

Carriage Connection



SEPTEMBER 2026



OUR SUMMER WAS FULL OF ADVENTURES!

Watch Me! Watch Me!

Take yourself back to your 6-year-old self. You're outside at a playground or in the neighborhood pool. You just learned a new trick; now what? You yell to anyone around, "Watch me! Watch me!" Then you do your trick, and you know that you were seen.

We all want to be seen. It doesn't matter if we're 6 or 86. We want someone to take notice of who we are, that we are still here. We are important people who have a place in the world.

Samaritan's Carriage took a group of people to Millennium Park. We walked to the playground where many children played. The guests commented that everything looked so different! Where were the big swings with the black seats? The monkey bars? The tri-level bars? Everything was so colorful.

The best part was the children. I asked the children to show our guests what they could do. Then the performances began. "Watch me, watch me!" They yelled to us as they did their tricks. They wanted to be seen. The guests that day provided a valuable piece of encouragement to their day: we saw them. We enjoyed them. They were precious.

Someday, when they are sitting in a nursing home, they will still want to be seen. And Samaritan's Carriage volunteers will see them.

In this issue

A classic summer outing with a twist

The cost of adventures

How to donate to Samaritan's Carriage

Sara Buchholz

A Trip to the Beach



Many of us have been to Ottawa Beach numerous times, so what's new to do? We can't take our guests swimming. But there's learning to be done.

We walked to the Pump House Museum on Lake Macatawa. A young woman docent knew just about everything in that museum. She told us stories about Pope Leo XIV, who went to St. Augustine Seminary in Holland, President Jerry Ford, Frank Baum (author of *The Wizard of Oz*), Chief Joseph Wakazoo, and the lady who began Tulip Time, Lida Rogers. What fun to learn about these people in a tiny museum on Lake Macatawa.

Back at the beach, we enjoyed a picnic lunch. It was a perfect way to lift everyone's spirits – sunshine, Lake Michigan, and warm sand. All the colorful umbrellas added to the joyful scene. But was there a way for our guests to feel the water, too?

I spied two buckets by a blanket, asked permission to borrow them, and went in the water to fill them up.

Everyone was eager for a chance to feel Lake Michigan. "It's perfect." "I could swim in that." "Wow, that's not cold at all!"

All in all, we had an excellent adventure.



"The residents had a wonderful time . . . As usual, you are all such a blessing."

—Nancy Staal, Sheldon Meadows

The Rising Price of Adventure

We are all familiar with the increase in the cost of food and gas. Every family and business is confronted with the increase in prices of most everything from bread for sandwiches to soda pop. In Michigan, average gas prices are consistently over \$4 per gallon.

Each Samaritan's Carriage outing includes lunch at a local restaurant. What had been an inexpensive meal at Golden Corral for a team of 12 people has **nearly doubled in price**. We visit a variety of restaurants and request our teams only order water to drink. Otherwise, at \$3.00 per drink, we would add \$36 to a bill of \$150, not including tip.

Gas costs have risen significantly. We do our best to find outings near guests' homes, but there are times when a trip to Lake Michigan is tugging at our heartstrings. Guests enjoy the soothing sound of the waves and the joy of laughter from children playing in the water. Those are priceless outings!

How can you help? Consider increasing your donation and inviting a friend to match. **Monthly gifts** are especially appreciated. They are also an easy way for you to contribute a small amount at a time that adds up to a big difference for our guests.

Samaritan's Carriage has monthly donors who contribute between \$20-\$200 a month. Here are some ideas of what your donation will cover:

Average Meal Costs:

Per guest - \$13

Guest and a volunteer - \$26

Full team - \$160

1 month of outing meals - **\$1,760**

Average Gas Costs:

One outing - \$30

One month - **\$325**



Donations to Samaritan's Carriage Annual Fund

can be mailed to:

Samaritan's Carriage C/O Sara Buchholz
2431 Paris Ave SE,
Grand Rapids MI 494507

or you may give via the website at
www.samaritanscarriage.org

Monthly donors, RMD and Legacy Gifts are
deeply appreciated.

Charitable Giving Number: 30-0065870





Thank you for joining our mission to bring joy!

Board Members

Bill Botts *President*
Barry Meerman *Secretary*
Doug Sieplinga *Treasurer*
Mark Greidanus
Abbie Holt
Ruth Schoon
Mary VanWingerden
Karen Weaver

Contact Us

Sara Buchholz *Executive Director*
616-633-9548
email@samaritanscarriage.org
2431 Paris Ave SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Our Mission

As an expression of God's love,
Samaritan's Carriage tailors experiences
and personal encounters that affirm, bless,
and bring joy into the lives of persons
having limited mobility.

