

Parent Handbook



CAMP
KIDWELL
SINCE 1949

www.campkidwell.org

Greetings from Eagle Lake!

We are excited for 2023 and look forward to making it the best year ever! Helping young people discover who they are, become better people, and have a great time is a privilege I am eternally grateful for! Thank you for sharing your kiddos with us! It is my commitment to do everything in our power to give your child(ren) an experience they will never forget!

2023 brings the breezes of change for us! And we are excited for what that will bring us! In the fall of 2022, our organization officially changed our name to Camp Kidwell. You may say, what, you have always been Camp Kidwell....and you would be correct, partially! Camp Kidwell was formed in 1949 as an independent, non-profit organization under the legal name of Allegan County 4-H Clubs. We operated at 4-H Camp Kidwell/Camp Kidwell and worked with Michigan State Extension – 4-H to provide high quality programs for 73 years.

After months of discussions, we decided that to best serve our families and children in the best possible way, we needed the ability to make decisions in the best interests of Camp Kidwell and our campers and families without seeking input from 4-H or considering expectations and regulations that come with using the 4-H name and emblem. Our history is steeped in 4-H, and we want to be very clear.... we will continue to include and support 4-H youth and families. We have decided to offer most, if not all, of the programs, activities and support we have always offered the 4-H Community. This will include regular invitations to be involved with camp programs and activities, offer discounts for program and supporting 4-H members and families in whatever way possible.

We recognize it will likely take time for everyone to learn about the change. We are glad to answer questions and share details, please do not hesitate to reach out any time!

2023 is going to be a great year here at Camp Kidwell and we are looking forward to having you be part of the fun and excitement!

Here to making Memories,

KJ Kelly
Director



ABOUT CAMP KIDWELL

OUR MISSION

To provide extraordinary camping opportunities for children and to be a valued resource to 4-H, youth, families, groups, and organizations throughout the region.

OUR MOTTO

To teach young people skills for life in a safe, fun and loving environment.

CAMP DETAILS

Camp Kidwell sits on 150 beautiful acres surrounding Eagle Lake in southern Allegan and northern Van Buren Counties. Camp was created by 4-Hers in 1949 and has been offering summer camp, youth, and family-oriented activities ever since. Camp Kidwell is Licensed by the State of Michigan, and we are a proud accredited member of the American Camp Association.



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Connect with us

www.campkidwell.org * 269.521.3559 * office@campkidwell.org

ACA ACCREDITATION

Camp Kidwell has been accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA) since 1998. ACA accredited camps must meet up to 300 standards for health, safety, and program quality, as well as establish guidelines for needed policies, procedures, and practices. To earn and maintain ACA accreditation, we must pass an on-site visit every five years which includes a full review of all ACA standards. We must submit an annual assessment in the years between the on-site visits. Only 25% of camps across the country receive this accreditation.

OUR STAFF

Our staff members come from across the state of Michigan and occasionally from outside of Michigan. They help us to create a safe, fun, and loving environment for our campers. Our staff is formed by mostly college and high school students. All staff members undergo an intensive screening, interview, and background check process before arriving at camp. Staff must complete an intense staff training program designed to prepare them for their job at camp – to provide a safe, successful experience for our campers.

Follow us



SAFETY

Safety is our top-priority, as evidenced by our excellent safety record. Significant measures of prevention and a well-trained staff are key to a safe summer. All program-related activities contain an element of risk, including the unpredictable forces of nature; however, we adhere to American Camp Association standards in the outdoor/camping industry to help minimize these risks and ensure the safest programs possible. A signed enrollment denotes that the parent/guardian and participant acknowledge this inherent risk.



COVID-19 AND CAMP

The safety of our campers, staff and guests is our #1 concern, always. Here are some of the things we have adopted as part of our plan to minimize the affect Covid-19 may have on our program.

We will also emphasis activities that allow us to spread out.

We will continue to emphasis outdoor activities. We want our campers to unplug and disconnect, so this is not a stretch.

We will continue to maintain a clean and sanitary facility.

We will continue to emphasis good personal hygiene.

We will continue to use a cabin group scheduling model.

Our drop off and pick up procedures will be designed to minimize congregating. We will work to modify these processes to make them as efficient and smooth as possible.

