

The FRIEDENSWORD

Camp Friedenswald

Volume 33, Issue 1: Spring/Summer 2025

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

Reflections from the Director

by Jenna Liechty Martin

In the summer of 1950, when Camp Friedenswald was simply known as the “Camp Site at Shavehead Lake,” 22-year-old Carol Sprunger (née Hooley) spent her summer cooking meals out of a trailer for the 100 hungry volunteers who helped build the first cabins. This experience left its imprint on Carol’s life. She enjoyed reminding me that she held the title of “Camp’s first cook” — and that she managed to do so on a one-burner stove!

Carol died earlier this year. As the family sorted through her keepsakes, they came across a letter from the Camp Committee thanking Carol for her service that first summer. In addition to outlining the amount of her stipend — \$220 for three months — Committee member Esko Loewen wrote, “Thanks so much for all that you have done to make the camp a reality.”

Thus, Carol became one of the first “Builders” of Camp Friedenswald.

She, along with her husband, Roy, would spend the rest of their lives committed to Friedenswald. They passed along their desire to serve and their love of Camp to other family members. Each of their children attended summer camp, and several children and grandchildren worked as summer staff. Today her son Norm Sprunger serves as a regular volunteer, using his construction and woodworking talents to assist with a variety of projects. Carol’s granddaughter, Kenda Sprunger, contributes technology and organizational expertise as Administrative Assistant in the office.

While singular in its own way, Carol’s story is not unique. For 75 years, Camp Friedenswald Builders have helped to carry Camp’s mission forward through their contributions of time, talents and financial support. In this issue of The Friedensword, we celebrate the contributions of the Builders and honor the nearly 1,000 days of service given by volunteers throughout 2024. Their many contributions were varied: helping to prepare meals, stewarding the land, maintaining buildings and grounds, assisting with programming and more. Truly, Camp Friedenswald would not exist today without ongoing support from congregations and individuals who have generously given to sustain Camp’s mission.



Carol Sprunger is pictured washing a dog outside the trailer where she cooked and lived in the summer of 1950. The overhang at upper left is where meals were served.

This year marks 75 years since that very first summer at Camp.

As we celebrate this significant milestone, we want to be intentional about collecting and sharing stories that illustrate how Friedenswald has been shaped into the place it is today, and how it has impacted peoples’ lives. We want to bear witness to God’s presence and faithfulness throughout these years and to look back with a spirit of gratitude and appreciation for those who have shaped the peaceful woods from a humble vision to a thriving reality. And, we want to look forward with expectation and hope for the ways that Camp’s mission will continue to be lived out and impact lives in the years to come. The need for retreat, renewal and reconnection are as important today as they were in 1950. We need your help in collecting stories that hold meaning for you and your families. Please submit your stories and reflections online at friedenswald.org/75-years/ or send an email or letter. We look forward to celebrating together throughout 2025.





Exploring the Wisdom of Trees

by Gwen Gustafson-Zook

Inherent in the life of trees is embodied wisdom:

- The wisdom to be deeply rooted
- The wisdom to stand firm without being rigid
- The wisdom to flourish with new life
- The wisdom to thrive and bear fruit
- The wisdom to repeat the cycle year after year, gradually revealing significant growth

Our biblical story is bookended by stories in which trees play prominent roles. In the second creation story, the *Tree of Life* stands firmly rooted

in the center of the Garden of Eden offering abundant life for all. And in the benediction embedded in the final chapter of the book of Revelation, the *Tree of Life* shows up again, this time bearing leaves for “the healing of the nations.” Between these two tree stories we find hundreds of biblical references to trees, most of which we miss or even dismiss — not unlike the trees we pass by each day without so much as a thought. But what might happen if we paid attention to the trees?

This summer we hope to find out.

Our 2025 summer theme is *The Wisdom of Trees: Instructions for Living*. Throughout the season we will pay attention to the trees that surround us. We will ask questions, both scientific and theological: What does it mean to be deeply rooted? And how do those roots nurture community? How are trees able to withstand the storms of life, and what might we learn from them? What does it take for trees to flourish, and what might Jesus have meant by saying we are the branches connected to him, the vine? And what might we learn from the *Tree of Life* who offers healing and abundant life for all?

We look forward to this communal, deep exploration of *The Wisdom of Trees*, grounded in the rich soil of the peaceful woods. Won't you join us?

Top photo: Campers gather for morning quest under the shade of the cottonwood tree on the lower flat.

Right: High school campers reflect while sitting on the edge of the field where 9,000 trees were planted in spring 2023.



