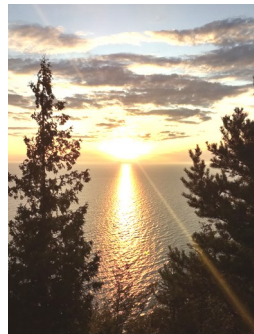




## Hiking the trail: *Volunteering at Little Eden*

**H**iking in Michigan is a common activity, but not everyone is suited to the rugged, challenging terrain of some trails. Steep inclines, slippery surfaces, pests and poison ivy are just a few of the possible hazards one may encounter. The serious hiker trains and invests in gear and supplies to venture deep into nature. The rest of us simply throw on a good pair of shoes and fill up a water bottle.

Thankfully, just north of Onekama is the **Overlook Trail**, a trail that leads to a stunning overlook of Lake Michigan. Located in *Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve*, this trail has been designed to accommodate hikers of all skill levels, young and old, even those with mobility issues. The Overlook Trail opened in 2017 as the first universally accessible trail of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. Much thought was given to the design of this trail. At a half-mile long, the six-foot wide trail is made of crushed and compacted stone and wooden walkways to provide a hard, level surface. Elevation of the trail is limited to 100 feet using multiple switchbacks to insure a safe ascent/descent for those in wheelchairs or strollers. A viewing platform at the end of the trail offers bench seating, a panoramic view of Lake Michigan and a moment to contemplate.....



Someone had an idea. Someone developed a plan. But without workers, that plan would remain a sketch, just scribbles on a page. Surveyors, heavy equipment operators, truck drivers hauling in supplies and all kinds of skilled laborers were needed to accomplish the goal of building this trail. This reminded me of Ephesians 2:10, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."* Sitting on that bench, I felt a gentle nudge. The Holy Spirit said, *"I have a job for you. It's been planned from long ago. Will you walk in it?"*

Details, details. I needed details. How will I convince my family? My boss? Myself? Is it doable? So I prayed, *"You'll have to work out the details."* He answered, *"I already have."*

That was the summer of 2022. I soon found myself in conversation with my husband and boss. Then in October, I discussed the plan with Wayne and Lynda. I'd arrive during **Spring Work Weekend** of 2023 and stay through Genesis Week as a volunteer. What none of us knew at the time was that the Craft Director would not be available until a week

before family camps began. But God knew.

Besides being interested in art activities, I like to clean and organize. So, my first weeks, I spent time tidying up and taking inventory of all the craft supplies. Then I helped plan the Craft-of-the-Day and ordered supplies. Once summer staffers arrived, I went through orientation week and learned the intricate day-to-day workings of which guests are blissfully unaware. The amount of planning, organization and work required to maintain Little Eden is astonishing and has given me a new appreciation for every aspect of camp.

During **Youth Camps**, we were short-staffed because several summer staffers filled the role of cabin leaders. Thankfully, a number of other volunteers arrived to walk in the good works that had been planned for them. Like working a puzzle, God fit all the pieces together into a masterpiece. Ephesians 4:16 (NLT) says, *"He makes the whole body fit together perfectly."* As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy, growing and full of love.

By the time **Family Camps** began, we were operating like a well-oiled machine, especially on Saturdays as each cabin and lodge room was cleaned and prepared for the next group of campers. Each staffer knew their assignments and joyfully worked together throughout the week to create a great camping experience for the guests. When my assignments were completed for the day, I relaxed, studied, explored, kayaked, rock-hunted and simply enjoyed being in Michigan. I ventured to Lake Michigan almost every evening to watch the sun set and praise God for the opportunity to walk in the path He had planned for me. Looking ahead, I am praying Psalm 27:11, *"Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path."* I'm feeling the nudge to jump on that trail again and am wondering which of you God is calling to join me at Little Eden this summer.



by Diane Buerge

*Volunteers are vital to this ministry. We depend on them to accomplish the mission God has given us. Whether it's helping with Saturday turnover, washing dishes for youth camp or filling in throughout the summer and early fall, we couldn't do what we do without our volunteers. Little Eden offers many opportunities for volunteers to give of their time for a day, a week or longer. Please let us know if you would like to volunteer this spring, summer or fall by contacting KJ at [operations@littleeden.org](mailto:operations@littleeden.org) or 231-889-4294.*



# From the desk of Wayne Faber, *Executive Director*



I would like to give you a few updates about the happenings at Little Eden.

