



**Central  
District  
Conference**

A conference of  
Mennonite Church USA

# focus

KNOWING CHRIST'S LOVE  
- ANSWERING GOD'S CALL

**FEBRUARY 2014**

## LIECHTY MARTIN EMBRACING ENERGY OF YOUTH CAMPS AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jenna Liechty Martin's first several weeks as Camp Friedenswald's new executive director were filled with weekends of excited youth and lots of snow.

Liechty Martin started in the new position with the new year and said that the first weekend she and her husband, Peter Martin, were moved on to the camp's property, she was "reminded of its beauty in all seasons."



*Liechty Martin talks with Melissa Kinsey, the camp's environmental educator.*

It was also fun to jump in with the youth winter retreats, she said. "I've just been reminded of how special this place is to the people who come here."

Liechty Martin grew up in Goshen, Ind. and studied business administration and peace and conflict studies at Bluffton University in Ohio before moving to Belfast, Ireland with her husband Peter Martin for three years on a peace and remediation team through Mennonite Mission Network.

It wasn't as clear to Liechty Martin at some points, but she said that looking back, she has had a long calling to her current work.

"As I look back," she said, "it was the Belfast experience, the experience working at a retirement home, doing some leadership things and working at Bluffton in the admissions office, my studies, and then my experiences at camp here, doing worship leading and counseling and other opportunities that helped prepare me for my experiences here."

Her vision for the camp is simple.

"My hope for Friedenswald is that it can always be 'the peaceful woods,' a place away," she said.

"Camp is a unique place because it holds this tension between needing to operate like a business... but at the same time, it's a ministry," she said. "I hope I bring being able to see things through a theological lense and holding this place as ministry, and also some gifts of (business), looking at things through both those lenses."

"I feel truly humbled and honored" to take on this role, she said.



*Middle-schoolers sing and clap during one of the junior youth winter retreats this past January.*

## Camp Friedenswald's 2014 Calendar

- Feb. 14-16** Winter Family Retreat
- Feb. 24-27** Plein Air Art Camp
- March 7-9** Spring Scrapbook Retreat
- May 16-18** Summer Scrapbook Retreat
- May 26-31** Leadership Team
- June 2-7** Summer Staff Orientation
- June 9-14** High School Camp (grades 9-12)
- June 16-18** Primary Camp (grade 1 and 2)
- June 16-21** Junior High Camp (grade 7-8)
- June 23-28** Pre-Junior Camp (grade 3-4)
- June 30-July 5** Junior Camp (grade 5-6)
- July 7-11** Family Furlough
- July 12-13** Builders Weekend Celebration
- July 14-18** Family Retreat
- Aug. 1-3** Know Jesus (with Amigo Centre) at Goshen College
- August 11-14** Plein Air Art Camp
- Sept. 12-14** Women's Retreat
- Sept. 30-Oct. 2** Plein Air Art Camp
- Oct. 17-19** Fall Scrapbook Retreat
- Oct. 17-19** Men's Retreat

# Honoring the land, the butterflies and God

Written by Melissa Kinsey,  
Camp Friedenswald Environmental Educator

# ...in the Peaceful Woods

The Camp Friedenswald property is unique in many ways. Original tracts of land were purchased in 1950 and the land bordered by Shavehead Lake has been protected, loved and cared for ever since. With about 365 acres of woods, wetlands and lakefront, the beauty of the land was evident. The environmental value of the land continues to be realized.

## Land Stewardship and Christian Faith

Camp Friedenswald, a Mennonite organization, is part of a Christian tradition dating back to the century, which holds to the notion from the biblical Psalms that the earth and everything in it belongs to God. Mennonites believe that we are to be stewards of God's earth, called to care for the earth and to bring rest and renewal to the land and everything that lives on it. Many historic Mennonite communities in Europe and Russia were known for the innovative agricultural and large-scale conservation initiatives.

In modern times, environmental stewardship and sustainability are high priorities. Through the years, very little development has occurred on the Friedenswald property. As a result, pristine wetlands have survived and flourished, providing a sheltered environment for many living things.

Two fens are located at Camp Friedenswald. Prairie fen wetlands are one of Michigan's most valued biological treasures. Fens are rare globally, primarily because they were considered "swampland" and developed in the mid twentieth century.

## What is a Fen and why is it unique?

Fens are a type of wetland occurring in glaciated regions of the upper Midwest. With an abundance of groundwater from underground springs, fens differ from bogs in the soil composition. Fens have a low to moderate pH and bogs are highly acidic. More importantly, fens are fed by a constant supply of cold, mineral-rich groundwater, while bogs get water from precipitation such as rain or snow. Fens are rich in biological diversity. They often support more than double the amount of living species as bogs.

## Endangered Butterfly in a Unique Habitat

The Prairie Fen Bridge project is underway at Camp Friedenswald with efforts to restore native species of wildflowers, sedge grasses, plants and trees in the area between the west and east fens. Invasive species of plants and trees have been removed and will be replaced by all native species. Invasive species can occur simply by a seed being dropped by a bird.

The location of the Prairie Fen Bridge is a pivotal point on camp property. Located near the hub of many camp trailheads, this location is well known to people who enjoy hiking and camping here.

While most bridges connect land-to-land-over water, the Prairie Fen Bridge connects water-to-water-over-land. Bridges are usually built for people to easily cross a waterway. In this case, the bridge will provide people with a beautiful prairie view of wildflowers while providing insects and butterflies a passageway to the east fen (water) from the west fen (water). This habitat serves many wildlife species including the endangered Mitchell's Satyr Butterfly, one of Michigan's rarest butterfly species. It inhabits fewer than 20 sites in Michigan and only two sites in Indiana. This small butterfly once roamed the entire Midwest, with some venturing as far east as New Jersey, but loss of their habitat has put the Mitchell's Satyr near extinction.

Satyr's require very specific habits, including sedge grass meadows and fens. Ringed with tamaracks, poison sumac and dogwood shrubs, a fen is the perfect home for these rare butterflies. We are enthusiastic about the Prairie Fen Bridge Project and hope to create a habitat where this butterfly and many other species will survive, multiply and thrive.

*To tour the project area or get more information about getting involved, contact Melissa Kinsey, Environmental Educator. [melissa@friedenswald.org](mailto:melissa@friedenswald.org)*