Camp Staff

Vicki Archer, *Dishwasher*
 Eric Emerson, *Food Service Director*
 Heather Emerson, *Housekeeper*
 Patrick Estel, *Sustainability Assistant*
 Jonathan Fridley, *Facilities Director*
 Julie Fridley, *Housekeeper*
 Andrea Golden, *Bookkeeper*
 Gwen Gustafson-Zook, *Program Director*
 Jeremy Hostetler, *Facilities Assistant*
 Janessa Hostetler, *Kitchen Assistant*
 Amy Huser, *Sustainability & Outdoor Education Director*
 Amber Manes, *Housekeeper*
 Jenna Liechty Martin, *Executive Director*
 Anita & Paul Pawelski, *Guest Hosts*
 Pat Pusko, *Housekeeper*
 Kendra Sprunger, *Administrative Assistant*
 Natasha Tucker, *Housekeeper*
 Jess Whicker, *Guest Services Director*

Board of Directors

Steve Hartman-Keiser, *Secretary*
 Evan Miller, *Vice-Chair*
 Chris Moser
 Sibonokuhle Ncube
 Deanna Risser, *Chair*
 Mark Roeschley, *Treasurer*
 Allison Troyer
 Sarah Werner
 Kendra Yoder

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



Sustain
Friedenswald



Earlier this spring we celebrated the completion of the new Fenwood staff duplex that provides a comfortable and highly energy-efficient home for two of our staff families and the installation of a 46-panel solar array to power Lakeview Lodge. Sycamore Lodge is nearing completion and is expected to be in use by summer. Up next: Family Suite/ Health Center and staff housing. Follow along at friedenswald.org/sustain-friedenswald/. A heartfelt thank you to the generous Builders who have pledged or given over \$2.1 million toward the goal of \$2.5 million.

Strategic Plan: 2024 Progress Report

Alongside serving 8,100 people through programs and hospitality services, we took significant steps in 2024 toward our strategic goals. Highlights of this work are described below and serve as an encouragement to keep taking things one step at a time. The full report is available on our website.

Pillar 1: PLACE

- 360+ hours committed to land stewardship
- Three landscaped areas transitioned from non-native to majority-native plantings
- Received \$12,000 in grants for Mitchell's satyr butterfly (pictured below) habitat restoration
- Over 28,700 meals served in dining hall, with over \$3,000 spent on food from local partners
- Awarded Michigan Sustainable Business Award for Southwest Michigan from Michigan Sustainable Business Forum



Pillar 2: FORMATION

- Record-setting 699 summer campers (pictured below)
- Summer theme *Animal Kin-dom* highlighted interconnectedness of creation and God's vision of shalom
- 2,100 school children and chaperones were served through Camp's outdoor education program
- 80 participants heard Cyneatha Millsaps speak on theme of *Women's Prophetic Voices* at Women's Retreat
- 75 people heard Sarah Augustine (pictured bottom left) speak on decolonization and ecological overshoot at Restoration Retreat



Pillar 3: JUSTICE

- Ritual of repair was held with Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBT Interests addressing past harms
- 30 people visited Pokagon Band's Dowagiac River re-meandering site during Restoration Retreat
- Indigenous history and settler impacts of local area were presented by Luke Gascho at Builders Weekend
- Climate Action Plan was written and adopted
- Greenhouse gas emissions in 2024 decreased by 66% compared with 2015
- 60% vegetarian meals served during summer youth camps, helping reduce our carbon footprint



Pillar 4: RESILIENCE

- 996 service days were given by volunteers
- Campaign to Sustain Friedenswald was launched during Builders Weekend with over \$2.1 million raised to date toward goal of \$2.5 million
- Construction began on new energy-efficient staff duplex and Sycamore Lodge (pictured below)
- Camp received "clean" financial audit
- Generous financial support given throughout 2024 helped sustain our mission for another year



CAMP FRIEDENSWALD BUILDERS

The people, congregations and organizations listed contributed as Builders to Camp Friedenswald from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024. If you gave during this time and your name is not listed or is listed incorrectly, please accept our apologies and notify Jenna Liechty Martin. Thank you for your faithful support!

WHO IS A BUILDER?

A Builder is someone who believes in the work of Camp Friedenswald and is committed to supporting its mission by providing essential financial support (\$500 or more annually) and/or volunteering five or more days each year. See www.friedenswald.org/get-involved/ for more!