How can Families help?

If the child is exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 or experiences symptoms, please keep your camper home. Rescheduling to another session is possible and refunds can be issued.

Families are encouraged to consider getting the COVID-19 vaccine.

Families are encouraged to test prior to coming to camp.
Testing is NOT required.

If we work together, we can have a very fun, SAFE and successful camp experience!

Our camp director is always glad to speak with families and parents about any questions or concerns they may have. Please be sure to reach out to him if anything doesn't seem right or you would like a better explanation. You can reach him at 269-521-3559 or kj@campkidwell.org.

CAMPER HEALTHCARE

Our "Nurse's Station" is in the middle of camp for quick and easy access for campers and staff members. Our medical staff resides on site and is accessible 24 hours a day during camp sessions.

Our health officer provides treatment for illness and injuries requiring minor care and distributes medications as prescribed. If a camper needs care beyond what we can provide, parents/guardians are contacted to decide the appropriate steps to be taken or emergency services are contacted immediately if necessary.

Allegan General Hospital is located 12 minutes from Camp in Allegan, Michigan. Emergency medical services, LIFE EMS of Allegan, (via 911) are available and ready to assist if needed.

Parents/guardians will be contacted if:

- Your camper is involved in an emergency.
- Your camper needs medical care our staff can't provide.
- Your camper is withheld from regular camp activities for more than half of a day due to medical concerns.
- Camper illness, injury, or emotional health present concerns for their ability to have a positive experience at camp.
- Your camper shows signs of COVID-19 or has been in contact with someone who has displayed symptoms of or tested positive for COVID-19.

MEDICATION

'Medication' is any substance an individual takes to maintain and/or improve their health. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter medications, vitamins, supplements, natural remedies and other substances. Please review the policies below and let us know how we should handle any possible medications for your child.

CAMP PROVIDED OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS

Camp Kidwell has a variety of over-the-counter medications on hand to be administered as needed. Some medications we may have on-hand include ibuprofen, Tylenol, aspirin, allergy medication, cough syrup, cough drops, throat spray, Pepto-Bismol, anti-diarrheal, anti-nausea, as well as others. These medications are only administered as the manufacturer labels indicates. Any time over-the-counter medicines are given at camp a log is created and kept on file.

PARENT PROVIDED MEDICATIONS

All medications campers will take during their stay must be reviewed, detailed and logged during check-in. Our health officer or designee will review your camper's daily med needs to ensure we understand their needs.

Any medications (prescription or over the counter) provided by parents/guardians must be in the original container with labels indicating the camper's name and how the medication is to be given. Medications provided by parent/guardians cannot be sent in a presorted, med container (pre-packaged meds from a pharmacy are okay, even encouraged).

HEALTH SCREENING

As part of our commitment to the health and well-being of all campers and staff, each camper will receive a health screening upon arrival.

Lice Check – if lice are found, child will return home

Temperature check – temperature should <100°

Covid Questions – there will be a short set of questions

-Both parent(s) and camper(s) will be asked

Visual – Camper will be visually checked for signs of illness or injury.



STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

Camp Kidwell believes every human being has intrinsic value and should be treated with respect and dignity! We welcome, affirm, and support young people and adults of all abilities and disabilities, experiences, races, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, religion and non-religion, citizenship and immigration status, and any other category people use to define themselves or others. We foster positive relationships through safe, fun and inclusive environments for every human being who attends Camp Kidwell.

Why does Camp Kidwell emphasize welcoming EVERYONE?

Unfortunately, often people do not feel welcomed or accepted in many places and situations! In fact, many times we are made to think it is bad or unacceptable to have unique beliefs or express ourselves in a way that is outside of the accepted “norms.” This is UNACCEPTABLE! Each human being is welcome at Camp Kidwell and we strive to celebrate each person for who they are and help them to be confident in themselves!

It is of the utmost importance that environments are created so which young people and adults of all abilities and disabilities, experiences, races, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, religion and non-religion, citizenship and immigration status, and any other category people use to define themselves can come together to interact, learn from one another, have positive experiences in collaborative and respectful ways.



