



WOODSEGE HOWL

WoodsEdge Learning Center
PARENT NEWSLETTER

Staff Spotlights



First impressions, it is often said, are very important. At WoodsEdge we are fortunate to have **Sherry Lepird** and **Barb Christopher** as our primary receptionists who greet and assist visitors when they first arrive.

Sherry's smile, warmth, and sense of humor greets visitors and staff alike when they first arrive at WoodsEdge, and she is happy to assist them with whatever they need. She works in classrooms, as well, and this makes her presence at the front desk all the more helpful.

Ten years ago, an illness forced her to retire from Western Michigan University after working there for 18 years. When her health improved, she found that she was ready to explore new directions.

"For two years I worked on getting healthy and after feeling better I realized I wasn't ready to retire and started looking for part-time jobs," she explains. "I came to Woodsedge as a substitute paraprofessional. They needed a part-time receptionist at the front desk so I've been doing both for a little over two years."

Sherry loves the work environment and the staff at Woodsedge, and has a special place in her heart for our students and their families.

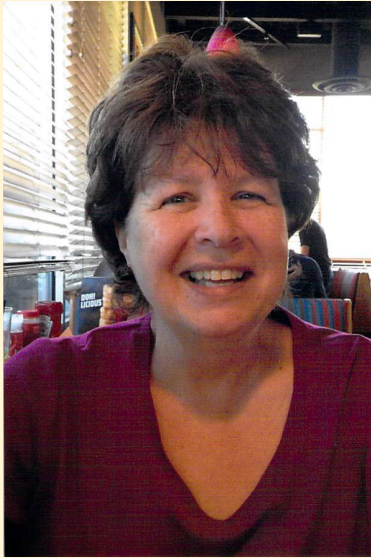
"It's both challenging and rewarding," she says, "and I feel blessed to be here."

Sherry says that the greatest joy for her and her husband, Stan, is spending time with their three children and seven grandchildren. She also enjoys traveling, reading, and playing golf. She and Stan have made it a point to play golf at least once a month. "It's quite a feat when we live in Michigan," she adds.

Sherry was able to complete her "bucket list" with a bit of luck and grace. Stan helped her achieve her dream of being a pilot by treating her to a flying lesson for her 50th birthday. She had always wanted to tour the U.S. government's enormous Pentagon building near Washington, D.C.. As luck would have it, their oldest grandson got a job at the Pentagon, and Sherry and Stan were able to tour it last year.

"So my bucket list is complete!" she says. "Life is good!!!"

"I love working with the kids and am humbled and inspired every day by parents and grandparents who handle overwhelming issues with more patience and grace than I handle when I get behind a slow driver on South Westnedge". - **Sherry Lepird, Receptionist**



Barb Christopher has worked in education for more than four decades. She received her Bachelor's from Central Michigan University in 1974 and did her student teaching in Winchester, England. She taught history at the middle school level in Constantine, Michigan, for 36 years, where she also coached girls track for several years. She received her Master's degree from CMU in 1981.

Her many years in education have resulted in interesting coincidences.

"I have had several WoodsEdge parents as students," she explains. "I taught with Off-Site Director, Tori Wentela, and have had both of her daughters as students. Principal Aubree Spencer was almost my student, but she had another teacher that year - hence, she is not very well-versed in geography, which she admits!"

Barb can be found three days each week as a part-time

receptionist at WoodsEdge, with Sherry at the post the other two days.

"Our main duties include answering phones, greeting and assisting visitors in the main office," she says. "We take attendance and make parent calls for absences. We handle the volunteer and intern paperwork, and send orders for the Regional Educational Media Center (REMC). We order needed teaching supplies and handle UPS, FED EX, and regular mail."

Barb has two daughters. Elizabeth, who works at KRESA's West Campus in the Young Adult Program, and Erica, who recently graduated from the University of Michigan and works in Ann Arbor. Barb's husband Larry was a teacher as well, and their summer's off supported their love for travel.

"Our goal was to see all 50 states with our daughters, which we did--ask me about my maps," she explains. "We have also been to 16 European countries. Since retiring, I still love to travel, get together with family and friends, and go to home football games at U of M. According to my family, I play way too much on-line mahjong."

