



Camp Blodgett
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CAMP BLODGETT

FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER



Summer 2022 at Camp Blodgett was a summer to remember! I had the incredible privilege of calling this season my first summer as Camp Director and with it many first and major strides which showcased the heart within our organization. What stood out this summer was the high-level energy and enthusiasm brought by the campers. The kids came ready for an unforgettable experience! Through the hard work and resilience of our summer staff, we delivered!

In many ways, this summer felt like a fresh comeback as we continue climbing out of the pandemic's rubble. We were lucky to serve the most eager and energetic group of campers I've seen in a long time. Each week we watched timid smiles turn into tearful goodbyes. The success of this summer took a lot of careful planning and teamwork, and I couldn't be prouder of the team I got to lead through it all.

We rotated four themes throughout our eight-session summer: Big Top (Circus) Week, Magic Week, Arts Week, and for the first time, Teen Week! These sessions were coupled with various experiences, from guest caricature artists to fire-dancers, magicians, African drummers and dancers, along with so many other volunteers and individuals who partnered with us this summer. Teen Week, as a part of our new exploration of teen program expansion, implemented more choice and freedom within the camp experience, empowering teens to be able to curate their camp experience. This proved to be a huge success, and we plan to continue building on this for summers to come.

The impact and learning that takes place through this ambitious programming comes as an addition to the already valuable outdoor connection, artistic expression, character building, and youth empowerment woven into the fabric of every day at camp. Meaningful conversation, belting out camp songs at the top of your lungs, swimming in Lake Michigan, eating s'mores with friends around a fire, conquering the rock wall and ropes course, perfecting your shot on the archery range (or the



basketball court), expressing your appreciation for someone with a carefully crafted friendship bracelet, or making up a dance with your cabin mates to perform at Musicale. The deep and lasting impact of these experiences are all part of the growth-minded center of what Camp Blodgett is all about.

I'm thankful for all the staff, supporters, and participants involved in keeping the love train rolling. Additionally, on behalf of Camp Blodgett, thank you to those who made in-kind donations through our Amazon Wish List! Those donations truly helped the campers experience camp. I'm excited to continue connecting over this school season and next summer!

If you, or someone you know, is interested in working at Camp Blodgett during the summer sessions or interested in volunteering during Summer Camp, please email me at donny@campblodgett.org

Dontario Hodges
Camp Director

- Highlights of Impact
- Celebrating Kim Schurr!
- Happy Trails, Blake Huddleston!
- Legacy Matching Gift Announcement
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INVEST IN CAMP BLODGETT FOR THE KIDS!

Camp Blodgett is a camp for all children in West Michigan. We stand out because of our dedication to providing free and low-cost recreational and educational programs for children year-round. In just one day at summer camp, a child can step their toes into Lake Michigan for the first time, practice archery, try out the rock wall, learn a new skill at a workshop, take a dip in our pool, and so much more! Camp Blodgett programs teach critical thinking & problem solving, communication & time management, goal setting, perseverance, resilience, and much more. They are skills that last a lifetime. You can make a difference in a child's life. Make a sustainable gift today!

WHEN YOU GIVE...

\$500 Cover the costs of one child attending a one-week session at Camp Blodgett.

\$250 Support half the cost of one week of magical memories on the shores of Lake Michigan.

\$100 Sponsor a day at Camp Blodgett for one child.



To view all of our campership options or make a donation online, scan the QR code or visit us at campblodgett.org/donate

You can also make a donation using the enclosed envelope. Memo: Campership

PROPERTY THANK YOU

On behalf of Camp Blodgett, we send a big thanks to Ottawa County United Way and Ernst & Young for the volunteer help in tidying up camp for the fall.



campblodgett.org info@campblodgett.org

(616) 949-0780 [Camp Blodgett](https://www.facebook.com/CampBlodgett) [@campblodgett](https://www.instagram.com/campblodgett)

HIGHLIGHTS OF IMPACT...

CAMP BEYOND THE SHORES



For the first time, Camp Blodgett expanded our camp program beyond the shores of Lake Michigan, all the way to Camp O'Malley! This was the fruition of over a year of planning and working with staff from Camp O'Malley to help keep summer camp alive on their Alto, Michigan property. For the first time in four years, campers got to stay in cabins on the bank of the Thornapple River, and try fishing, bird watching, and more! This is just the beginning as we continue to work with Camp O'Malley to see how we can increase our camp offerings on their property and serve even more campers next summer!