John Alter & Sueann VonGuten
Jan Althaus
Philip & Andrea Arner
Sylvia Aschliman
Don Augspurger
J.O. & Elizabeth Augspurger
Rachel Augspurger
Walter & Lynette Bachman
Wendell Badertscher & Esther Nafziger
Jim & Lois Bare
Scott & Nancy Baum
Katherine Bauman
Leon Bauman & Char Yutzy
Howard Baumgartner
Jim & Naomi Baumgartner
Marie G. Beechy*
Justin & Erin Beeker
Ted & Gretta Beitler
Terry Berg & Cathy Beery Berg
Dave Bertsche
Hilary Bertsche
Allan & Marie Blunt
Michael & Connie Brandt
Henry & Sara Braun
Tim Braun & Alysha Liljeqvist
Jeff & Patricia Buhr
Arlin & Maretta Buller
Rick & Cindy Burns
Ron Byler & Mim Shirk
Hannah Chappell Dick
Virgil & Louise Claassen
Stanley & Joenita Clemens
Roger & Linda Clemmons
Richard & Kathleen Collins
Mike & Stephanie Company
Carol Connelly
John Courtney
Brad & Ellie Covert
Jack & Katherine DeLee
Ryan & Alicia Demarco
Lu Derstine
Carole F. Dobbie
Alex & Emma Dugger
Alan Ediger
Mike & Mary Edmiston
Bracton & Briana Eicher
Jim & Linda Eicher
Phil & Cindy Eicher
Kirk & Heather Eicher-Miller
Greg & Nedra Engle
Mia Engle
John Fox & Mary Habegger Fox
George & Barb Fridley
Erica Friesen
Ivan & Rachel Friesen

Joelle Friesen
Jon & Janelle Friesen
Billy Funk & Alita Yoder
Barbra Gant
John Gerber & Suella Lehman Gerber
Marlin Gerber
Ted & Beth Gerber
Rose Gerber Emery
Elinor Gerig
Daniel & Jan Gingerich
William Goldberg & Lisa Schirch
Cal & Sharon Graber
Jonathan & Phoebe Graber
Peter & Mary Graber
Erik Grayvold & Angela Moore
Alan Greaser & Jeannie Brunk
Ben Gundy & Jennifer Ruth
Jeff & Marlyce Gundy
John & Jan Gundy
Nate Gundy & Jessica Witmer
Bob & Christine Guth
Arman & Sue Habegger
Ben & Joanna Habegger
Gary & Carla Habegger
Marge Habegger
Mike & Gwen Habegger
Ronald & Ladonna Habegger
Rollin & Debra Handrich
Steve & Lori Hartman-Keiser
Doug & Sarah Hartzler
Greg & Laura Hartzler
Kelly Hartzler
Matt & Jen Hartzler
Tim & Marybeth Hartzler
Galen & Karen Hershberger
Stefan & Karen Hershberger
Wilbur & Elizabeth Hershberger
Hal Hess & Christine Schumacher
Andre & Dancy Hirschler
Steven & Suzanne Marie Hitt
Rex & Angie Hochstedler
Ruby Hochstedler
Mary Hofstetter
Mark & Beth Hooley
Jim & Sandi Hostetler
Hans Houshower
Amy Huser
Steve & Mary Beth Huser
Kevin & Tonya Jaberg
Barry & Janeen Bertsche Johnson
Steve & Jan Johnson
Titus King & Joy Kauffman King
Vernon King

Jim & Vicky Kirkton
Todd & Alison Kirkton
Ted Koontz & Gayle Gerber Koontz
Tim & Sarah Koontz
Raphael LaFrance & Julia Graber
Hesston & Jean Lauer
George & Anita Lehman
Jeff & Sharon Lehman
Scott & Greta Lehman
Tim Lehman
Mary Lehman Yoder
John & Joy Liechty
Nancy Liechty Loewen
Douglas & Mary Liechty-Caskey
Todd & Lisa Liechty-Steele
David Lind & Kendra Yoder
Tim & Suzanne Lind
Dorothy Loepp
Stephen Lowe
Doug & Paula Luginbill
David Mark
James & Audra Mark
Wesley Mark & Mary Harder
Bob & Amy Martin
Daryl & Karen Martin
Peter Martin & Jenna Liechty Martin
Gerald & Carrie Mast
Krista and Craig Mast
Rodney Maust & Martha Yoder Maust
Connie McBroome
James McInerney
Ross & Jeanne Mielke
Pete & Cheryl Roscher Mikinka
Brent Miller & Megan Stauffer-Miller
D. Paul Miller
Darren Miller & Anna Ruth Hershberger
Edward & Twila Miller
Evan Miller
Imogene Miller
Joel & Abbie Miller
Rae Ann Miller
Phil & Karen Miller Rush
Mary Ann Moman
Chris Moser & Carmen Ordonez
Dave & Jenny Moser
Janean Moser
Mary Anne Moser
Luke Mullet & Sarah Roth Mullet
Lewis Naylor & Belle Duerksen
Ruth Naylor