**Birch, Cherry & Juniper update.** Many of you who have stayed in **Birch, Cherry** and **Juniper** over the years (or who have had family or friends stay in them) know these cabins are in great need of being replaced. Our best estimate dates these cabins to be over 100 years old. These cabins continue to deteriorate mainly due to the decades of moisture found in the log walls and



floors. We know that if we don't do something in the next few years, we will need to quit using them altogether because they will have decayed beyond being able to safely use them.

We had developed an approved floor plan option to use in replacing these cabins and were moving forward with that plan, but since last summer, the State of Michigan has changed what they will allow to be built and used for youth camps. As a result of the state's change, we are having to go back to the drawing boards (literally) to re-design a cabin layout that will be viable for both youth camps and family camps.

I have been working with the State of Michigan as well as a local architect to determine what our options are. What is emerging is a single-story option with a couple of bedrooms along with a kitchen, living and dining area. Once we finalize an approved plan, we will get estimates of cost and move ahead. Please keep the camp in your prayers as we continue to work through this process.

*As a result of a state's change, Little Eden is having to re-design the cabin layout to be viable for both youth and family camps.*

**A new development position.** As Little Eden continues to grow, the camp is looking to add a part time **Donor Relations / Recruitment Director**. This is a new, remote, part-time position for someone who lives in the Northwest Ohio or Northeast Indiana areas and loves Little Eden and the families of the camp. This individual would help raise funds for upcoming projects, build and strengthen donor relations, as well as visit some of the local colleges in the area to help recruit college-aged summer staff. We would prefer someone with development experience but would potentially consider someone needing training. If you or someone you know has interest in this position, please contact me at [admin@littleeden.org](mailto:admin@littleeden.org) or 231-889-4294.

**Improvements around camp.** Over the past year, we have continued to make improvements around camp. Many of this year's projects aren't visible as you walk around the grounds but are still vital to Little Eden ministering to guests and campers comfortably and safely.



Projects completed include:

- *Replacing and upgrading water lines in the camp's main water distribution system*
- *Rebuilding one of the main sewer pumps in the lift station on camp property*
- *Updating the electrical panel in Silver Creek*
- *Replacing 30 receptacles around camp to be GFCI-protected*
- *Replacing 50 smoke detectors in cabins which were expiring*
- *Replacing the commercial reach-in refrigerator in the Lodge kitchen*
- *Replacing the warmer in the Lodge kitchen*
- *Replacing the furnace in the boys dorm*
- *Replacing the hot water heater in Pine Creek*
- *Replacing the windows in the Lodge chapel*
- *Replacing two leaking roof windows in Lodge guestrooms*
- *Repairing a leak and replacing two bad spots in the Lodge roof*
- *Adding reliable internet to the summer staff dorm and out to additional cabins*
- *Replacing the showers in Wel-Cum-Inn East and West*
- *Replacing toilets in Pine Creek & painting the bathrooms*
- *Repainting the inside of the men's and women's Bathhouse*
- *Staining Mo-Z-Inn, Dew Drop Inn and the Waterfront Shed*
- *Painting the benches and fence around the Shuffleboard Court*
- *Pruning lower branches around camp*
- *Putting new chair leg slides on all the chairs in the Lodge*
- *Replacing the swimming area water mat*
- *Updating some mattresses in cabins*

This spring we are still working on:

- *Stripping and re-shingling one of the camp houses*
- *Rebuilding the bell tower*
- *Replacing the wooden picnic tables on the Lodge deck with aluminum ones*
- *Replacing worn out parts on the swimming area dock*
- *Replacing aging outdoor lamp posts*
- *Finishing the landscaping and edging around the Lodge*



We would like to thank everyone who has helped or is helping with these projects or made donations to **Special Projects** or to the **Friends of Little Eden Fund**. Your generosity has made or is making these projects possible! **Thank you!**

**Summer changes.** As noted in the Reservation Packets you received, **Saturday check-in time is now 4:00 pm** (instead of the traditional 3:00 pm) to give our smaller staff team a little more time to turn camp over and have camp facilities ready for you.

As mentioned in the Fall Newsletter, there will be a **3% surcharge on credit card payments** as our new machine passes that expense on to cardholders. If you would like to avoid that fee, please bring your checkbook (or cash) with you to pay your summer bill.