YOUNG LEADERS REFLECTION



The Young Leaders (YL) at camp are an integral part of our program, and often they don't get the credit they deserve! It would be easy to just say that they help cook our meals and assist counselors in the cabins. The true impact cannot really be measured—it can be witnessed in the face of a camper that wanted to go home until a YL talked them through it. It can be seen in a group of campers playing an intense game of four square, refereed by a YL. It can be watched by the number of YLs volunteering to keeping our campers safe while swimming during aquatic observe. YLs practice leaderships skills in communication, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork and much more all summer long. I look forward to witnessing more growth as they hone their leadership skills.

FOR THE KIDS SOIREE

This year, we combined our Summer Soiree and For the Kids luncheon and called it For the Kids Soiree! It was held September 22 at the Loeks Retreat Center. It was a beautiful evening to learn more about our mission and the incredible young people we serve.



KIM SCHURR: CELEBRATING TWO DECADES OF SERVICE!



Kim was hired in 2002 by former Executive Director Jim Guilfoyle as the Finance Director. She was the second full-time staff member, thanks to the added growth of our Loeks' Retreat Center. Kim has seen us grow from two to ten year-round staff members, and her impact has touched so much more than finance.

Former staff member Andrea Robinson worked with Kim for several years and shares, "Always with a keen eye on financial responsibility and stewarding the dollars provided by our philanthropic partners, her patient and gentle reminders that every dollar counts is a grounding and stabilizing presence for the team and board.

[Kim's impact is felt] from her tireless attention to detail... to the sparkle in her eye when a camper, parent, or long-time staff alumni would walk through our doors or approach the check-in table."

Please join us in celebrating Kim's twenty years of service by making a gift to Camp Blodgett in her honor. And remember, no gift is too small (or too large) because each one makes an impact on the children we serve.

SUNSET CONCERT SERIES



Camp Blodgett hosted three Sunset Concerts this summer, which are fundraisers to help provide summer camp and yearlong programming! Thank you for joining us and we look forward to seeing you again next year!



If you are interested in assisting with planning CB Sunset concerts or our next Soiree, please email volunteer@campblodgett.org (Subject: Special Events).

HAPPY TRAILS, BLAKE HUDDLESTON!

(STEM COORDINATOR)



Longtime staff member Blake Huddleston concluded his service to Camp Blodgett on Friday, October 14, 2022. Blake started as a counselor in the summer of 2012 and has served in several camp roles before joining the full-time staff in 2019. He is very well known and loved by our campers, staff, and community—often seen as the life of the party, bringing a joyful energy to all his work!

Here is what campers had to say about Blake:

"If Blake is in charge of it, you know it will be epic! He levels up everything he touches." - Young Leader

"Blake knows how to make learning actually fun and never boring. He gets us, knows how to vibe with us, and is an adult we actually want to be around." - STEM Academy Participant

"That guy is why I am here right now. Seeing him as a counselor when I was younger made me realize that I could be "that guy" for someone else. You know, the one who really sees what's going on with you and knows how to help you out." - Junior Counselor



INTRODUCING THE LEGACY MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE

In honor of Blake's decade of service, the Huddleston family is launching the **Huddleston Legacy Matching Gift**, an annual matching donation (up to \$1,000) to ensure youth can access the outdoor learning and STEM programs Blake fostered.

The Huddleston family is challenging YOU – CB family and friends – to [collectively] match this donation by the end of 2022. Blake believes in the importance of helping support organizations that you care about. *"So come on CB alumni and friends, any amount can make a meaningful impact especially when we join together!"* - Blake

To participate, write Huddleston Legacy 2022 in the check memo or online in the additional comments field. Just 10 gifts of \$100 would help us reach our goal! Visit campblodgett.org/donate for more info.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2022 SPONSORS!



OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

LOOKING FOR CB STORIES!

Are you a former camper or counselor? Are you a volunteer or donor? Are you a champion for Camp Blodgett? We want to hear from you and your story! It could be featured in an upcoming publication. Please reach out to info@campblodgett.org (Subject: CB Stories).

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Camp Blodgett is seeking volunteers in the following areas: Fund Development & Special Events Committee, and Volunteer Services Committee. If you are interested, please email volunteer@campblodgett.org with your area of interest.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN GIVING THE GIFT OF STOCK TO CAMP BLODGETT?

Stock donation is no longer a difficult process, and it helps donors save money on taxes. Camp Blodgett accepts bonds, stocks, and funds.

Contact Finance Director Kim Schurr at kschurr@campblodgett.org or by phone at 616-949-0780 x104 to discuss next steps!