Sibonokuhle Ncube
 Randall & Marcia Nelson
 Art & Cheryl Neuenschwander
 Kiva Nice-Webb
 Kevin & Kendra Nickel
 Jerry & Virginia Nussbaum
 Jonathan & Becky Nussbaum
 Phil & Maribeth Nyce
 Jack Paxton & Sharon Monday
 Luke Penner & Rachel Yoder
 Penner
 Tanner Pinks
 Jo Ann Preheim
 Matthew Pritchard & Elizabeth
 Moraff
 Larry & Louise Reeser
 Brian & Heather Reichenbach
 Douglas & Paulette Reichenbach
 Eric & Jennifer Reichenbach
 Lamar Reichert
 Jack & Jeanette Reimer
 John & Kay Reimer
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 Andrew Rissler
 Mark & Jane Roeschley
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 Phil & Mary Schmidt
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 Roger & Nathalie Schrock
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 Kian & Hannah Searcy
 Jane Sears
 Cheryl Severa
 Jeff & Amy Shadbolt
 Elisabeth Shelly
 Karl & Michelle Shelly
 Dale Shenk
 Philip & Anne Shenk
 Ted & Teresa Smucker
 Jim & Kay Sommer
 Keith & Shirley Sommer
 Ted & Josephine Sommer*
 Andrew & Janet Spalding
 Jonathan & Anne Marie Spelman
 Charlotte Sprunger
 Norman Sprunger
 Bruce & Suzanne Stauffer
 Amy Stauffer McNutt
 Jackson Steinmetz
 Jane Steinmetz
 Joel & Teri Steinmetz
 James Stevenson
 Peter Streid
 Kent & Linda Stucky
 Bonita Suter
 Dave & Marlene Suter
 Fred & Marlene Suter
 Jerry & Nancy Suter
 Tim & Margaret Thut
 Donald & Beth Troyer
 Josh & Paige Troyer

Scott & Allison Troyer
 Byron & Connie Warkentin
 Gertrude Warkentin
 Jim & Jane Weaver
 Joshua Weaver & Julia Gingrich
 Justin & Lyz Weaver
 Curtis & Shelly Weaverdyck
 Jonathan & Meghan Wenger
 Sarah Werner
 Robert Wheeler
 Brian & Brenda Wiebe
 Marie Wiebe
 Dan & Kathleen Wilson
 Diane Wiman
 James Wolff
 Anthony & Evanna Yoder
 Jim & Sandra Yoder
 Kent & Gaye Yoder
 Virgil & Amy Yoder
 Lucille Zimmerman
 Bob Zook
 *Deceased

Organizations/Foundations

Bethany Christian Schools
 Everence Foundation, Inc.
 Maurice Stahly Family Fund
 Moser Motor Sales
 Shavehead Lake Association
 Xylem

Churches

Assembly Mennonite Church
 Belmont Mennonite Church
 Berkey Avenue Mennonite
 Church
 Community Mennonite Church
 Eighth Street Mennonite Church
 Emmaus Road Mennonite
 Fellowship
 First Mennonite Church of
 Bluffton
 First Mennonite Church of
 Champaign-Urbana
 Grace Mennonite Church
 Hively Avenue Mennonite
 Church
 Koinonia Class (FMC Berne)
 Madison Mennonite Church
 Maplewood Mennonite Church
 Mennonite Church of Normal
 North Danvers Mennonite
 Church
 Oak Grove Mennonite Church
 Paoli Mennonite Fellowship
 Prairieview Mennonite Church
 Salem Mennonite Church
 (Kidron)
 Silverwood Mennonite Church

*Pictured far left: Ben and Susan Setiawan;
 Jackson Steinmetz; Jan Althaus. Pictured
 above: David Moser; Salem Mennonite
 Church volunteers; Ellie Hartzler.*



Volunteer Vernon King is the first of many volunteers to place his thumbprint on this plaque honoring the less-visible prints of the many Builders who have given their time and gifts to Camp. The plaque hangs in the Maintenance Shop, and all volunteers are invited to add their thumbprint! Pictured from left: Vernon King, Jonathan Fridley, Galen Hershberger.



CAMP FRIEDENSWALD
the peaceful woods

For registration and scholarship
info, please visit Friedenswald.org

THE WISDOM OF TREES

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LIVING SUMMER 2025

2025 SUMMER & FALL SCHEDULE

High School (grades 9-12): June 8-13
Jr High (grades 7-8): June 15-20
Pre-Junior (grades 3-4): June 22-25
Junior (grades 5-6): June 29-July 4
Family Camp I: July 7-11

Builders Weekend: July 12-13
Family Camp II: July 14-18
Family Camp III: July 21-25
Women's Retreat: Sept 19-21
Restoration Retreat: Oct 31-Nov 2

Read and Recycle



Return Service Requested

15406 Watercress Way
Cassopolis, MI 49031