HOMESICK CAMPERS

Home sickness, or “sadness” as we like to refer to it, is a normal part of being away from home. Many kiddos have never been away from home for a prolonged period or may have had a bad experience elsewhere. We are glad to help your camper work through these natural and normal feelings.

You can impact the way they may deal with “sadness” significantly but helping them have a realistic expectation for their camp experience. Help them to see that camp is going to be a great experience but will likely have bumps in the road that will make it challenging from time to time. They likely will miss mom and dad, the beds may not feel as good as their bed at home, there will be disagreements, they may not get to do everything they want at the exact moment they want to, someone may say something that is not very kind.....those things will happen and they are usually the start of homesickness. We believe learning how to respond to those situations are a valuable part of attending camp. Please talk with your camper about challenges they may face and help them develop ways to work through them and let them know it is okay to have a few challenges. Reassure them that there are staff members to help and encourage them to go to a staff member if they have a concern.

We will use skills developed over many years to help your child manage and overcome any homesickness they may experience. Please rest assured that if we have any prolonged or overwhelming concerns/issues we will contact you.

A tour before camp has helped many young people. We are happy to show families around and answer questions. Please give us a call to set up a visit. (269) 521-3559

IMPORTANT NOTE

Campers are NOT allowed to have cell phones at camp and are NOT allowed to call home at will. Please be sure to explain this to your camper and DO NOT tell them they can call home whenever they want.

If a camper is struggling, becomes sick/injured, or has a behavior concern, a phone call from a camp representative to the parent/guardian will be made. Then, together the camp representative and parent will decide on the best plan of action.

Parents are welcome to check on how their camper is doing with a phone call or email. We are happy to provide updates. You can call us at any time to check in or if there is an emergency, please call us at (269) 521-3559.



HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CAMPER SUCCEED

A successful camp experience starts with your camper feeling good about attending camp and having a positive mind set about the adventure they will be taking part in. If your camper understands why they want to attend Camp Kidwell, they will get the most out of their stay and create positive, lifelong memories. As their parent/guardian, you are the individual with the best opportunity to help them be successful! With this in mind, we ask you to not only be very aware of that, but because you are aware, that you also do as much as you can to help set your camper up for a GREAT camp experience!!!!

You can do this in a variety of ways.... Here are a few ideas: Talk with them about what the camp experience will look and feel like. Help them create realistic expectations for what they might experience and feel while they are here. Give them opportunities to stay away from you for shorter stays prior to attending camp. Answer all of their questions. **Be sure you are honest with them though.... If a camper has the wrong information, it can make it hard for them to feel comfortable at camp.**

It is important for you, as a person who your camper looks up to, to know and communicate to your camper what you expect of their camp experience. By knowing what your vision for the experience will look like, you help them create their own vision and expectations. Parents are often as nervous as their children about a prolonged stay away from home. "Is my child going to be safe?" "Are they getting to do the things they want to do?" "Are they homesick?" are all common questions going through most parents' minds. We are happy to give you peace of mind about those questions, both before and during your camper's stay. Please do not hesitate to contact us to ask questions. We would also be happy to give a camp tour. Please let us know if you would like to set up a visit.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY!

For campers to enjoy their camp experience they should be emotionally stable and independent; be able to care for themselves at an age-appropriate level, maintain basic hygiene (brushing teeth, showering, table manners, etc.), be emotionally appropriate as well as physically safe with fellow campers and staff. We expect campers to carry themselves in a way that is **SAFE, FUN and LOVING.**

As you prepare to arrive at camp, talk with your camper about these things and what this experience will mean to you, as well as to them. It will help them immensely in feeling confident and ready for their camp experience! This can be a lot on the plate of a young person, but with your support before camp and our support here at camp, attending camp will be a very powerful experience of growth and excitement.



CAMPER COMMITMENT

Every camper who attends Camp Kidwell is expected to be part of our family atmosphere. Below is a commitment that we hope you will review with your camper and help them understand what it means for them while they are here at Camp Kidwell.

"I want to become a camper at Camp Kidwell. I will do my best to follow instructions, remain in designated areas, and keep others and myself safe. I will do my best to make this a good experience for my fellow campers and myself. I understand I may not possess or use tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, or non-prescription drugs while I am at camp. I understand that failure to live up to this promise might result in my dismissal from camp."

