



# WELCOME TO... Camp Akeela

Thank you for choosing to send your child to Camp Akeela this summer. We know that in doing so, you are trusting us with the physical and emotional safety of your most prized possession. Camp is a wonderful gift that you are giving to your camper and we truly believe that Akeela is a great place for growth, friendship and fun!

This spring, you will receive our Parent Handbook and instructions about how to access our online forms. In the meantime, this flyer will help your family feel more prepared for camp. Don't hesitate to contact us with questions or concerns at any time.

All our best, *Debbie Eric*



## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN THE COMING MONTHS

It is common for our campers to feel both excited and nervous about coming to Akeela for the first time! Sometimes, after the decision has been made, anxiety lessens. In other cases, it does not. Either way, we want you to know that we're here to help and support you and your camper. Keep an eye out for newsletters with important information – we find that our campers (and parents) feel most comfortable when they have more information. In addition, we invite you to join us for Open House in June. Finally, a few weeks before your camp session, you will receive an email with the parent email address of another camper in your child's bunk. This is a wonderful opportunity for our campers to connect before they even arrive! We hope all of this information allows your camper to get a sense of our community before they summer begins!



## 2018 Camp Dates

### FIRST SESSION

Wednesday, June 27 – Friday, July 20

### SECOND SESSION

Monday, July 23 – Wednesday, August 15

### FAMILY CAMP

Saturday, August 18 – Friday, August 24  
(check-in after 2:00 pm)

## SAVE THE DATE

### Open House at Camp Akeela

**Sunday, June 17, 2018**

Join us at camp before the summer starts.  
Meet other campers and some of  
our staff, and see your camper's bunk!

Winter: 314 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bala Cynwyd PA 19004 • Summer: One Thoreau Way, Thetford Center, VT 05075

1-866-680-4744 • [www.campakeela.com](http://www.campakeela.com)

# MEET THE DIRECTORS

## at Camp Akeela



### **Eric Sasson, Director**

Eric has over 30 summers of camp experience. He has been a full-time camp professional for nearly 20 years and is an active member of the American Camp Association. Eric earned a BA in Math from Haverford College and a Masters in Education from Harvard University. Outside of the camp world, he has extensive experience working with children and young adults in a variety of settings.

**Favorite Book:** *Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien

**Place I'd Like To Visit:** New Zealand

**Favorite Camp Food:** Fajitas

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### **Debbie Sasson, Director**

Debbie has been spending her summers at camp for more than 25 years. She has a BA in Psychology and a Masters in School Counseling from the University of Rochester. After 3 wonderful years as a middle school counselor, she earned her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Yeshiva University. She brings to camp an extensive knowledge of the fields of child, adolescent and Family-Systems psychology.

**Favorite Book:** *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

**Place I'd Like To Visit:** South Africa

**Favorite Camp Food:** Tacos

## WHAT ARE HEAD COUNSELORS?

Lots of people get confused about the actual role of these important leaders in our community. Perhaps it's the title that's misleading ... Head Counselors are not the wonderful staff members who live in your child's cabin. Those are Cabin Counselors and Specialists. Our Head Counselors are adults who live in our community and who supervise between 3 and 5 cabins. They oversee the well-being of the campers and staff in those groups and are the primary "point person" for you to call when you have a question about your child's success at camp.

Our Head Counselors spend all day out in camp with their campers and staff, providing ongoing support and feedback. They check messages a few times a day and return parent calls, usually in the evening. They are a wonderful resource to us as camp directors and serve as our eyes and ears, as we cannot be everywhere at once! While we oversee the entire community (120 campers and close to 100 staff members), the Head Counselors focus on their few cabin groups.

Please let us know if you have any questions about your child's Head Counselor this summer. (You will find profiles of our Head Counselors this spring online and in our newsletters.)



# DAILY CAMP SCHEDULE

7:30 am	<b>WAKE UP</b> Campers get dressed, make their beds, brush their teeth and wash for breakfast.
8:00 am	<b>BREAKFAST</b> Campers eat each meal with their cabin group.
8:30 am	<b>CLEAN-UP</b> Counselors guide campers as they help bunkmates keep their cabin neat and clean.
9:00 am	<b>BUNK HUDDLES</b> Campers meet daily as a bunk with counselors and key staff to discuss bunk concerns, individual and group goals, and to preview the day's schedule.
9:15 am	<b>FIRST ACTIVITY PERIOD</b> Bunk groups go to activities together with their cabin counselors.
10:15 am	<b>SECOND ACTIVITY PERIOD</b>
11:15 am	<b>FREE-TIME</b> Counselors supervise free play and optional group activities.
12:00 pm	<b>LUNCH</b>
12:45 pm	<b>REST HOUR &amp; PREVIEW OF AFTERNOON SCHEDULE</b>
1:45 pm	<b>THIRD ACTIVITY PERIOD</b>
2:45 pm	<b>SNACK</b>
3:00 pm	<b>SPECIALTY PERIOD 1</b> Campers are empowered to choose two activities each week to "specialize" in.
4:00 pm	<b>SPECIALTY PERIOD 2</b>
5:00 pm	<b>SHOWER TIME</b>
6:00 pm	<b>DINNER</b>
7:00 pm	<b>EVENING MEETING</b> The entire camp community gathers to recognize camper achievements, read from the suggestion box, and look ahead to upcoming activities.
7:30 pm	<b>EVENING ACTIVITY</b> A mixture of all-camp events, special interest exploration and small-group games.
8:30 pm	<b>SNACK &amp; "DAY IN REVIEW"</b> Campers enjoy a healthy snack while participating in a nightly bunk check-in activity.
	<b>BEDTIME</b> Bedtime varies depending on age.

