



# 4-H Camp PALMER

Making Moments Matter since 1947



## 2023 Annual Report

Snapshots from Cloverbud Day Camp (left) and HARC (below)



Today was a day at Camp just for me!

I overheard a camper exclaim this to a parent as they were being picked up this summer. It was from our first ever Cloverbud Day camp, where 60 youth from six counties spent the whole day at 4-H Camp Palmer. Activities included creek exploration, nature studies, time in the swimming pool, and even line dancing for little feet. Cloverbuds range in age from kindergarten through second grade and are not quite overnight-camper age. No wonder this youth was excited to be the one dropped off at Camp instead of an older sibling!

There are so many organizations that call 4-H Camp Palmer home. We have schools that come for Outdoor Education or band camp. We have sports teams and colleges that do team building and team bonding. We have church groups that have a time for adventure and retreat. We have Supercamp and Scouts and so many others that camp with us. While we do serve a diversity of groups, we have a united goal that everyone who is at 4-H Camp Palmer feels like it was a day (or week) at Camp just for them!

Randy Barnes would agree. For the last two years, he has brought groups out with HARC, the Henry County Abilities Resource Council. They are a private, non-profit 501c3 organization that offers recreational, camp, and trip opportunities to persons with Developmental Disabilities.

He states that 4-H Camp Palmer is set up in such a way that their campers get the best experience possible. Randy praised the facilities, food, dining experience, and the staff. He said, "Camp staff is committed to providing us with the best experience possible—in fact they seem to be part of our staff." He also highlighted another area that helps them. "The fee structure is one that we can easily work with and Palmer is able to offer many things that other camps could not. It is also easy for me to understand what I am paying for and budget accordingly." Randy ended by saying, "In short, Camp Palmer is number 1 in our book. I get 100% agreement from my staff; we need to go to Camp Palmer every year."

The combination of attentive Camp staff and top-notch programming in perfect proximity to each other helps HARC feel like it is a time at Camp just for them.



For those that camped with us in 2023, and for those planning trips or wanting to book in 2024, thanks for helping us Make Moments Matter at 4-H Camp Palmer.

Thanks for helping us to make a place and time at Camp just for you.

Written by Kristy Helberg, Program Specialist

Find us online: [camppalmer.org](http://camppalmer.org)



# Ecology Report



I find myself sitting in a patch of sunlight surrounded by obvious changes of the seasons. Leaves of green, yellow, oranges, reds, and more rustle on the trees. The Big Bluestem arches its purple streaked stem and leaves towards the ground. The Wild Bergamot and Prairie Dock have shed their lavish petals and dispersed their seeds.

Growing up, my primary interest in the natural world was focused on animals. It still is for the most part. We were surrounded by animals both on the farm and in the woodlots and creeks surrounding our home. For me, plants could be divided into three simple divisions: trees, crops, and weeds. Life was simple and we did not believe in such frivolities as wildflowers and native grasses!

Of course, as one starts to look at ecosystems instead of individual components, plants become incredibly important with many more categories. Unfortunately, at Camp, my focus on plants is often on a group we now refer to as “invasives”. Honeysuckle, Autumn Olive, Purple Loosestrife, and Garlic Mustard are all commonly dealt with species.

The past few years however, through the work of those that camp before me, and the knowledge and passion of those coming after me, I am developing a much better understanding and appreciation of our native flora. Camp is home to some incredible plants, both large and small. Most are quite common; some are not often seen. These plants have come to Camp through the efforts of wind, animals, and humans. Some, like Rattlesnake Master and Eastern Prickly Pear Cactus, we know the stories of and the names of those who brought them to Camp. Others, like White Turtlehead, show up one day and wait for someone to notice!

This is what we are all about when it comes to environmental education at Camp. Getting people to notice, to appreciate, to care about our natural surroundings. Most of us speed through the natural areas in our lives without much concern or wonder. As a Naturalist, it is my passion to slow people down, to be able to see, and appreciate all that this place called Camp Palmer holds for us. To share that excitement and awareness of our environment with all those who walk through the covered bridge.

We have continued to develop and maintain resources that enable us to provide unique educational opportunities for our campers. The addition of new trails is on-going, allowing access to more parts of Camp for exploration and discovery. Trail development is very purposely done to take full advantage of the exceptional areas and ecosystems that exist here.

Along with our natural areas, the Nature Center is another important part of our teaching of ecology. Filled with a plethora of native and exotic animals and assorted natural objects, it is a favorite stop for our campers throughout the season. In the winter months, our Nature Center on the Road travels to schools, youth groups, libraries, and festivals, taking our critters out to reach even more people with educational programs.

