



Gretchen Diane Petroelje

December 14, 1969 - August 28, 2025

Gretchen Diane Petroelje, age 55, of Zeeland, passed away on August 28, 2025. Gretchen was a beloved daughter, sister, and friend, cherished by all who knew her.

Gretchen loved Jesus as her Lord and Savior and had a deeply expressed faith that was especially evident in her joyful worship. She was front and center at every worship service and is now worshipping her Lord face to face.

Gretchen faced life's challenges with a bright smile and an exceptional sense of humor that could light up a room and had an unforgettable personality. She attended the Ottawa Area Center and later worked at KANDU Industries, where her spirit and determination shone brightly.

Gretchen was a resident at Benjamin's Hope, where she thrived in the supportive community and actively participated in numerous activities. She formed special connections with many friends.

Gretchen is survived by her loving parents, Aud and Cathryn Petroelje; sisters: Kim and Larry DeGroot, Susan and Vern Sommers; several nieces and nephews, her guardian, Eric Peterson, and her many special needs friends at Benjamin's Hope. Gretchen was preceded in death by her sister, Sandy Fehrenbach.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 AM on Saturday, September 6, 2025, at Benjamin's Hope, 15468 Riley St, Holland, MI 49424. Rev. Eric Peterson will officiate. A private family graveside at Zeeland Cemetery is also planned.

Memorial contributions are to Benjamin's Hope (<https://benjaminshope.app.net/oncrm.com/forms/donation>) to honor Gretchen's memory and the joy she found in her time there. Arrangements are by Yntema Funeral Home, 251 South State Street, Zeeland, MI 49464. To leave condolences online, please visit www.yntemafh.com.

Cemetery Details

Zeeland Cemetery (OLD)

Lincoln at Church Street
Zeeland, MI 49464

Previous Events

Memorial Service

SEP 6. 11:00 AM (ET)

Benjamin's Hope
15468 Riley St
Holland, MI 49424

Tribute Wall

JF

“ To know Gretchen was to love her! When I started volunteering with Camp Sunshine, she was a seasoned camper and there wasn't a counselor she didn't know. She was a celebrity. Her pure joy radiated. To watch her sing & dance was watching a glimpse of Heaven's choir.

Jenna Fox - September 03, 2025 at 10:58 AM

IM

“ Gretchen was only four days younger than me and I used to joke that we were sisters from different parents. I will always remember her wonderful enthusiasm for volunteering and helping, her love of creating arts and crafts, and the complete abandon with which she danced at the holiday parties at Kandou. One of my favorite memories of Gretchen was the day we took the Star of Saugatuck boat ride and how Gretchen insisted on going up to the top deck to lean over and feel the wind in her face, and, oh, how she loved that! Another wonderful memory I cherish is the time she won worker of the year at Kandou, and she was so proud of herself, and rightfully so--she accomplished so much to earn that honor! Dear Gretchen, I wish I could hug you one more time, my friend and sister, and I'm so, so thankful that I was able to know you and be a part of your life.



Ivy Moser - September 02, 2025 at 09:07 PM

IM

And I'd like to send my condolences to her family, to her wonderful parents who I was fortunate enough to meet several times, and all the others who must be missing this lovely person so much right now! Gretchen was truly a light and a blessing to all who knew her.

Ivy Moser - September 03, 2025 at 09:12 AM

RJ

“ Life will not be the same without the fun and love that Gretchen brought to those she cared about. It was a privilege to get to know her through Kandu, Inc. and to continue to see her here and there in the community. Truly, she made my day brighter every time I saw her, especially when she would shriek my name in what I hope was joy and humor! I will miss her and my deepest sympathies to her parents, family, and all of the rest of those who are mourning her loss.

