



Fall  
2023

# Little Eden Echoes

## Summer Camp 2023: a tool for His Kingdom

by KJ Oom



As another **Youth and Family Camp** season has ended, and I look back on the last few months, it is incredible to see all that God did at Little Eden in the summer of 2023! It reminded me that God is actively using camp as a tool for His kingdom.

Our hope at Little Eden is always that every person coming to camp is able to relax, to be refreshed, to feel renewed and to connect both to God and others. Camp is a wonderful opportunity to step away from our busy schedules, have a quiet reprieve from the hectic pace of everyday life and take time to be intentional and focus on those relationships which mean so much. God uses these times of stepping away to meet us where we are, remind us of His daily presence and minister to our needs. God was definitely on the move and ministered to people in mighty ways throughout the summer.

**Youth Camp.** It is such a joy to see youth campers come off the buses with huge smiles on their faces ready for an amazing week at Little Eden. Any apprehension is soon wiped away as they get to know the other campers in their cabins and their cabin leader. It's great to see how camp is a place where each child can have positive peer interactions and find acceptance. Our directors planned a week full of fun activities, meaningful conversations and great teaching. The teaching focused on *"dealing with conflict the God way"* for our junior high and boys and girls camps and *"soul training"* for our high school youth. What a blessing to have record attendance in our high school camp! We saw God at work in the lives of the youth who attended as many made first time commitments to the Lord. We even got to watch as three of our campers were baptized in Portage Lake. A huge thank you to our youth camp directors and staff who gave their all for each camper! Youth camp would not happen without each and



**The Roth family celebrated 50 years of God's faithfulness at Little Eden this year!**

every one of you!

**Family Camp.** What a privilege it is to serve families during our family camp weeks. It is incredible to see the relationships among the campers and see the communities built by those who have come for many years. Creating opportunities for families to be together and build memories is a main way God uses Little Eden throughout the summer months. Time and again, we hear people say that the moments spent with their family during their week of camp are priceless. Seeing the older campers interact with the younger and pass on faith is definitely a tool God uses to build strong families and grow faithfulness among the generations.



**Staff and Volunteers.** What a blessing our summer staff team was this year. We had sixteen staff from seven different states and three other countries. It is always so nice to see such a diverse group bond with each other and create a tight

community of friends. They were hard working and willing to adapt and be flexible with different changes throughout the summer. We were even able to function without a Food Service Director as three of them stepped up to run the kitchen together. They did an amazing job!

Once again, we couldn't have made it through the summer without the help of many volunteers and our local staff. We are amazed and grateful for the way God provided for each need we experienced and how He continues to bring people forward to help—they bring such energy and life to Little Eden.



Joining God in the work He is doing at Little Eden is a huge honor. I love watching the ways God uses camp to minister and bring about change in people's lives. What a blessing this summer season has been, and we look forward to what God has in store for Little Eden in the coming months and year. We are thankful for all of you and can't wait to see you again!



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



**Summer of 2023.** On September 15, our 2023 summer program ended. It was a great summer in many ways. We saw record numbers in our high school youth program. This included three high school young men being baptized by Pastor Glenn Nofziger who was at camp volunteering that week.

We also saw the **highest number of summer campers** in the 79 years Little Eden has been in existence. Our total guest count for the summer of 2023 was **3,091**. This is the first time ever that we have had over 3,000 summer campers, which blew past last year's record attendance of 2,894. We thank the Lord for all the youth and families who were able to enjoy camp this year. What a blessing to be able to continue to serve so many people through our summer ministry!

**The New Balmy Heights.** Many of you were able to see firsthand this summer that Balmy Heights was replaced with a more traditional cabin. Construction began last September and was completed by the first of May. Thanks to many generous Balmy Heights permanent reservation holders as well as other wonderful friends of the camp, this project was completed fully funded. This does more than just update the cabin; it solves several issues with the old cabin and gives us additional beds for our youth camps.

**Replacement of the three log cabins.** The **Birch, Cherry and Juniper** cabins are over 100 years old. These three cabins continue to deteriorate due mainly to the moisture found in the log walls and floors. We know that if we don't do something in the next couple of years, we will need to quit using them because they will have decayed to the point where they will no longer be safe to use. This would mean that each summer, there would be about 30 families who would no longer be able to come to Little Eden, plus about 36 youth campers we would no longer be able to accommodate.