*We are looking forward to another great summer and can't wait to see each and every one of you here at camp!*



# Little Eden welcomes Chelsea Lybarger, *Guest Services Manager*


Little Eden Camp is excited to welcome **Chelsea Lybarger** as its new **Guest Services Manager**. Chelsea grew up in North-west Iowa with a desire to help others and explore the world. Her first Christian camp experiences were at Ingham Lake Lutheran Bible Camp in middle school and later at Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp in high school. Her high school youth leaders introduced her to missions. She got a taste of the world through her time in YWAM (*Youth with a Mission*) doing her Discipleship Training in Juarez, Mexico, with outreach to Spain and North Africa in 2006.

In 2010, she moved to Michigan and attended Kuyper College and Spring Arbor University for Social Work. Chelsea spent ten years serving and working with youth and mentally ill adults in residential settings in Iowa and Michigan.

Chelsea fell in love with the outdoors and adventuring in Michigan and got into camping, rock climbing and any other type of adventure she could find. Her most recent adventure love is surfing on Lake Michigan. Chelsea also spent the last year fulfilling

a dream of van life.

Chelsea grew up sewing and designing and continues to create by knitting and making jewelry. She loves to read and enjoys cooking and baking. Chelsea still has a passion for Social Work and helping others and continues learning and promoting trauma awareness/healing.

She is very excited to work at Little Eden and be in Northern Michigan, one of her favorite places. 



*Chelsea, on one of her many excursions in her van*


**Reminder: 2024 Membership fees are due Sept. 30, 2024. If you aren't attending camp this summer, please let us know of any changes to your contact information (address, email, phone) and mail in your annual membership dues of \$35.**

## Join us for Spring Work Weekend: *May 16-19, 2024*

**Spring Work Weekend** is right around the corner! We invite you to come and help get Little Eden ready for the summer season. We will be doing some preliminary work on **Thursday, May 16**, and then working all day **Friday, May 17**, and **Saturday, May 18**. As always, housing and meals are provided for those who volunteer. Meals will be served from Thursday lunch through Sunday breakfast.

Work projects will include assembling new picnic tables, finishing the house roofing project, replacing the bell tower and aged lamp posts along with staining and spring-cleaning projects. **Any and all help from ALL ages is greatly appreciated.**

Please contact the camp at [office@littleeden.org](mailto:office@littleeden.org) or 231-889-4294 to let us know how many will attend, when you will arrive and what meals you will eat here.


We hope to see you there! 



## New Board Member: *David Lehman*

**D**avid Lehman is Little Eden's newest board member who was approved at the **2023 Annual Meeting**. His parents, Dave and Doris (Liechty) Lehman, met at Little Eden in 1949 and started bringing the family to Heart's Desire a few years later. Since then, David and his wife, Jan, have continued the tradition, with their children and the extended family.



The Lehmans live in Union, MI. David recently retired from his orthodontic practice. He always hopes this is the year he can bring his wooden boat back to Portage Lake. 

# Being on staff: A great way to serve, have fun and earn a paycheck and matching scholarship

We are gearing up for another great summer at Little Eden Camp. Our summer staff are a huge part of the heart of camp. Their continued contribution helps to impact the Little Eden families that come each year.

**We still need 6 more summer staff.** Will you pray with us that God will send us the staff needed for the summer of 2024?

Working at Little Eden is a great opportunity for college students to spend a summer in beautiful Northwest Michigan while serving Christ by serving others. Our staff learn life and leadership skills, experience living in Christian community, and are challenged to

**If you know of someone interested in working at Little Eden this summer, whether it's a few weeks, a month or all summer, please have them visit our website at [littleeden.org](http://littleeden.org) or call / text KJ at 639-294-6382.**

grow in their walk with Christ while enjoying all the benefits of Little Eden! It is so much more than just a job!

Not only do our staff get to live and work in an incredible part of the country, they will also get a paycheck, a matching scholarship, free room and board, free staff outings, a snack shop stipend and free use of camp wi-fi, boats, bikes and waterfront. If you know of someone interested in working this summer at Little Eden, whether it's all summer or just part of it, please encourage them to visit our website at [littleeden.org](http://littleeden.org)



or call or text KJ at 630-294-6382. Thank you for your prayers on behalf of camp!



**Being a part of the Little Eden summer team is filled with meaningful experiences and making lifelong friends!**



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3	New Board Member: David Lehman
4	Staff Needed: Will you pray? Will you serve?



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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**2023 Little Eden Photo Contest**

**Winners!!**

*Facilities Category*

*Scenic Category*

*People Category*

**Congratulations!!**

Thank you to all who voted!