



June 2025 - Volume 36 - Issue 1

HIDDEN ACRES REVIEW

DREAMING ABOUT THE FUTURE

By Chris Pot

In the book of Proverbs, King Solomon shares words of wisdom on planning for the future:

- "Trust in and rely confidently on the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight or understanding. In all your ways, know, acknowledge, and recognize Him, and He will make your paths straight and smooth." - Proverbs 3:5-6
- "Commit your works to the Lord, and your plans will succeed." - Proverbs 16:3
- "A person may have many plans in their heart. But the Lord's purpose wins out in the end" - Proverbs 19:21

These verses remind us that effective planning requires more than our own individual insight, it requires understanding God's direction as well as inviting others into the process.

Over the past several months, Hidden Acres' Board of Directors and staff team have been reflecting on, and praying about the camp's future direction. We've been asking crucial questions: What are we doing well that should continue and be strengthened? Where do we see opportunities for growth and improvement? What new initiatives might God be calling us to explore? Are there programs or practices we need to prayerfully wrap up? We have also been gathering input from our community of stakeholders—campers, families, volunteers, donors, partner churches, and friends who care deeply about Hidden Acres' mission.

As we compile and consider all the input we've gathered, we're asking God to guide our thoughts, discussions, and decisions. Our hope is that God's purposes for Hidden Acres would be central to every aspect of our strategic plan, and that the path forward would be clear and guide us into more great years of serving the community.

We anticipate having the strategic plan ready to share by our Annual Meeting in December. If you haven't yet had an opportunity to share your thoughts about Hidden Acres' future, we'd still love to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

SUMMER CAMP, RETREATS, SCHOOLS AND LINC

By Josh Penfold and CC Weber

"And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14

The story of Esther is fascinating and riveting. One interesting fact is that it is the one book of the Bible that does not make direct reference to God, yet it is clear that God is at work behind the scenes. I take some encouragement from that as we offer programming to school groups throughout the year. As a Christian organization welcoming public schools to enjoy our property and programming, we do not make direct reference to God, yet we trust that God is at work behind the scenes quietly being revealed in the beauty of our property and in the integrity and character and love of our staff. We'll come back to Esther in a bit...

Too Much Winter?!

This winter as most people were saying "Enough snow already!" I was delighting in the depths of our snow. This winter was an incredible winter to welcome school groups to winter programming. As glad as I was for the snow, even I found it to be a bit too much by the end of February. Hazardous winter conditions prevented us from

having our annual Family Day open house, and one school group had to use their back up date because of inclement weather. By our last school group this winter we had so much snow we couldn't even access all of our activities!

Retreats

March Break weather was much kinder to our retreats as we hosted Grandparent & Grandchild Day on March 13th.



Guest speaker Wanda Mann and her KiDs worship team led kids and their grandparents in song and worship

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SUMMER CAMP, RETREATS, SCHOOLS AND LINC CONTINUED...

exploring what creative worship looks like in our lives. On April 14th our Spring Senior’s Retreat joined the *Anabaptism at 500* celebrations, spending time learning about how the New Testament was formed with guest speaker Alicia Batten and how the Anabaptist Community Bible was formed with guest speaker Mollee Moua.

Spring & Summer update

Through the cold winter months I was warmed by the encouragement of our staffing progress. With recent changes to co-op hiring processes that have provided us with many spring/summer staff in previous years, there was some concern that staffing may be a challenge this summer. How wrong I was! Between increasing staff retention, many LITs (Leader In Training) returning to join the staff team, and staff recruiting friends, we are delighted to have a full staff team in place by the beginning of May! Nearly thirty staff participated in our Spring Training weekend preparing staff for both spring and summer seasons. In the story of Esther, she finds herself in a position of privilege with the ability to potentially save her people from destruction. Her uncle Mordecai sends her a message and says, “For if you keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another place.” It is both humbling and exciting to be reminded that God may have orchestrated things in such a way as to invite us into the good work being planned, and that God’s work will somehow be accomplished regardless of our involvement. I believe that each of the spring/summer staff that have been hired this year are here “for such a time as this” and are being invited to join in God’s good work at camp, creating a safe and welcoming place for campers to connect with God, each other, and nature.



LINC

Over the past year, we’ve made exciting progress with our LINC Program. Thanks to the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we’ve been able to expand our programming and offer meaningful new experiences. This included hosting our first two overnight LINC Retreats—one in the fall and another in the winter. These retreats offered participants a much-needed opportunity to unwind, connect, and enjoy creative activities like blanket-making and birdhouse building. Families expressed deep appreciation for the chance to access overnight respite during the fall/winter season.



Our LINC day program has continued to run every Monday and Tuesday, providing a meaningful space to build relationships and develop new skills throughout the year. Together, we’ve enjoyed a variety of engaging activities—from beach-themed days and trying out new recipes in the kitchen, to volunteering on camp property and at the MCC Thrift Centre. We’ve also had fun exploring our creativity through a range of crafts. Meeting weekly with each group has allowed us to deepen our connections and grow together in friendship and community.

We’re excited to host our second week of LINC Summer this July. We’re hopeful that this time at camp will offer meaningful opportunities for personal growth and leadership development for each participant. As we come together in intentional community, we look forward to walking with each of the participants as they learn more about themselves, one another, and God.



