

## 2023 Winter and Spring programs

January 6-8 – High School Winter Camp

January 13-15 – Jr High Winter Camp

February 3-5 – Winter Getaway

February 17-19 – Family Winter Camp

March 31- April 1 – Grand Camp

(for grandparents or friends and their grandchildren grades K-6)

Details and registration online at [Friedenswald.org/camps](http://Friedenswald.org/camps).  
Summer program dates online.



# JOIN OUR TEAM

We're looking to fill the following positions:

- Food service assistant
- Facilities and land stewardship assistant

More info & application online at [Friedenswald.org/employment](http://Friedenswald.org/employment)


## NEW! 2023 Camp Calendar



The 2023 Camp Calendar featuring stunning photography by volunteer Allan Blunt is for sale in the Camp Store, along with other select camp-gear.



Order online through December 6 in order to receive by Christmas.

Read and Recycle 

Return Service Requested

Cassopolis, MI 49031

15406 Watercress Way



# The FRIEDENSWORD

Camp Friedenswald

Volume 30, Issue 2: November 2022

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

## Reflection from the director

By Jenna Liechty Martin, executive director

Five years ago we set a goal to become a more resilient and sustainable camp by the year 2022. We wanted to live meaningfully into our values in ways that were relevant to our times. We wanted to solidify sustainability and resilience into Camp's core identity. We wanted to be a model and encourage others to join us.

So, as 2022 draws to a close, it's time to ask: how did we do?

If you're interested in the numbers and specific steps taken over the past five years towards our goal, you can read the *By the Numbers* reports published on our website. The numbers are important and help tell the story.

But what the reports don't tell is that our five year plan didn't account for a global pandemic. For a camp that seeks to draw people *together*, the pandemic required us to completely rethink our model of how we would "do camp." We opened the cabins and delivered meals to doorsteps; we drew heavily on volunteers, building lasting relationships that continue to serve us well; we relied on the people and congregations who love Friedenswald deeply, and who committed financial support in abundance!

While it wasn't in our plan, the pandemic tested our resilience as individuals and as an organization. And while we certainly made missteps along the way, our journey through the past three years is one marked by resilience.

Our efforts towards sustainability started with changing light bulbs in early 2018, and went on to include adding insulation, 180 solar panels, a full-camp compost system, and electric car chargers. It included developing relationships with local food growers, restoring an oak savanna, and creating a land acknowledgment. It even had us reconsidering activities that included plastic bags or beads. What at times felt like small actions, sometimes more challenging than others, started to add up and helped move us forward.

Over the past few years we've received phone calls and emails from people at other camps and organizations asking us questions like: Do you compost chicken bones? Who did you work with to get solar on-site? How did you install your electric car charging stations? How did you develop your plan? (Amy Huser, our sustainability and outdoor education director was instrumental!) Our staff have been happy to help when we can and have been humbled to think that our actions might have inspired someone else to do something good for the world.

Clearly we've made considerable progress towards our goal and yet we know there is more we can do. As we dream about the next five years, we know that resilience and sustainability will continue to guide our planning. It's hard to imagine it any other way. In the months ahead I look forward to sharing more about our next strategic plan and the ways that **place, justice, formation, and resilience** will serve as pillars, shaping our work and life together.

15406 Watercress Way Cassopolis, MI 49031 269.476.9744 [www.friedenswald.org](http://www.friedenswald.org)



## The summer of clay!

By Amy Huser, sustainability and outdoor education director

With our summer '22 theme “Shaped Like Earth,” incorporating work with clay seemed almost essential. We wanted to use clay harvested from the soils of Camp Friedenswald to enable more meaningful camper experiences. Luckily, we managed to find some! With the help of local clay harvester and potter, Jacob Hostetler, by the time summer arrived we had over 150 pounds of clay ready to be molded and shaped by campers, with over a hundred more pounds waiting for processing as the summer unfolded.

Throughout the summer, each camper came to a clay activity where we talked about this big idea: *“Humans are uniquely connected to the earth because we are made from the same stuff.*



*This creates a kinship between the earth and humans.”* Campers were asked to consider how humans and the earth are literally connected. The conversations we had were rich and varied. We talked about the food we eat, air we breathe, water we drink, the common chemical composition of living things, and returning to the earth when we die. Campers were then instructed to go on a walk and to collect items they found interesting, beautiful, or connected to in nature. They would then use their items to decorate a clay tile.

Once they returned it was time to get out the clay! Campers made a ball, rolled it out, and went to town using their collected items to create their own unique design. It was so much fun observing the care and thought that campers put into creating their clay tiles, and the way they got to know their items a bit better as they worked.