As we look to the future, we know they are overdue to be replaced. Our plan is to raise pledges and funds for them over the next year and replace them during the non-summer season a

year from now. We are currently working on getting an estimate for their replacement, but it will likely cost about \$880,000 to \$900,000 to replace all three.

This summer I was able to meet with many of the permanent reservation holders of Birch, Cherry and Juniper while they were at camp. There was a lot of excitement amongst this group because they know the condition of the cabins firsthand and understand the need. But to be able to replace these cabins, we will need help from a large group of the membership and friends of Little Eden Camp. If you would like more details about this project, please feel free to contact me or watch the January newsletter. You may also send in a gift using the enclosed response card or by writing Birch, Cherry & Juniper Project in the memo line of a check, if you so desire.

**3% Credit Card Fee.** Each of the last three summers, we have had campers recommend that, like many other organizations and businesses, we pass on our credit card fees to those who choose to use credit cards instead of cash or checks. Our fiscal year ends September 30, and this year Little Eden anticipates paying \$12,000 in credit card fees, even though we have repeatedly shopped for the best processing prices possible.

At the September Board meeting, the board chose to follow the recommendation raised by campers and approved a 3% credit card processing fee for those choosing to use credit cards. Campers are still welcome and encouraged to use check or cash to avoid paying this fee, which will go into effect with all credit card transactions beginning January 1, 2024.

**A big thank you to all our volunteers!** Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the hundreds of volunteers we had this spring, summer and fall. With the staffing shortages we continue to experience, Little Eden couldn't minister to everyone we do without the help of so many people who gave of their time. I know I speak on behalf of all the staff in saying to each of you - thank you!



## Did you know?

- ...We are open all year round?*
- ...We have 15 cabins that can be rented during the fall and winter seasons?*
- ...Our lodge has 18 hotel-style rooms and you can rent the whole lodge for your large family gatherings or craft or church retreats?*
- ...We can provide food service for your group of 25 or more?*
- ...There are over 350 miles of hiking trails in Manistee county?*
- ...There are two ski resorts within an hour of camp?*
- ...It is the mission of Little Eden to provide a Christian environment that nurtures and encourages relationships to God and others through fellowship, worship, camping and education?*

Little Eden Camp has so much to offer, not just during the summer months but all year long. We would love to have you visit us in the non-summer season! If you'd like to set up a reservation or have any questions, give KJ a call at 231-889-4294 or email [guestservices@littleeden.org](mailto:guestservices@littleeden.org).



# Little Eden welcomes Rachel Wiens, *Food Service Director*

**R**achel Wiens is no stranger to camping or to Little Eden Camp. Having grown up at Christian camps in western MI and western PA, she first joined Little Eden's staff as a summer team member in 2012 and 2013. In 2014 and 2015, Rachel served as a summer kitchen manager. She also helped



**Rachel, Trevor & Jenna served as the leadership team which ran the kitchen this summer in the absence of a Food Service Director.**

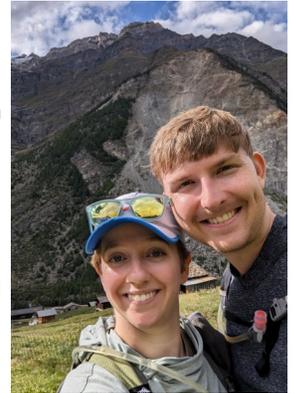
many other years during the late summer/early fall and non-summer seasons.

This summer, Rachel was a part of the threesome (with **Jenna Yordy** and **Trevor Short**) who led the kitchen during our time of transition. In accepting the food service position, she has committed to staying through at least the fall of 2024, with the possibility of extending longer. Rachel says, *"Food and ministry are two things I am passionate about. Little*

*Eden's rich history and traditions include both of these. By creating a relaxing and welcoming environment, we can foster community and provide a place where guests can come and make memories together, grow closer as families and dive deeper in their faith."*

In addition to her time at Little Eden, she has served as a summer cook at Pine Ridge Bible Camp, as a pastry assistant at Hall Street Bakery, and in human resources with a company who owns four different restaurant brands.

