s theme, “Followers of the Way.” While we all have our own personal journeys, the Way is a common path that we follow together – or where we at least encounter each other frequently, and therefore have ample opportunity to show support for our fellow travelers. This staff member was especially grateful to experience that support first-hand:

“The support that I have received from year-round staff, summer staff and even volunteers has been overwhelming and the constant affirmations are what make this journey more doable. [...] As a ‘follower of the way’ with support from others on ‘the way’, I have been able to see the gift of people and the comfort and joy that they can bring.”

And for year-round staff member and Program Coordinator Kevin Leary, this past summer effectively reaffirmed and bolstered his commitment to community in his professional journey. He wrote,

“I am at my most fulfilled when I am working with others toward a common goal, and also when I am helping others reach their fullest potential. I think that my experiences this summer only strengthened my goals of using camp to develop leaders in the church, and making camp a place where all people are celebrated and can feel at home.”

In any situation there is opportunity to serve, to work for a greater good through mindful interactions, to do what we can to create a positive impact with our flicker of a life. As a place intended for gathering, at Camp we have the opportunity to serve an exceptional number of people. How many relationships does a summer at Camp hold? Well, given summer staffer Luke Rush’s estimate that he met 483 new people, and given the possibility that there were at least 25 staff members forming an approximately equal number of relationships, one summer at Camp holds in its arms – its woodsy, lakey, swampy, musical, delicious, spiritual, joyous arms – at least 12,000 relationships.

How amazing that this one tiny Friedenswald-summer-camp tessera stands to impact the entire picture for so many individuals! Never the finishing piece, but a detail along the way that unquestionably shapes the emerging image. Camp is a valuable resource for a long list of reasons, but as a welcoming community where growth is nurtured and supported, it is priceless. In the spirit of celebrating this gift, we’ll leave you with the beautiful words of one last summer staff member for whom this summer at Camp was, in his words, a “diving board”: At Friedenswald we have opportunity to “breathe in the air in the peaceful woods and truly become ready for anything and everything we have next on our plate. It can be and should be a place of and for transition. But those places are sometimes the most sacred of all.”

*These numbers aren’t an exaggeration! But they are, alas, rough estimates only...



Pictured from top:: Zana Mlotshura; John Vargas; High School camp music jam session; Birdhouse making activity; Morning Quest on the lawn.

Resilience and Sustainability Plan Update: Fall 2018

We are now one year into our 2022 Resilience and Sustainability Plan. Exciting things have been happening! Here are some of the ways we've worked towards implementing the plan over the past months:

In our efforts to increase education for sustainability:

- In our summer program we included eco-skits during two meals –one focused on reducing food waste and one about our all-camp veggie meal (no meat!)
- We used “Wangari’s Trees of Peace” book all summer. The book tells the true story of Wangari Maathai, a woman who started the Green Belt Movement in Kenya in 1977. Cabins took turns acting out different parts of the story each night at campfire.
- Campers helped with compost and weighed food waste each day – some took the effort to reduce food waste challenge very seriously – even forgoing napkins (which go into the compost at Camp) and licking their plates clean. One parent shared that their camper returned enthused about compost and ready to begin the practice in their home.



Recently installed Meditation Points encourage connection with God and nature, inviting hikers to spend meditative moments learning, thinking, and simply being.

In our efforts to save energy:

- Summer staff hung up extra clothesline to dry their clothes this summer, and they really made use of them! They even had a “jar of shame” in which anyone who used the dryer had to put a large rock. Peer pressure can be a good thing!
- We are using 2015 as our baseline year for tracking energy, as that was the year before work started on the Renew Friedenswald renovations. We are happy to report that for May 15- through July 15 of 2018 we used 3,747 fewer kWh as compared to the same time period for 2015, even with about 2,400 more square feet of building space.

In our efforts to increase the sustainable food supply:

- We've partnered with Corey Lake Orchards and Bubba's Produce to work to reduce food waste and increase our use of local food. They have donated over 450 pounds of local produce this summer. We've also purchased 345 pounds of local produce this summer.

In our efforts to reduce waste:

- We added recycling containers to each cabin. We have also added an aspirationally named “Zero-waste shed” to the Maintenance area where we are able to recycle plastic film and bags, e-waste, and batteries – along with any waste associated with teeth brushing (thanks to the organization Terracycle).
- Knowing what is in your waste is a basic step to knowing how to reduce it. In August we completed a waste audit. The good news is we are diverting 58% of our waste from the landfill through recycling and composting (based on weight and a three day sample period). We also have room for improvement; after sorting the waste we discovered we could have diverted 76%.

We will continue to keep you up to date on our progress towards our R&S goals. Check our Facebook page and blog for new information!

Staff Transitions

In May, we welcomed **Phil Nyce**, facilities assistant, to our camp staff community. When he's not actively maintaining Camp Friedenswald's facilities and grounds, you can find him on his own 32 acre property just north of Camp in Jones, Michigan, where he and his wife Maribeth Nyce enjoy gardening and sitting on their back porch, listening to the sounds of the morning and evening.

Before coming to Friedenswald, Phil worked as a research chemist and project manager. He's appreciated the change of pace, noting that he especially enjoys working outside, the variety of tasks involved, and joining with other staff to help campers and guests see God in nature. Phil and Maribeth have two adult sons and two grandchildren. Next time you're in the peaceful woods, be sure to say “Hello” to Phil.



Sandhill Lodge Openings

Is your family ready for a new tradition around the holidays? What better Christmas present to give your loved ones than quality time in the peaceful woods? The recently refurbished Sandhill Lodge has openings! Call today to reserve your spot or visit our website for more information.

2018-19 Holiday and winter openings:

Thanksgiving (November 21-25)

December 14-16

Christmas (December 21-25)

January 18-20

February 1-3

February 22-24



Upcoming Retreats

Men and Boys Retreat – October 12-14

Healthy Masculinity with Steve Thomas, Mennonite Men

Art Retreat – October 12-14

Print making with Judy Wenig-Horswell

Crafting Retreat – November 2-4

High School Winter Camp - January 4-6, 2019

Junior High Winter Camp - January 11-13, 2019

Family Winter Camp – February 16-18, 2019

Read and Recycle



Return Service Requested

15406 Watercress Way
Cassopolis, MI 49031