Once campers were finished, we set their tiles out for display as a collective mosaic of sorts – symbols of both our individual connections to nature and our community’s collective efforts – human and non-human, all coming together to connect, reflect, and create beauty in the peaceful woods.

### Staff transitions

This fall we said goodbye to **Abigail Greaser** and **Em Hilton-Nickel**, each having completed a year of voluntary service at Camp Friedenswald. Abigail served on summer staff since 2017, sharing her gifts of music and leadership. Throughout the past year, Em helped cultivate a small teaching garden and embed Indigenous perspectives into this summer’s program. Thank you, Abigail and Em! We will miss you.

### Three generations

Here’s something sweet from the Camp Kitchen: Three generations of Miller/Nester volunteers serving side-by-side during an especially busy week! Lynn Miller, Lori Nester, and Douglas Nester (who served on staff this summer) assisted in serving 130 hungry band campers. What a tradition of service and love of Camp Friedenswald across the generations!



#### Year-round staff

Vicki Archer, Dishwasher  
Eric Emerson, Food Service Director  
Jonathan Fridley, Facilities Director  
Andrea Golden, Bookkeeper  
Amy Huser, Sustainability & OE Director  
Jane Litwiller, Program Director  
Jenna Liechty Martin, Executive Director  
Lora Nafziger, Program Advisor  
Phil Nyce, Facilities Assistant  
Anita & Paul Pawelski, Guest Hosts  
Vicky Solano, Housekeeper  
Jess Whicker, Guest Services Director

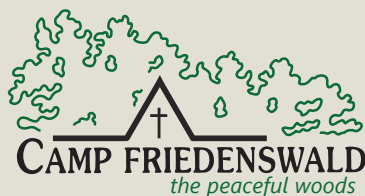
#### Board of Directors

Steve Hartman-Keiser  
Todd Kirkton, Secretary  
Evan Miller  
Jerry Nussbaum  
Deanna Risser, Vice-Chair  
Mark Roeschley  
Pete Suter, Chair  
Sarah Werner  
Alita Yoder  
Kendra Yoder

#### Contact us:

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

Moving? Need to update your address? Please let us know!



## 9,000 trees

An unfolding story, made possible with the vision and support of many, including camp staff Jonathan Fridley and Amy Huser.

*The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now. – Chinese proverb*

*... and the leaves of the trees are for the healing of the nations. – Revelation 22:2*

A number of years ago we entered into a land trade with a neighbor to the north of Camp Friedenswald. In exchange for a portion of land off Union Road (near Round Lake), Camp Friedenswald received 37 acres of land adjacent to Main Camp, just north of the Allan Hill campsite. The trade opened up possibilities, including the chance to steward more of the rare prairie fen habitat, home to the federally endangered Mitchell’s satyr butterfly. We hoped that having more direct access would help us to better steward the land, reduce the flow of chemicals into the wetland, and hopefully increase the butterfly’s chance of survival.

While one portion of the land is wetland and other is forest, approximately 17 acres of land has been conventionally farmed for decades. In acquiring this land, we knew there was something more that needed to be done – something that would align with our values of sustainability and stewardship and our commitment to the work of repair. After dreaming about possibilities, we decided to transition most of the land from conventional farmland to forest, enrolling the land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), with the goal of increasing habitat for wildlife. Camp will receive financial support for this transition for the next fifteen years.

We are excited to partner with Mennonite Men in their **JoinTrees** campaign to plant one million trees by the year 2030 by planting 9,000 trees on this land next spring (2023). This initiative targets climate change by increasing tree and forest cover with the goals to help (1) mitigate global warming, (2) promote climate justice, and (3) sustain biodiversity.<sup>1</sup>

The trees will consist of a variety of oak, hickory, cherry, and walnut trees, among others, and will be planted with the help of experienced foresters and a few of our own staff. **In time, this new forest will aid in sequestering carbon, providing habitat for wildlife and contributing to the overall resilience and health of the natural communities in this area. Someday, campers might even walk under its canopy.**

If the best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, and the second best time is today, we hope that the third best time will be the spring of 2023. And with each of the 9,000 trees planted, we pour our prayers for the leaves that have yet to unfurl. May the leaves of the trees be for the healing of the nations.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.mennonitemen.org/jointrees>



A “before” photo taken in fall 2022 of the farmland that is to be converted to forest.



In spring 2022, volunteers from Assembly Mennonite Church (Goshen, IN) assisted with planting 50 trees across Camp. Next spring 9,000 trees will be added to that count.

If you, your congregation, or an organization you’re part of are interested in learning more about the JoinTrees campaign, contact Steve Thomas at [SteveT@mennonitemen.org](mailto:SteveT@mennonitemen.org).