CAMP EXPECTATIONS

Below are the camp expectations we will share with your son/daughter when they arrive. Please take a moment to look them over and discuss with your child. Campers will:

1. Always use our buddy system. Camper should always have a friend with them as they travel around camp.
Special Note: To use the restroom during the night, campers are asked to wake up a staff member and have a buddy.
2. Always wear shoes. Except when in the water.
3. Always walk. Running can take place when playing games.
4. Help keep camp beautiful and clean up after themselves & others.
5. Maintain good personal hygiene.
 - a. Campers should at least wash their hands after each time they use the restroom and before each meal.
 - b. Campers should shower daily
 - c. Campers should brush their teeth daily
 - d. Campers should change their clothes daily
6. Will keep their cabins neat and organized.
 - a. All beds will be made before breakfast.
 - b. Clothes will be picked up & put away neatly
 - c. Beds must be made head to toe & at least 30 inches apart
 - d. All wet towels will be hung neatly on each bed.
 - e. Cabins will be swept and kept free of cobwebs and dirt.
 - f. Only one radio, playing appropriate music, is allowed.
7. Respect their fellow campers and staff and avoid getting into other belongings. Things and areas to not get into:
 - a. Suitcases, bags, backpacks
 - b. Cabins (other than yours)
 - c. Camp office
 - d. Maintenance
 - e. Storage shed
8. Will always stay within camp boundaries. The waterfront, horse area, archery range, sports field, challenge courses and sledding hill are off limits unless accompanied by a staff member.
9. Will not touch fire extinguishers unless in the case of a fire.
10. Will avoid throwing of stones, sticks, or other objects.
11. Will respect camp property. If anything is broken, campers will report this to a staff member.
12. Will avoid smoking, swearing, fighting, using alcohol or drugs, and PDA and intimate relations.
13. Will not bring animals, firearms, personal sports equipment or hunting equipment, unless pre-approved by the Camp Director.

CAMPER BEHAVIOR

Camper safety is our top priority. Creating an environment where our campers, staff, parents, families, and other guests feel comfortable and safe is vital to a successful camp experience. Our behavior program has been developed to create a SAFE, STIMULATING and FUN environment for ALL campers, staff members and guests. All while providing opportunities for campers to work through challenges that may arise and build skills to cope with such challenges.

Expectations of camper behavior:

- I will be respectful of my fellow campers and all staff members. I will speak to others in a respectful manner and tone of voice.
- I will follow directions of my counselor and camp staff members.
- I will not threaten or cause physical or emotional harm to others, including possessing sharp or other dangerous instruments.
- I will respect the personal space of others and keep my body to myself.
- I understand that disrespectful behavior includes, but is not limited to, hitting, punching, kicking, biting, spitting, swearing, lying, lewd or inappropriate acts and refusing to listen to Camp Kidwell staff
- I will not possess or use alcohol, tobacco, illegal substances or paraphernalia.
- I will be respectful of the campgrounds, building, facilities, equipment and any physical objects.
- I will not litter, vandalize, steal or destroy items that do not belong to me.
- I agree to follow all camp rules including those that are not listed on this behavior contract or rules set forth by the camp director and counselors during my camp stay.

To maintain our SAFE, STIMULATING and FUN environment and ensure appropriate behavior standards are met, the follow Behavior Management Program will be used. We strive to shape positive patterns of conflict resolution. Offensive, defiant, or disrespectful behavior will be dealt with in a logical and systematic fashion. The procedure is as follows:

1. **Strike One:** When a camper's behavior is deemed especially offensive or 'out of bounds', he/she will be informed of his/her offensive behavior and will be counseled by the Camp Director or Assistant Director. The camp rules will be reviewed, and the camper's guardians will be notified. The camper will have earned one "Strike."
2. **Strike Two:** The second time a camper's behavior is 'out of bounds,' the Camp Director or Assistant Director will discuss appropriate alternative behavior with the camper. A second 'Strike' will be issued, and the Camp Director or Assistant Director will contact the camper's guardian. The camper will be excluded from regular camp activities until they are able to rejoin the rest of camp in a positive, productive manner.
3. **Strike Three:** If, after the camper returns to regular camp activities, his/her behavior continues to be offensive, his/her parents will be contacted and the camper will be dismissed from camp for the remainder of the current session and no refund will be given.

