



Strategic Plan - Progress report and steps taken (2023)

In 2023 we served:

- 607 campers in summer (334 youth / 273 family) - the most youth campers we've served since 2014 and the most family campers in over 20 years
- 1800+ people through our school-based outdoor education program
- More than 7,000 guests
- 29,000+ meals in the dining hall

As we worked to provide hospitality and programming to those who came through the peaceful woods, we also worked actively towards our strategic goals. Highlights of the steps we took in 2023 are noted below.

Pillar 1 - Place

We root our work and play in the St. Joseph River watershed and commit to learning, caring for, and being shaped by the place and its inhabitants.

Goal 1: To deepen our understanding, engagement, and love of this place and community.

- 2023 - Completed planting of 9,000 trees on north property
- 2023 - 800+ hours committed to land stewardship in the year (goal: 500)
- 2023 - Completed four hikes with staff (Turtle Hill with Bill Minter; Indigenous History; Paw paw hike; winter hike around Allan Hill)
- 2023 - Expanded garden wall outside kitchen to provide fresh herbs for cooking
- 2023 - Began work on planting of native plants outside Nature Center and began plans for native plantings on both beaches
- 2023 - Developed and implemented summer theme "Water Ways" - helping provide watershed education to all campers

Goal 2: To increase local partnerships and collaborate with others to strengthen our connections within the watershed.

- 2023 - Offered two hikes (spring/fall) for neighbors (2 people attended spring hike; 18 in fall) Amy led
- 2023 - Developed a plan for cardboard recycling and transitioned to pick-up of all single stream recycling

- 2023 - Partnered with Bethany Christian Schools for second year in providing year-long sustainability camp program (a series of 3 day-long experiences)
- 2023 - Formed and strengthened new food partnerships with local food suppliers (Gluten Free Sensations, Chops & Co., Jake's Country Meats, Maple Row Sugarhouse)
- 2023 - Received Cass County Conservation District award for recycling, waste management, and sustainable purchasing
- 2023 - Added new/additional local and/or sustainable items into camp store (i.e. Soapy Gnome; coloring book; recycled content t-shirt and sweatshirt)
- 2023 - Collaborated with and supported Shavehead Lake Association in application of water monitoring grant for the lake

Pillar 2 - Formation

We nurture and empower people for hopeful living through worship, play, rest, and skill-building.

Goal 3: To clearly define our objectives and goals for programming and craft a compelling and fresh vision for programs in collaboration with stakeholders.

- 2023 - Reviewed and revised camp pastor information sheet (which includes clearer objectives for summer and winter programs)
- 2023 - Learned and gathered information from ACA, referenced CDC stakeholders, as well as the larger body of work informing best practices at camps. (Jane)
 - Continue to get info from ACA (attended staffing summits)
 - Attending and participating in CDC leadership councils and meetings (Jenna)
 - 3 staff attended MCA gathering in 2023 (Eric, Jonathan, Jenna)
- 2023 - Ensured camp licensing requirements were met for State of Michigan

Goal 4: To develop deep spiritual wells and practices for sharing Anabaptist Christian faith and values.

- 2023 - Book study of Rooted Faith as a staff team
- 2023 - Developed and implemented summer theme "Water Ways" that drew in concepts of watershed discipleship

Goal 5: To cultivate joy and practical life skills that foster resilience among staff and those we serve.

- 2023 - Completed natural playground (and dedication at Builders)
- 2023 - Further developed loose parts play area
- 2023 - Played as a staff - tried to find times for hikes, meals, and time together
- 2023 - Provided professional development opportunities (i.e. CampBrain conference attended by two people; Rooted and Grounded Conference attended by two people, Michigan Sustainability Conference attended by one person)

Pillar 3 - Justice

We value diversity, equity, and inclusion, and will examine the power structures that contribute

to climate change, discrimination, oppression, marginalization, and other forms of injustice, responding with individual and collective action.

Goal 6: To articulate and embed DEI commitments into the fabric of who we are at Camp Friedenswald through policies, procedures, and staff training.