Rachel loves to cook, bake, read, sew, travel and tackle home remodel projects. She is married to Carson, who works remotely as a software and database developer at Advanced Radiology Services, PC. 🌲



**Rachel & Carson Wiens**

**Reminder: 2023 Memberships were due September 30, 2023. If you haven't paid yours yet, please do so today.**

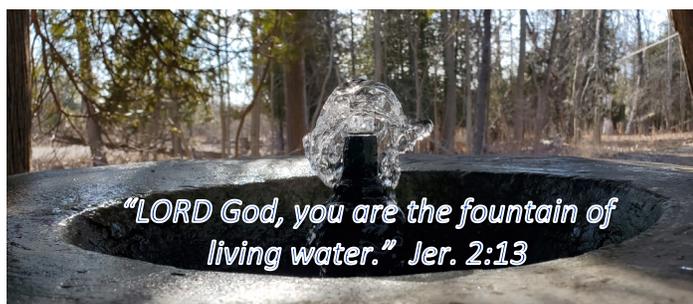
## The artesian well at Little Eden

**G**ail Shetler, resource person for **Golf & Fellowship Week** shared a devotional on water and included the following information about artesian wells and the well at camp. We thought you might enjoy it too:

*An artesian aquifer is a confined aquifer containing groundwater under positive pressure. This type of well seems to defy gravity because the pressure that builds up between layers of rock gets relieved when the water finds a path to the open air.*

*The well near Little Eden Camp produces 12, 575 gallons of water per day. It and Old Faceful (the other popular artesian well in Manistee County) are considered to produce some of the purest water in the county and beyond.* 🌲

*Gail's source: the Manistee Tourism website*



## 2023 Photo Contest



**S**ubmit your photos for Little Eden's **2023 Photo Contest**. The winners in each of the three categories will receive a **\$25 gift certificate** to the **Little Eden Gift Shop**. Categories include:

- **Scenic pictures**
- **People pictures**
- **Little Eden facilities**

Pictures must have been taken in **2023** and must be **2 megapixels** or greater in jpeg, gif or tiff format to qualify. Please email submissions as attached photos (sending no more than two or three at a time), as a shared google photos link or a shared google drive link to [lyndaf@littleeden.org](mailto:lyndaf@littleeden.org) by **November 30, 2023**. Or you may mail a usb drive to Little Eden, 3721 Portage Point Dr, Onkama, MI 49675.

Please understand that any photos submitted could be used in future newsletters and marketing pieces, on the camp website, social media or elsewhere. Names of the people in the pictures or of those taking the photos will not be disclosed when using the photos. No copy written or watermarked photos may be submitted.

Winners will be announced in our January/February Newsletter. Send your pictures in today!



# Join us for Fall Work Weekend

Come join us for our **Fall Work Weekend** scheduled for **October 19-22!** Work will include fall clean-up—inside and outside—and several projects around **Little Eden Camp**. And while you work, enjoy the beautiful fall weather and fellowship among all the volunteers. No matter your skill set or your age, there will be something for everyone.

You are welcome to arrive Thursday or Friday and stay through Sunday. All meals are provided Thursday noon through Sunday breakfast. Lodging and meals are free for volunteers. If you want to come early to help prepare projects for work weekend, please let us know when you contact us.

Please email [office@littleeden.org](mailto:office@littleeden.org) or call 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. We hope to see you there!**

The Fall Work Weekend also includes the **Annual Meeting** which will be held **Saturday, October 21 at 8:00 pm** in the chapel at camp. All members are encouraged to attend. 



# Help us build our 2024 team

We are looking ahead to **Summer 2024** and *need your help* to build our summer staff team! We are seeking college-aged adults or older (for two weeks of youth camps or for the whole summer) who are looking for a great way to **gain leadership experience, meet new life-long friends and make an impact on youth and families.** If you know someone who might be interested in serving Christ by serving others, please share this opportunity. Please also be in prayer with us asking God to provide the help we need for ministry in 2024.



More information and applications are available on our website. You can apply online at [littleeden.org/workemployment.html](http://littleeden.org/workemployment.html) today. Have questions? Call or text KJ at 630-294-6382. 

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**The 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Agenda**  
**October 21 at 8:00 p.m. at camp**

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Opening Prayer
3. Presentation of the Annual Report
  - Presenting the Minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting
  - Reviewing the Financial Reports - Balance Sheet, Income and Expense
  - Questions/comments by members
4. Review of Major Decisions for '22 - '23 Year
  - Operational Board Decisions
  - Motion by membership to approve actions and decisions of the Board of Directors on behalf of the membership.
5. Little Eden Update
6. Presentation of Nominees for Open Positions
  - Board of Directors, Grounds Committee, Auxiliary Committee, Vate
7. Recognition of Retiring Board & Committee Members
8. Closing Comments, Motion to Adjourn
9. Closing Prayer