Dismissal from a camp session may not affect subsequent sessions, unless the camper is unwilling to make changes to the behavior that led to dismissal. Camp Kidwell reserves the right to 'dismiss' any camper at any time.



TECHNOLOGY FREE CAMP

Camp Kidwell is a technology free camp. We have found that phones, smart watches, tablets, and computers disconnect children from each other and prevent them from getting a true camp experience. Any technology your child does bring will be kept in the camp office until checkout.

CAMPER POSSESSIONS

To protect your child's possessions, we ask you to keep valuables, activity equipment, and expensive clothing at home, rather than allow your child to bring it with them to camp. We cannot be responsible for these items, nor can our staff. Please make sure your camper does not bring any electronics or money with them. If your camper is found with these, we will keep them in the office until checkout.

Small fans are acceptable and may be used in the cabins where electrical outlets are shared by cabin-mates. We recommend battery powered fans as there are limited outlets in the cabins.

Given our beautiful yet wooded location, we cannot allow food in our cabins because it attracts mice, bugs, and other critters. Snacks are available for purchase in camp store every day and snacks are provided for campers each night.

Camper belongings may be searched by camp administration if there is a reasonable basis or probable cause that he/she is in possession of drugs, alcohol, stolen property, weapons, or any possession feared to be harmful to campers or staff. Campers found possessing or using tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or weapons will be dismissed immediately with no refund. Furthermore, the proper authorities will be notified as required by law.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

Please help us ensure these items are not brought to camp by reviewing what your child has packed before departing for camp. Please understand that if any of these items are found at camp they will be held in the office and returned during checkout.

- Any electronic devices
 - o Mobile Phones/Phone Watches/Google Glass/etc.
 - o iPod, MP3 players, etc.
 - o iPad, tablet, kindle, or laptop computer
 - o Gaming devices
 - o Video/DVD players
- Any item that may be considered a weapon
 - o Knives, utility tools/multi-tools, swords, etc.
 - o Firearms
 - o Matches, lighters, fireworks
- Food (snacks, candy, gum, drinks)
- Tobacco, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs
- Pets or other animals

IMPORTANT DETAILS

With paid tuition every camper receives the following: all activities, room and board, a t-shirt, group photo of their session, digital copy of the weekly camp video, one-way email program, and our online photo gallery. See details below.

Camper Mail - Kids LOVE to get mail at camp.

One-way Emails— A free parent to camper email program. To access, log into your online account and find the “Email a Camper” link in the “additional options” dropdown.

Snail Mail – If email isn’t for you, please send something through the USPS. Our address is 39000 1st Ave, Bloomington, MI 49026. Don’t forget to send these early as it usually takes a couple of days for them to get to us locally and more time the further you are away.

Packages – Care packages are welcome. Please keep in mind food is not allowed in cabins so any food sent in a package will need to be consumed immediately.

Prewritten Mail— Get your letters written ahead of time and give them to us when you check-in. We will then hand them out during the week. Just be sure you have them labeled with the day you would like us to hand them out.

Camper to Parent Letters – Campers can also feel comfort from sending you mail as well. Please help your camper send you mail by packing: Paper, pencil, and pre-addressed and stamped envelopes.

Online Photo Gallery

We offer FREE access to our online photo gallery for all families. This is a great feature which gives you a chance to see what your camper is doing while they are here with us. We try to upload pictures from all the program areas as well as getting all the kiddos, but we can’t guarantee pictures of all campers will be uploaded.

Camp Store

When you check in to camp you will set up a camp store account for your camper. You can add money to their account so they can get snacks, treats or trinkets when they visit the store each day.

Online access to Camp Store Account

You can check your camper’s store balance from home and add money as you feel necessary. To access this great feature, just log into your online account and find the “camp store” link in the “additional options” dropdown.

Cancellation Policy

A non-refundable \$25 deposit is due at the time of registration. scholarship cannot be used with discounts.

In case of serious accident, illness or other extenuating circumstances, refunds will be provided at the discretion of the Camp Director. No refund or deductions will be made for late arrival or early departure. Any camper whose behavior is disruptive or is harmful to him or herself will be dismissed with no refund.