- 2023 - DEI task force worked on charter and met throughout the year
- 2023 - Created and adopted a welcome/inclusion statement and placed on website
- 2023 - Joined Supportive Communities Network
- 2023 - Took steps towards repentance and repair to Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests for past harms
- 2023 - Staff training (March 2023) on LGBTQ+ inclusion

Goal 7: To participate in the [Repair Network \(of the DDoD Coalition\)](#) and actively follow through on the commitments of learning and lament, truth-telling, relationship-building and the work of repair.

- 2023 - Commitment to meet at least twice a year in order to carry forward repair work goals
- 2023 - Met with local group (Elkhart County and beyond) of Mennonite leaders engaged in similar work; plan to continue meeting going forward
- 2023 - Incorporated indigenous history hike in summer program; all campers went on hike
- 2023 - As part of a new hire checklist, included training on indigenous history and land acknowledgment

[Goal 8:](#) To reduce our contribution to climate change through specific strategies that seek to lower greenhouse gas emissions, serving as a role model to other camps and churches.

- 2023 - Established a baseline for greenhouse gas emissions at camp
- 2023 - Researched geothermal
- 2023 - Connection with Mark Goertzen (sent “extra” food waste to feed pigs)

Pillar 4 - Resilience

We creatively adapt and embrace sustainable stewardship of our built environment and financial and personnel resources in order to sustain Camp Friedenswald’s purpose into the future.

Goal 9: To renovate and expand staff housing and to update other aging facilities across Camp keeping “green” practices, accessibility, and beauty at the forefront of our planning.

- 2023 - Developed plans for remodel of Fenwood and Sycamore. Steps were taken to help set us up for renovation in 2024 of these two buildings. Existing plans for Tamarack, Family Suite, TriPlex and Peace House were drawn by an architect and initial discussion about anticipated needs was had.
- 2023 - Identified and selected a builder who prioritizes sustainability and green practices
- 2023 - Switched to low/non-toxic all purpose cleaner (and trained summer staff on use)

- 2023 - Installed automatic door openers in Main Dining Hall (and received grant funding for project)
- 2023 - Completed new standing seam metal roof and additional insulation on Lakeview roof (\$170,000 project)
- 2023 - Completed new covered seating area and storage area at Lakeview Beach

Goal 10: To ensure sufficient financial support to sustain Camp's operations and a capital campaign, while promoting Endowment growth.

- 2023 - Began to identify costs of capital projects; created plans for new duplex and received pricing/costs. Met regularly with the Building Committee to move projects forward.
- 2023 - Began quiet phase of capital campaign - over \$600,000 in new gifts/pledges by year end (in addition to \$1m of unrestricted giving and operational cash)
- 2023 - Reviewed pricing of all programs and services and made adjustments
- 2023 - Received grants to support ongoing land stewardship, accessibility, and education efforts. Grants included:
 - \$6,000 - from DNR
 - \$14,000 - for Mitchel's satyr habitat work
 - \$9,000 - from Mennonite Men for tree planting
 - \$8,000 - from Fed Governmnet's CRP program (one-time payment + on-going lease)
 - \$8,000 - from Bontrager Family Foundation for door openers
 - \$500 - from Anabaptist Disabilities Network
 - \$1200 from DNR for supplies for outdoor education classes

Goal 11: To evaluate staffing and volunteer needs to ensure that ample support is available to achieve goals, while wholeheartedly investing in Camp's people by ensuring benefits and compensation reflect a living wage.

- 2023 - Filled full-time facility & land stewardship assistant position
- 2023 - Filled part-time food service assistant position (and moved to full-time)
- 2023 - Created and filled new part-time administrative assistant position
- 2023 - Changed eligibility requirements for health insurance benefits (from 40 to 32 hours/week), directly impacting 3 staff
- 2023 - Filled VS Sustainability & Program Assistant position
- 2023 - Created comprehensive "new hire checklist" to help onboard all year-round staff
- 2023 - Met living wage benchmarks for Cass County (for single person) and built into budget
- 2023 - Reviewed and revised food service offerings and schedule in order to make work more sustainable for staff
- 2023 - Focused on volunteer appreciation: created special "volunteer" t-shirt for regular volunteers
- 2023 - 780 days of volunteer engagement at Camp