2025 BOWLATHON



The 41st Annual Bowlathon was another success. This year, 35 bowlers from 15 area churches filled the lanes in New Hamburg and helped to raise over \$29,300! Thank you to the bowlers, donors and New Hamburg Lanes as well as the following local businesses who donated prizes: BW Feed & Seed, Rheo Thompson Chocolates, The Imperial Market & Eatery, Meme's Cafe, Wallenstein Feed & Supply, Kindred Credit Union - New Hamburg and Jon Witzel Construction. We’d also like to thank the Bowlathon Committee: Vanessa Erb, Becky Minor and Valerie McClung

NEW STEPS TO PINEVIEW & HILLTOP



Many thanks to Rhino Excavating for replacing the steps to Pineview and Hilltop. In the near future we plan on adding a handrail to help make those facilities a bit more accessible.

LEAVING A LEGACY

For an organization to grow and flourish for over 60 years like Hidden Acres has, there needs to be many people who show great care for it. People who have vision, who can creatively come up with solutions to challenges and obstacles, who are committed to praying, who have time and expertise to lend a hand when work needs to be done, who can nurture the faith and development of youth and young adults, and those who have financial resources to support the work. Some fit into one or two of these categories, others into all. But they're all connected by their desire to see long-term and lasting organizational impact.



Over the last couple of years we have received five bequests from individuals or couples committed to Hidden Acres' success. They wanted a part of their legacy to continue to help camp make an impact beyond their lifetime. We are grateful for these gifts as they have helped us complete projects and support campers in ways we couldn't have done alone. Some of the impacts of these gifts include:

- a larger Camper Subsidy Fund leading to increased financial support for campers each year
- paying off the remaining balance of Woodhouse Retreat Centre mortgage (the mortgage was paid off eight years ahead of scheudle due to donations, bequests and surpluses)
- completing renovations to a staff house after water damage from a leaking foundation

We invite you to consider how your legacy can continue nurturing impactful experiences for thousands of campers and visitors to Hidden Acres each year. If you would like to explore the idea of leaving a gift to Hidden Acres in your will, please contact Chris Pot at chrispot@hiddenacres.ca.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM, CUT IT OFF AND MAIL IT TO THE CAMP OR
FILL IT OUT ELECTRONICALLY USING THE QR CODE

I would like to support the ministry of Hidden Acres by becoming a member of the Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp Association. I agree with the Hidden Acres mission of "providing a welcoming, peaceful gathering place where diverse groups of people experience life-giving connections with God, one another and nature." My annual contribution as a member is:

- ☐ A minimum donation of \$25
- ☐ Serving on a Hidden Acres Committee (Alumni, Property, Chicken BBQ, Bowlathon, Board of Directors or Seniors Retreat)
- ☐ Volunteering a minimum of 10 hours in the year.



Name: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____



We are grateful for, and appreciate the support of the many individuals, groups, organizations and businesses that give their time, energy and finances to support the mission of Hidden Acres.

- **Wayne Hoffman** who rolled the lawns and fields to help keep them level and safe
- **Joe Wagler** for helping to repair winter damage on the Pineview roof
- **Jeff Martin, Myron Wagler** and **John Iutzi** for helping paint the Focus Shelter washrooms
- **Myron Wagler** who helped with trim repairs in the Stonehouse washrooms
- **The Gathering Church Youth** for spring cleaning the Oakview Cabins
- **Conrad Grebel University** for donating paper towel rolls
- **Property Committee** who helped on our Spring work day cleaning up fallen trees, repairing the BBQ Pit Shelter and other routine workday projects



The Brian and Pauline Fisher Fund

We appreciate the support of the **Brian and Pauline Fisher Fund**, held at **Waterloo Region Community Foundation**, for their **\$5,000** grant supporting our Single Moms Camps.



School Sisters of Notre Dame Legacy Fund

We are thankful to have received **\$5,445** from the **School Sisters of Notre Dame Legacy Fund**, held at **Waterloo Region Community Foundation**, to go towards campers subsidies this summer.

We are thankful for the support of the **Brian (Barney) Dale Memorial Fund** held within the **Stratford Perth Community Foundation** for their **\$1,000** grant that will help Hidden Acres replace the stairs to the Pineview & Hilltop cabins and make those spaces more accessible.

OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED:

- Bring your youth group, bible study, staff team, etc. to help with a project or work day at camp
- Volunteer on a committee or the Board of Directors
- Pray for Hidden Acres and its staff team
- Help Hidden Acres continue making an impact in the lives of thousands of people each year by making a donation towards Summer Camp, Single Moms Camp or a general donation.

WISHLIST

- Hammocks for a 'Hammock Village'
- Adirondack/Muskoka chairs
- A volunteer to sew new couch cushion covers
- Single or double burner camping stove
- Our 2007 Dodge Dakota truck, which was generously donated in 2020 is nearing the end of its usable life. We are looking for a new-to-camp full-size pick up truck. If you, or anyone you know is looking to sell or donate a truck, please let them know we are looking.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Family Camping Weekend:** June 27-29, 2025
- **Summer Camps:** June 30-August 28, 2025
- **LINC Connect & Skills:** Mondays & Tuesdays from September to December
- **Fundraising Dinner:** October 4, 2025
- **Fall Seniors Retreat:** October 6, 2025
- **Men's Retreat:** November 28-29, 2025
- **Fall LINC Retreat:** Dates TBD
- **Annual General Meeting:** December 2, 2025



We are proud to be a part of the following associations:



CHECK US OUT ON