CAMP GOALS(G) and OUTCOMES(O)

Below are some of the goals and outcomes we hope your child(ren) experience while they are with us.

G - Provide a unique, exciting, fun-filled and growing experience for all campers.

O - Campers learn personal strengths and weaknesses, and how to use them.

G - Convey to each camper the feeling that he or she is a unique and worthwhile human being.

O - Campers become more confident and outgoing and are able to express themselves more clearly.

G - Emphasize the fact that everyone has something positive to offer. Each camper is a winner if he or she does the best they can with the abilities they have.

O - Campers develop willingness to try new things.

G - Provide camping experience which allows for individual reflection, cooperation with others, and a close relationship with a cabin counselor and program leaders.

O - Campers develop a healthy respect and interaction level with adults.

G - Provide a caring community in which campers and staff work together.

O - Campers show concern for others and willingness to help each other solve problems.

G - Expose campers to activities with which they may not be familiar.

O - Campers develop interest in new activities.

G - Offer individual, small group, and large group activities.

O - Campers demonstrate ability to be productive members of any size group.

G - Challenge children to treat each other with respect and promote positive communication skills.

O - Campers think before acting and work out issues through positive and appropriate means.

G - Provide challenging educational experiences, promoting a positive feeling between boys and girls.

O - Campers demonstrate positive, meaningful relationships with members of the opposite sex.

G - Maintain and build meaningful traditions through songs, activities, and camping.