It is the hope of those of us that work with the Natural Resources at Camp Palmer, that you have a chance to participate in some of Camp’s unique natural experiences. Whether that is discovering Water Pennies in the stream, holding a turtle, looking at Woolly Beech Aphids under a microscope, or simply finding yourself sitting in a patch of sunlight surrounded by plants you don’t know the name of. We strive to provide these opportunities for you and help deepen your appreciation of our natural world.

As always, we are extremely grateful for all who have supported the ecology program through the giving of time, knowledge, skills, and donations. Thank you so much!

Written by Mic Runyon, Natural Resources Manager



# Camp Connection



Campers and counselors enjoying Hirzel Canning products. Center picture Jo Brown and Liz Avers with the food donation.

Hirzel Canning Company and Farms, in Wood County, celebrated 100-years in business in 2023. As part of their anniversary year, the company focused on giving back to the community through various food donations. 4-H Camp Palmer was the recipient of this generosity in the form of a trailer load of quality, tomato-based products, that helped feed campers all year long. The Hirzel family has many 4-H alums and past advisors. Liz (Hirzel) Avers is the current Wood County 4-H educator. She said her family and the company have been longtime supporters of 4-H. This donation aligns with the Hirzel's primary purpose—feeding people. Campers enjoyed spaghetti, tomato soup, BBQ sauce, salsa, pizza pudgy pies, and more.

Thanks to the Hirzel Canning Company and Farms for their connection and donation to 4-H Camp Palmer. We appreciate your generosity and congratulate you on 100-years in business!



# Donors Make Impact



Our staff and Camp Board are very thankful for the generous donations 4-H Camp Palmer received in our fiscal year of November 1, 2022- October 31, 2023! A total of \$59,150 in donations was received from over twelve key donors. We are also thankful for many smaller gifts that made up the total. For those gifts over \$1000, we want to recognize the donation and how this contribution was used to improve camp facilities or camping services.

Two anonymous gifts totaling \$13,500, along with additional funds in the Camp savings account, allowed for the purchase of a 2021 Dodge Ram truck for our Camp! Thanks to the outstanding effort of Kristy Helberg, our Program Specialist, and her key role of involving Camp in Everence Financial's Giving Tuesday event. This program was held in November 2022, and resulted in \$11,385 of gifts. A \$10,000 donation was received as part of an emergency grant from the Ohio 4-H Foundation board. On August 30th, our two main sewer pumps malfunctioned. The new pumps cost over \$14,000 and this grant has helped camp to install new ones. A donation of \$3,000 from Henry County 4-H Council provided new mattress covers & mattresses for 30 camp bunk beds. A \$5,000 donation from Fulton County Dairy Association provided funding for paint for the bottom of the swimming pool, and monies for completion of Traverse Wall. An anonymous donation of \$5,000 and \$1,500 donation from The Farmers & Merchants State Bank supplied the needed funds to complete a 41-foot sewer pipe project. A \$2,000 donation from Williams County Dairy Association and \$2,000 donation from Wood County 4-H Council provided funds for the nursing station upgrade and picnic tables. John Ford's \$2,000 donation and Janet Frank's \$1,500 donation allowed our maintenance staff to install 12 new shower heads and 12 new sink faucets. A grant valued at \$1,143 through the charitable contribution program of Hirzel Canning Company & Farms provided 38 cases of tomato products for our kitchen. A team of volunteers from Allen County (Brad Core, Doug Hilty, James Schaad and Blaine Cline) spent a whole weekend of taking off the old roof on the boy's blockhouse and installing a new metal roof valued at \$7,000. The Friends of Camp Palmer paid for most of the roofing materials with a gift of \$2,040.15.

Much thanks and appreciation to all the support of our generous donors! Because of your help we continue to operate camp without debt and finished our 2023 fiscal year in good financial shape. If you want to find out more about becoming a donor and what our needs are, please contact me, Executive Director Bill Goodson: [goodson.34@osu.edu](mailto:goodson.34@osu.edu) or 419-237-2247.



# Heart of Camp



Jo Brown surrounded by 2023 summer staff.

After 25 seasons as the food service supervisor, Jo Brown is retiring from the 4-H Camp Palmer kitchen.

Jo has a lifetime of experience in the food service realm. She owned a restaurant. She worked for a caterer. With 5 siblings and 8 children of her own, even her family experience taught her how to feed a crowd. At 4-H Camp Palmer, Jo has served countless meals to the campers, counselors, and adults in this community. This community all agrees that Jo is kind, hard-working, helpful, and serves with a smile.

