



Spring
2023

Little Eden Echoes

Little Eden: *A place of ministry, a place of rest, all year long*

by KJ Oom

We hear it often, *"It's so good to be here!"* Many of our guests anticipate, with excitement, the time they spend at Little Eden, their *"favorite place."* It happens no matter if they are coming in the summer or winter, for family camps or for a weekend retreat. I often think in response, *"There's a reason for that!"*

I believe camps have an important role in the world today. As we become a more urban generation and get busier and more plugged into technology, the need to get away and quiet ourselves grows. Camp is a great place to unplug and get away from the stresses of life. A place to delight in nature and the joy of being outside - especially when surrounded by the beauty of Northern Michigan. It's also a place to connect with those around us, taking time to have meaningful conversations to hear about the challenges and life events our friends and family have been experiencing along with the mutual encouragement we can give each other.

A place for rest. Putting Jesus at the center of our camp experience gives us peace and helps us get the rest we need, a rest that only He can give. In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus talks of this rest when He says, *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* Finding the rest Jesus gives helps us to reset and be renewed, giving Him our burdens and taking the easier and lighter yoke He offers us through His grace and mercy.

It is this exchange, our burdens for Jesus' wonderful rest, that makes time spent at Little Eden stand apart.

We have seen the way that God uses a place like Little Eden to bring refreshment and to minister to people in a way that is not easily found in our increasingly busy lives.

Non-summer groups. This past fall, winter and spring, we have had groups from many different walks of

life, many different areas around Michigan and neighboring states, and for many different purposes for their time away. From crafting retreats, both quilting and scrapbooking, to men's and women's retreats, to family getaways or reunions.

It is such a joy to be able to see all of the different people who come to camp and to watch them enjoy their time away. Here's what some of them have to say:



- *"Thank you very much! Little Eden is a place of rest and company, most of all a reflection of our intimacy with God. Your place and service provide that for us."*
- *"Thank you for making this another fun, memorable, rejuvenating weekend!"*
- *"Our entire family enjoyed themselves and our time together after a year of more distance than what we'd like. It's such a gift to have a whole weekend without cooking or cleaning! We look forward to next year!"*



- *"Great memories were made once again!"*
- *"What a great time!! I wish we would have had more time to spend at Little Eden, but the time we had was great!!"*
- *"We just wanted to thank you again for a fantastic getaway. Our family truly enjoyed our time at Little Eden Camp. It was beyond perfect for our family! What a treasure."*



We, as staff, are humbled to be a part of a place that creates and makes available a space for God to minister to His people by giving them rest. And we look forward to the next time you are able to come and enjoy all Little Eden has to offer!



Improvements around camp: *From the desk of Wayne Faber*

Over this past fall and winter, we have been working to make some nice improvements around camp.

Balmy Heights. The most noticeable improvement is replacing the A-frame Balmy Heights with a more traditional cabin with straight-sided walls. This project started in the fall and is scheduled to be finished in late spring. Hitting your head on the beams of the A-frame is now a thing of the past.



The new Balmy Heights is almost complete



WiFi, Web Camera & Security Cameras. With this cabin improvement comes expanded WiFi to the beach and playground area around Balmy Heights. Campers will now be able to stay connected to the internet in those locations. We have also added internet to the Silver Creek cabin area. In addition, hardware was installed in a way which will make expanding internet to other areas of camp more feasible in future years.

As a part of this project, we are adding a webcam on our website. The webcam will allow you to see and enjoy Little Eden while you are at home



and missing LE. Security cameras were added around the main areas of camps where we have had some problems in the past. This includes the main lodge and other parking areas and the marina.

Staining & Deck Projects. The Lodge currently is in the process of being stained. This huge project is being completed by a local painting company from Manistee. Last fall and this spring, camp volunteers stained/will stain Maplewood, Room-4-U, Sunset, Twin Oaks East and West cabins.



The Triplex freshly stained with its new deck

The deck on the front of Maplewood, Room-4-U and Sunset was also replaced as the old one was rotting from the bottom side up. The deck on the Lodge will be stained this spring.

Office Update. Over the winter, we were able to update the camp office. The office was painted, new carpeting was installed free of charge, and new desks were donated.

Other Projects. Last summer and fall, we had **vinyl siding and foam insulation** installed on the outside of the camp house where our Food Service Director lives. This is helping keep the house warmer and more energy efficient. Other smaller projects include **new volleyball poles, net and boundary markers** on the waterfront and **new ping pong tables** in the Craft Shop.