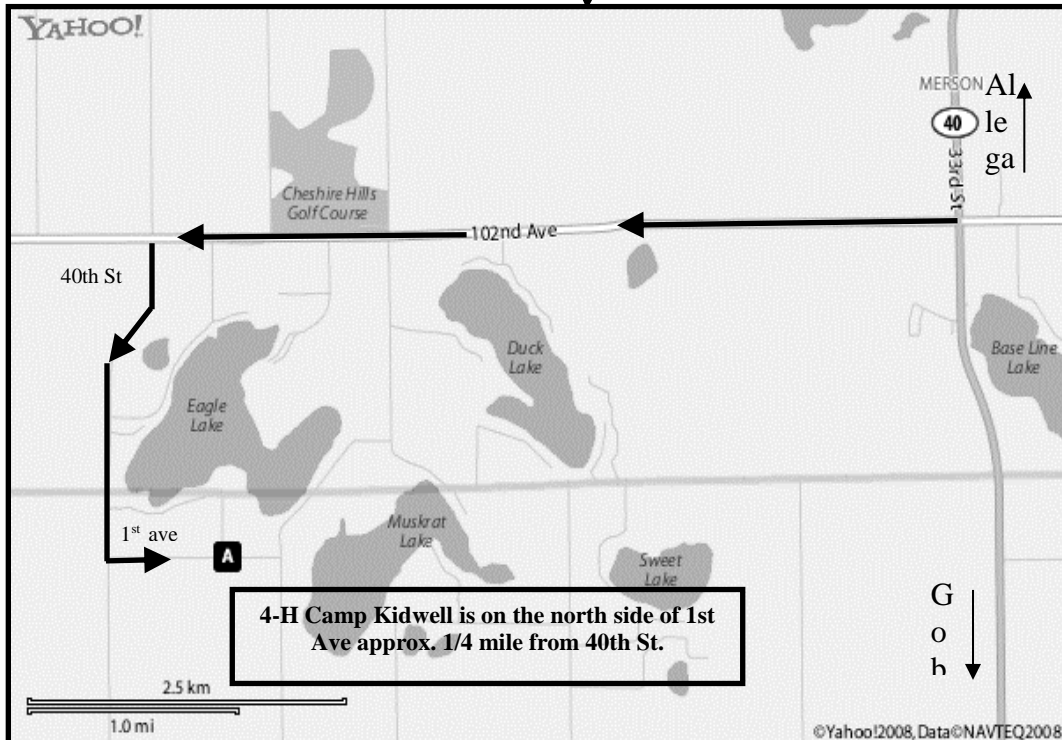
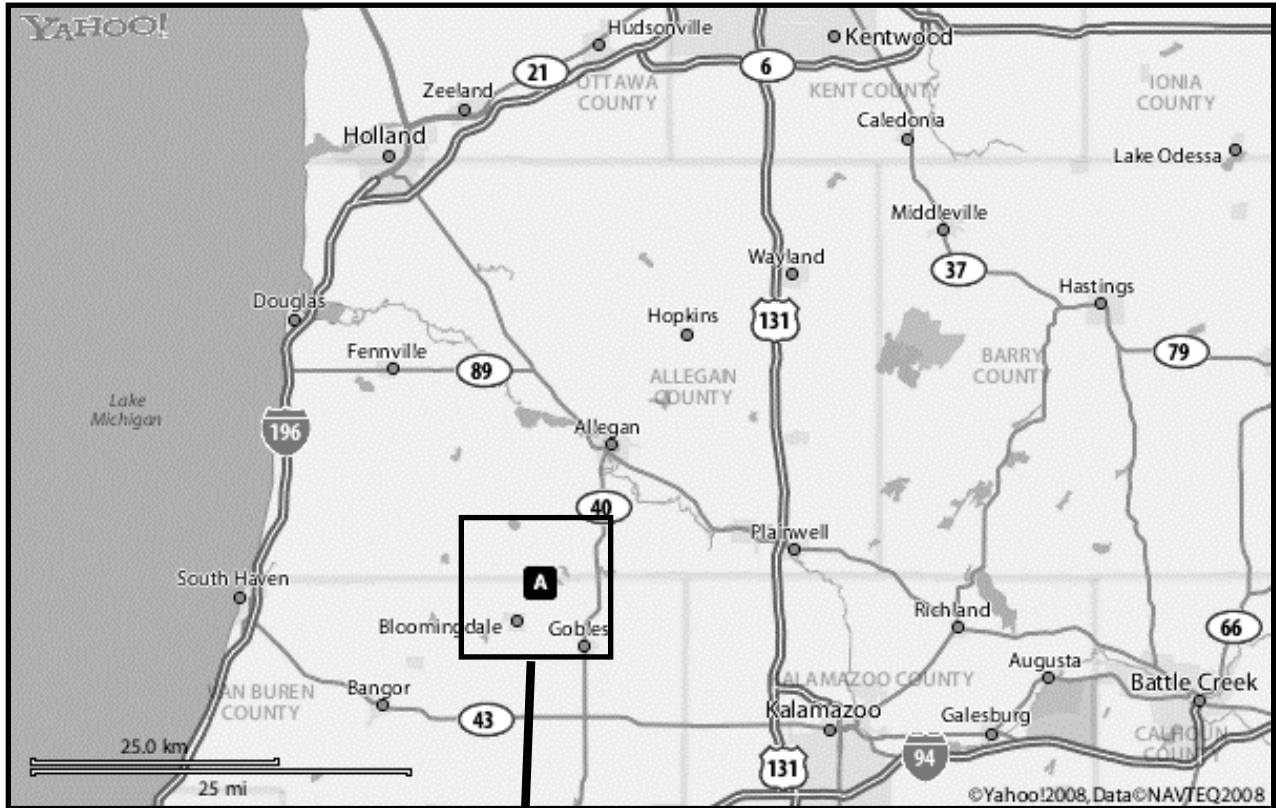
O - Campers want to become members of staff to share the positive experience with others.

G - Provide a quality overall program in which campers and families will be excited about and will want to return for future programs and activities.

O - Campers will want to return year after year.

DIRECTIONS TO CAMP KIDWELL

39000 1st Ave Bloomingdale, MI 49026 * (269)521-3559



4-H Camp Kidwell is on the north side of 1st Ave approx. 1/4 mile from 40th St.

From North and East

At the corner of M-40 and 102nd Ave, go west on 102nd Ave to 40th St. Go south on 40th St. to 1st Ave. turn east on 1st Ave. 4-H Camp Kidwell will be on the north side of 1st Ave about 1/4 of a mile from 40th St.

From South and West

Turn north on CR 665 from M-43, follow CR 665 through Bloomingdale to CR 390, turn East on CR 390. Follow CR 390 to 40th St, turn north on 40th St. Follow 40th St. to 1st Ave and turn east. 4-H Camp Kidwell will be on the north side of 1st Ave about 1/4 of a mile from 40th St.