"The thing I most enjoy about my job are the students and their families; hearing and seeing the accomplishments and growth that they have made by attending this facility. I always feel a sense of pride when I can discuss the building we have, and the fantastic job our teachers, paras and aides do with our students. This truly is a remarkable setting and I feel privileged to have worked here for five years."- **Barb Christopher, Receptionist**

Important Dates:



May

11 - Parent & Child Dance 12:45-2:00 pm

12 - Prom 1:00-2:00 pm

19 - Offsite Classrooms Talent Show 12:30-1:30 pm

26 - No School, Memorial Day Break

29 - No School, Memorial Day Break

ULS Focus



During the month of May, most themes from our Unique Learning System curriculum will focus on Life Science. **Preschool students** will learn about animals found on a farm, including moms with their babies. **Early elementary students** will focus on the similarities and differences of parents and their young. **Intermediate students** will explore how and why

babies resemble parents. **Middle school students** will learn about inherited traits, while **high school students** will further increase this knowledge by learning that traits are passed on through DNA. Lastly, **Transition-aged students** will continue to work on important life skills by learning ways to live as independently as possible.

Parent Information

Our **PAWS group** (an inclusive group of parents, caregivers and staff at WoodsEdge Learning Center) will be having their 2nd annual barbecue on Saturday, May 20 from 11-1. For more updates on this and other events planned by PAWS, **search @woodsedgepaws on Facebook!**

Celebration Cinema is still offering sensory shows. Please visit their [website](#) for more information.

Parents, with the weather warming up, now is a great time to get outside. Until swimming season opens, **Ramona Park** is still free, and has an amazing adaptable playground.

There are also more options of inside and outside play at kzookids.com. Its a great place to research fun activities for the entire family.



Also, just a little reminder... The first week of May (1st-5th) is Teacher Appreciation Week.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: WOODSEGE P.A.W.S. OF KRESA



**FOR MORE INFO, PLEASE
CONTACT SPECIAL EVENT
CHRISTINA: 269.491.7603 [OR]
ANGELA: 269.993.2097**

****THERE WILL BE A LIST OF FOOD
ITEMS FOR FAMILIES TO BRING,
OTHERWISE A DONATION OF \$5 PER
FAMILY IS APPRECIATED.****



**WHEN: Saturday,
May 20th, 2016
11am-1pm**

**-OR- a tentative
RAIN DATE for June
3rd, 11am-1pm**

**WHERE: WoodsEdge
Learning Center
Portage, MI**

****Volunteers needed, please
contact P.A.W.S.****

Kalamazoo Wraps and Children's Mental Health Network are teaming up for their 12th Annual Carnival! Thursday May 11th 4pm-7pm at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds, 2900 Lake St. Kalamazoo MI 49048. For more information call: 269.553.7120



Transportation

For transportation questions or problems on existing routes, please call your **District Transportation Office** first. If you require additional assistance, or for transportation questions or problems with a new route or a new student's bussing, please call Stephanie Reschka at 250-9411.



PBIS Around WoodsEdge



May: Playground

WE ARE SAFE: Be Careful

WE ARE INDEPENDENT: Take Turns

WE COMMUNICATE: Use Your Words

A group of WoodsEdge staff have re-formed the **Memorial Committee** in order to celebrate the lives of students who attended WoodsEdge and Croyden Avenue School, who are no longer with us.

WoodsEdge is currently fundraising to create this memorial by raising money and possibly collaborating with PAWS. Some ideas mentioned to commemorate these students are having a



bench, a plaque, and possibly a flowering tree. We would like to have this memorial outside WoodsEdge where people can have a place to go enjoy their memories or just the scenery. Please contact Madeline at madeline.bickings@kresa.org if you are interested in helping or have any ideas to celebrate the lives of these children.



The students at WoodsEdge participate in Community Based Instruction (CBIs) where they practice skills in the community like: ordering at a restaurant, taking turns at a bowling alley, grocery shopping, navigating stores, and navigating unfamiliar places, like the apple orchard.





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