

UPDATED OPERATIONAL PLAN – FORT LITTLEGREEN GARDENS, INC. 2023

Fort Littlegreen Gardens, Inc., is a non-profit youth camp and nature center located in Stoughton, WI. Our mission statement: To provide high quality nature-based education and daily care to the grade school youth of Stoughton. By teaching the knowledge of self-sustained living, organic growing, and environmental science, we can instill a love of nature for their lifetime.

Ownership/History:

The camp is operated by Luke and Kate Dennis who are co-directors. The property is owned by Kate's parents, David and Claudia Anderson. Kate grew up on the property the camp is located on. Her father built the home in 1988 and included a large lower level with an indoor gym. This 2500 square foot space is currently housing our camp kids during in-climate weather and is our base-camp. Her mother still resides in the upper portion of the home. David passed away in 2022. Luke and Kate live on Anderson Ave, just 1 block (or a stroll through the wooded nature trails) from camp.

Operations:

Our camp is open 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday in the summer (June – August) and only until 5:30 p.m. during the school year (September – May). We currently enroll 75 kids in the summer and 25 to 30 during the school year. We are allowed to go up to 100 kids in the summer, but we need to expand our facilities first. We will do this with a phased-in approach. Phase 1 is what we are asking to implement during the current (2023) CUP process. Phase 1 will include a new driveway to the north, a new traffic circle with parking lot, a privacy fence along the north property line, a garage to house our tractor, mower, and 15 passenger vans, and an educational wheelchair accessible walkway around our grounds. We received a grant from The Widen Foundation to create this walkway and make our property more accessible!

Traffic:

Summer: Drop off in the mornings is between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and pick up in the evenings is between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. The majority of the traffic will come between these times. During the day neighbors might see staff coming and going for shifts or break times, or occasional parents picking up their students early, or dropping off late. School Year: During the school year we pick up students from the schools using 15 passenger vans and minivans. We pick-up at 5 different schools in Stoughton. The bulk of the traffic during the school year is when parents pick-up between 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Staff will come and go just before 7:00 a.m. and slightly after 6:00 p.m. for opening and closing. We occasionally have a special event going on in the evening, such as a Customer Appreciation Party or an Open House. These occasions are few and far between (2 – 3 times per year). Other traffic might include work trucks on the weekend, or volunteers tending the garden or animals. We are very conscious of the high volume of traffic we bring to the neighborhood, and we understand and respect the neighbors who are close to us. We have "Please Slow Down" signs posted on the way in and out of camp, a 10 mile per hour speed limit sign on the driveway, and when available we will station a staff member holding a SLOW sign at the end of the driveway. We also send out emails to customers reminding them to respect our neighborhood and please slow down.

Parking: Our new site plan will include a parking area with approximately 26 spaces (in addition to the grass parking we have of approx. 40 spaces). This will cut down on any street parking during special events. We currently have a turn-around pick-up and drop-off area that allows parents to

receive their student without having to back up. Our new site plan includes another circle drive that is wider and will help traffic flow smoothly.

Noise: The new plan will include a buffer of evergreen trees that will shield neighbors from noise on all edges facing neighbors. We have strict rules about our students causing excessive noise. For example, our staff is trained to correct children if they are screaming outdoors, and to tell them we must keep a reasonable volume to respect our neighbors. When using the local parks, we always walk quietly, never going to other people's yards. When arriving at the park staff are trained to scan for younger students and others playing. If a group of younger students is using the park, we will choose a different area to not disrupt their space. Most of our activity areas on our property are centrally located farther from neighbors. The property is 10.2 acres.

Facilities: In effort to not overload our current septic system, and because we are an outdoor-based program, we utilize portable bathrooms and handwashing stations around the property in the nice weather (Spring through fall – until freezing weather) We do not anticipate having more than 25 to 30 kids during the school year, until we have a bigger building, and more vehicles available for bussing kids. We will propose Phase 2 CUP with a new building for students a a later date.

Accreditation: We are accredited by The American Camp Association. We have a long list of standards we have to be in compliance with. You can view these standards on the ACA website. We take our job very seriously and adhere to a strict 8:1 ratio (campers to staff). Our strict standards and dedicated staff (along with an amazing outdoor space) is what makes our program so popular.

Community: Camp is a place where kids feel a sense of belonging and everyone is welcome. It is a place where kids learn self-confidence and respect for others. It is also a place where they learn to help their community. Our students spend time picking up trash around our grounds and the local parks. They are taught to leave the space better than when they found it. They earn “virtual money” to spend at the camp store by doing camp chores. One of these chores is tending plants and harvesting in our garden. We have a market stand where you can pick up fresh produce for any donation you can offer, and we use proceeds to buy seeds for next year. We also donated hundreds of pounds of produce to the local food pantries. One season we donated 100 pumpkins to an elementary school for their fall festival. We show our neighbors the same generosity giving away flowers, produce, sheep fleece for knitting, fresh farm eggs and honey from the hives.

Other Activities:

Workshops: Archaeology, Dinosaurs Rock!, Discovery Center Museum, Safari Lake Geneva, Reptiles, Weather Safety, and More!

Field Trips: State Parks, Museums, Swimming, Hiking, Fishing, Aviation, and More!

On Site: Sports, Art, STEM, Water Games, Team Building Games, Drama, Nature Education, Gardening, Small Animal Care (2 Pot Belly Pigs, 1 Donkey, 20 Chickens, 1 Peacock, 2 Turkeys, 2 Geese, 2 Pygmy Goats, 3 Ducks).

Indoor Animals: Hamsters, Rabbit, and Turtle.

Phase 1: Extended driveway with circle drive and parking lot, north privacy fence, garage, educational, wheelchair accessible, walkway connecting points of interest on the property.

Thank you!

Kate Dennis

Executive Director