Reka Jellema - September 02, 2025 at 03:04 PM

MF

*“ Gretchen's nickname for her sister Sandy was "Dee". When I saw her after Sandy passed she said, "Dee, Dee?" multiple times. She was clearly asking where she was. I had to tell her that Dee was with Jesus. Now the two of them are together gazing at him, praising and exalting him. We love you Gretchen,
Mark and Nichole Fehrenbach*

Mark Fehrenbach - September 01, 2025 at 01:42 PM

TH

“ Tonya (Matthew) Harrington purchased the Fairest of All for the family of Gretchen Diane Petroelje.



Tonya (Matthew) Harrington - August 31, 2025 at 12:31 AM

TH

“ Tonya (Matthew) Harrington planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Gretchen Diane Petroelje.

Tonya (Matthew) Harrington - August 31, 2025 at 12:31 AM

FF

“ From Danny and Ashley Fehrenbach purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Gretchen Diane Petroelje.



From Danny and Ashley Fehrenbach - August 30, 2025 at 02:36 PM

FF

“ From Danny and Ashley Fehrenbach planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Gretchen Diane Petroelje.

From Danny and Ashley Fehrenbach - August 30, 2025 at 02:36 PM

AG

“Gretchen always had a twinkle in her eye, a giggle that was infectious that you couldn't help but laugh with her. She would always ask me to sit with her during devotions and we would sing our hearts out to the Lord and do all the motions (or make up our own) to the songs. She loved her friends dearly and this picture was taken two years ago when she asked her friend to do her hair for her. You will be greatly missed Gretchen at Benjamin's Hope, but to imagine you smiling, singing and dancing up in heaven brings peace in my heart and a smile to my lips.



Amy Gnyp - August 30, 2025 at 12:52 PM

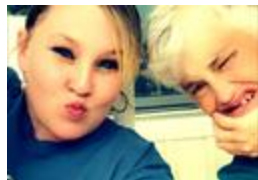
JM

I was blessed to help care for Gretchen for many years. She loved the Lord with all her heart and was always raising her hands in worship to Him. She will be greatly missed, but knowing she is with Jesus brings comfort.

julie myers - August 31, 2025 at 03:12 PM

KT

“4 files added to the tribute wall



Katrina Thompson - August 29, 2025 at 06:38 PM

MN

“ Love and prayers for your family. Have special memories of Gretchen growing up. Her tight hugs were always special to me.

MaeLee Nykerk - August 29, 2025 at 11:54 AM

WR

“ With love, Aryanna and Desiree Robbins purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Gretchen Diane Petroelje.



With love, Aryanna and Desiree Robbins - August 29, 2025 at 10:27 AM

AP

“ Andrea Pfeiffer lit a candle in memory of Gretchen Diane Petroelje



Andrea Pfeiffer - August 28, 2025 at 08:23 PM

SM

“ Gretchen was a love to know. She was always smiling and had a hug to give. She loved to sing songs at our nights of SEM. Sending condolences and loving memories of Sweet Gretchen. I will be out of town on the 6th or would be attending her memorial. She is standing in the heavenly choir singing before our God. What a joy to think of.

Sue Machiela

Sue Machiela - August 28, 2025 at 08:18 PM

PD

So very sorry to hear of Gretchens passing. Prayers for Aud and Cathy and all of the family. I cared for Gretchen at Parkview many years ago. Loved seeing her at Ben's Hope. She seemed to have a very happy life there! Love you Gretchen! Pam (Veldheer) Dunn

Pam Dunn - August 29, 2025 at 03:15 PM

MF

*Gretchen was a little "goofball"...
She truly enjoyed life. She and our Todd were not quite a year apart so we "grew up" with Gretchen and Aud and Cathy.*

She could be a 'pistol' at times but then she'd flash that smile and giggle. She will be missed. Our prayers to Aud and Cathy and the Benjamin's Hope family

Mark And Linda Dalman family - August 29, 2025 at 04:36 PM

RJ

Mark, you nailed it. Great description of Gretch.

Reka Jellema - September 02, 2025 at 03:07 PM