She first got connected to 4-H Camp Palmer because of an advertisement in the paper announcing the job opening. While some of her children had gone to Camp, Jo had never been there. She knew someone that worked in the kitchen and after consulting them decided this could be a good fit.

Jo is a wonderful cook and enjoys preparing food. People rave about so many meals! Spaghetti, breakfast casserole, sloppy joes, beef and noodles, and of course the indoor s'mores are among the favorites. As food service supervisor, Jo has been tasked with more than just cooking the food. There is the scheduling of workers, the ordering of ingredients and supplies, and the cleaning and upkeep of the facilities.

One of the most challenging parts of her job is knowing how much food to cook. Jo said some meals can be a guessing game, and that can be a struggle. She also reflected on changes with staffing the kitchen over the years. Jo employed many of her family members, especially grandchildren, to work in the kitchen. More than just her blood relatives call her "Grandma Jo".

One of the joys of the job according to Jo is getting to meet all the people that come through Camp. She said it was such a perk to be able to talk to people with different backgrounds and ideas. Even though everyone has a different style, all our groups have the same end goal and share a love of Camp. Jo said it is really fun to be a part of that plan.

Because the Dining Hall sits right in the main part of camp, it serves as a hub for our user groups to go if they have a question. Jo said people may be surprised to know how many times people have gone to the kitchen seeking answers. It does not surprise me one bit, because if the Dining Hall/Kitchen is the hub of Camp, Jo Brown is the heart of Camp.

She has provided more than food these last 25 years.

For me personally, Jo has provided a listening ear. Sound advice. Careful planning. Conversations on vision and dreaming and faith. I have appreciated all the meals I have had from the Camp Palmer kitchen, but I have treasured the time with Jo Brown even more.

Thanks to Jo Brown for being the Heart of 4-H Camp Palmer.



Written by Kristy Helberg



# Friends of Camp



Have you ever wondered, "What is a Friend of Camp Palmer? What do they do?"

Wonder no more! Friends of Camp Palmer is a non profit group composed of people who love 4-H Camp Palmer. Former employees, campers, counselors, adult staff, and ANYONE who has a desire to help Camp continue to touch the lives of campers are invited to join. The group currently has 28 members involved in various ways.

In the past year, Friends of Camp Palmer have helped fund a new metal roof for the boy's side blockhouse, hosted a Camp work day, repaired boardwalks, organized the shooting sports shed, weeded public areas, trimmed trees in the High Ropes area, helped at the annual "Celebrate" fall open house, and organized the first 4K at 4-H Camp Palmer! The group is excited to hold the first Reverse Raffle Auction next October.

If Camp holds special memories for you and you want to give back, join us! We'd love to welcome new members. We meet the First Sunday of each month at 5pm via zoom, so your location is never an issue! For more information:

Email: [friendsof4Hcampaalmer@gmail.com](mailto:friendsof4Hcampaalmer@gmail.com)



# Camp Wishlist



4-H Camp Palmer continues to survive and thrive thanks to our generous donors. Here are ways YOU can support the mission of Camp that will have a direct impact:

- Cabin facias—\$1,500
- High Ropes Sling Lines —\$3,000
- 12 Eight-foot tables—\$1,200
- Pole saw/chain saw—\$2,000
- Nurse's station desk—\$1,000
- Battery backpack sprayer—\$1,000
- Medicine organizers—\$500
- Updated golf cart—\$5,000
- Pool pump motor—\$2,500
- UTV/trail vehicle—\$15,000
- Smart TV and speakers for Woodland Lodge—\$2,500

**YES, I WANT TO SUPPORT 4-H CAMP PALMER'S OUTREACH TO YOUTH!**

Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Project(s) from the wish list (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ General Camp Use \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to meet with the Executive Director to discuss including 4-H Camp Palmer in my estate plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to volunteer for : \_\_\_\_\_

Other giving means (describe): \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: 4-H Camp Palmer MAIL TO: 4-H Camp Palmer, 26450 Co Rd MN, Fayette, OH, 43521**  
4-H Camp Palmer is a 501c3, your gift is tax deductible ....THANK YOU VERY MUCH !

**FOR ONLINE DONATIONS, CLICK HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

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Bill Goodson

### Program Specialist

Kristy Helberg



#### 4-H Camp Palmer Mission Statement:

The mission of 4-H Camp Palmer, Inc. is to extend Ohio 4-H camping by engaging youth and adults as they build life skills in a community living environment.

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Jacqueline Wilkins, Director, Ohio State University Extension

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## Contact Us

Have a question? Want to book a group? Need more information? We want to hear from you!

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