These improvement projects were possible because of the generous individuals and families who made donations to the **Capital Campaign/Capital Projects Fund** and the **Friends of Little Eden Fund**. If you come to camp and enjoy these improvements or you would like to help with future projects, please consider giving to either of these funds. You can make a donation online, mail a check to the camp or give when you attend camp this summer. Any size gift is important and appreciated.



Not coming to camp this summer?

Please mail in your **\$35 Membership Fee** for 2023 before September 30th.
And if you've had an address, phone number or email change, please be sure to notify the camp office.

It is your responsibility to let the camp know of any contact information changes.

Little Eden welcomes...



Scott DeRidder as our new **Guest Services Manager**.

Scott is excited to start this new season in his life. Scott is married to Heather (our Office Manager) and has three children. Scott has been involved with camp ministries dating back to his childhood. He and his family live in Bear Lake, Michigan. He is an elder at

First Baptist Church of Manistee and a part of their praise team. Scott also enjoys leading a men's small group at his home. One of his favorite quotes is *"God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called"*. Scott is looking forward to being a part of the Little Eden community and is thankful for the opportunity to serve.

Dan Heitjan as our new **Food Service Director**.

Dan was previously a Transportation Director and has past experience in food service. Dan is a father to Kayli. Kayli is a senior in high school at Benzie County Central. Dan and Kayli attend the Tabernacle Church where Dan serves in the children's ministry and as an usher. In his free time, he likes to run or hangout at the beach. Dan is very excited to meet the summer staff, campers and our guests.



Dan Sauder as Little Eden's newest **Board Member**, approved at the 2022 Annual Meeting. He and his wife, Ezzie, attend **Second Family Week** with their children and extended families. Dan's parents, Myrl and Freida Sauder, started attending family camp in 1967 and were the first people to ever stay in the Balmy Heights cabin after it

was built (the first time). Someone from the Sauder family has stayed in the cabin that week ever since. Dan has attended Little Eden every year of his life except for a few while living in South Carolina. Dan graduated from Clemson University in Engineering and now lives in Pettisville, Ohio, where he is the VP of Product Strategy and Engineering at Sauder Woodworking Co. The board is excited to have Dan join them.



Little Eden thanks...

Craig and Pam Coffey for nine years of service. Craig has served as our **Food Service Director** and has done an exceptional job in the kitchen serving our guests year-round. Pam has worked on-call in the laundry and has helped with newsletter mailings.



Craig and Pam will be missed, but we wish them God's

richest blessings in their new endeavors. They will soon be moving to Owosso, where Craig will be an assistant manager at the local Culver's, to be closer to children and grandchildren.



Little Eden still seeking 3 or 4 summer team members

Little Eden is still in need of three or four team members to complete our summer team. *Please be in prayer with us as we seek individuals to join the team, and if you know of young adults, 18 or older, looking for a summer opportunity, please direct them to the application on our website.*



Why work at Camp?



Spring Work Weekend: *Come join us!*

Come to camp this spring and help us get ready for the summer season. We will be doing some preliminary work on **Thursday, May 18**, and then working all day **Friday, May 19**, and **Saturday, May 20**. Housing and meals are provided for those who volunteer. Meals will be served from Thursday lunch through Sunday breakfast. If you want to come earlier in the week to help prep projects for work weekend, we would love to have you.



Work projects will include spring cleaning inside and outside, installing new volleyball poles, assembling furniture, folding and pricing gift shop products, spreading wood chips, staining and painting Twin Oaks East and West, the Lodge deck and the grill pavilion, cutting and splitting firewood, putting in docks, power-washing tennis courts, cleaning up the grounds, prepping camp for the summer season and more.



Please contact the camp at office@littleeden.org or 231-889-4294 to let us know how many will attend, when you will come and what meals you will eat here. **Any and all help from ALL ages is greatly appreciated.**

Other Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in spending a week or two or even a month at Little Eden?

We are looking for volunteers to assist with the late summer season once our college students head back to school (**August 12—September 16**). Volunteer opportunities include:

- Food/buffet prep and clean-up
- Dishes



- Grounds and maintenance
- Housekeeping, flower care, snack shop and more.



Housing and meals are provided for those who volunteer. If you want to know more or would like to sign up, please contact Wayne (admin@littleeden.org) or KJ (operations@littleeden.org) or call them at camp at 231-889-4294.

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