## CHOICE PERIODS

Campers love having the chance to try all of the activities Akeela has to offer with their bunk-mates and also getting to choose to specialize in some of their favorites! Our Specialty Periods (the last 2 periods of the day) allow campers to focus on mastering 2 activities each week. Every day for a week, campers go to their specialties with other campers (boys and girls of all ages) who also share their love for those activities. It's a wonderful way to gain more in-depth instruction and to make friends in different bunks. The Specialty Periods are chosen weekly – the two for week one at home and the other four prior to each week at camp!

## ELECTRONICS POLICY

Camp provides a wonderful opportunity for our campers to "un-plug". We find that it is much easier for them to make social connections when they are not looking at a screen. Hand-held electronic games such as iPads, iPod touches, Gameboys, Nintendos and/or PSP's are NOT allowed at camp (or on the bus to camp).

Please reinforce the following rules with your child before camp begins.

- Absolutely NO CELL PHONES are permitted at camp.
- No walkie-talkies
- No iPads, iPod touches, tablets or laptops
- No apple watches
- No PSP's, Gameboys, or any other electronic video game systems

*Any of these prohibited items will be confiscated.*

Music is an important part of our camp culture. Campers are allowed to bring a basic MP3 player (e.g. iPod nano or shuffle) with no video or game capabilities to camp.

# PARENT COMMUNICATION AT AKEELA

## FIRST DAY CALLS

If this is your child's first summer at Akeela, you will receive a call from a camp director or senior staff member within the first 24 hours of camp. We'll let you know how your child is adjusting to camp and help make sure that you are at ease. Be aware that we have many calls to make on four phone lines. We may not reach you until late in the evening.

## CALLS FROM YOUR CAMPER'S HEAD COUNSELOR

We believe strongly in partnership and open lines of communication with parents. We regularly call parents to share information and ask for advice. You can expect to hear from your camper's Head Counselor at least a couple of times during the camp session.

## ONLINE PHOTO GALLERY

We have a photographer at camp. We post as many photos as we can each day and do our best to reach each camper as often as we can. (To see these photos, you'll log on to our protected parent portal.)

## DAILY NEWS

Posted online every day, you can read about daily camp happenings, special events and announcements from our Evening Meeting.

## CALLS FROM THE HEALTH CENTER

If your child spends the night in the Health Center due to illness, you will be notified either that day or the next day, depending on what time they are admitted into the Health Center. Our nurses will also keep you abreast of any trips to the doctor.

## EMAIL REMINDERS FROM CAMP

Please check your emails from camp! We send information reminders throughout the camp session. If you aren't receiving emails from camp, please be sure to check spam and/or contact our office!

## ONE-WAY E-MAIL SYSTEM FOR PARENTS

Incoming emails are printed and distributed daily with regular mail. You will receive information about how to log in to our parent portal in the spring.

## SNAIL MAIL

While campers are not strictly required to write home, we do encourage them to do so! Since we are in a small, rural town, a letter may take up to 4-5 days to receive.

## CAMPER CALLS

Parents may elect to schedule one (1) phone call with their child during the camp session. (If your child has a birthday at camp, you will be able to schedule an additional phone call on that day.) In families where parents are living separately, each parent will have an opportunity to schedule a phone call.

We know from experience that phone calls can often be difficult for both campers and parents. Please don't feel obligated to schedule a call. As in other areas of camp, we believe in doing what's best for each camper. In some cases, that may include NOT speaking to their parents while at camp.

## COMMUNICATION AFTER CAMP

In September, you will receive a brief report from us summarizing our staff's feedback of your child's time at Camp Akeela.

**\*\*\* PLEASE CALL! \*\*\* Please don't ever hesitate to call Debbie or Eric if you have any concerns. Please don't wait if there is something that we can do to help you or alleviate any worry. While we are frequently out in camp during the day, we always check our messages and return calls and emails before the end of each day – often in the evening.**

## Spending Money for Campers Completing Grades 7-10 (for trips)

If your child is currently in grades 7-10, please plan to mail to camp a check for a small amount of trip spending money. This is not for the trip itself, as all of those expenses are covered by the camp, but is for any extra memorabilia that your camper may choose to purchase.

**Suggested amounts are NO MORE THAN: \$30 for Grade 7 \$40 for Grade 8 \$50 for Grades 9 - 10**

# PACKING LIST

The Packing List below details the clothing and equipment that will be needed at camp. The list is only a suggested guide. Substitutions can be made for individual preferences and age appropriateness. Campers do not need more than what's recommended and storage space is limited. Please do not overbuy!

All items brought to camp must be clearly marked with the camper's name. Akeela is not responsible for any lost property.

## REQUIRED:

- 1 white or grey Akeela t-shirt
- 10 additional t-shirts
- 3 long-sleeved t-shirts
- 4 pair pants (sweatpants, jeans, etc.)
- 6-8 pair shorts
- 2 sweatshirts (1 hooded)
- 2 pair sneakers
- 12 pair underwear
- 12 pair athletic socks
- 2 pair pajamas
- 1 comforter or 3 cot-sized wool blankets  
(VT can be cold at night!)
- 4 cot-sized or twin sheets (2 flat & 2 fitted)
- 2-3 bath towels
- 2 swim/beach towels
- 1 shower caddy with soap dish, cup, toothbrush holder  
& toiletries
- 25 pre-addressed, stamped envelopes with stationery
- 2 washcloths
- 1 pillow with 2 cases
- 3-4 bathing suits (GIRLS: one-piece or tankinis only!)
- 1 pair flip flops/sandals/Crocs
- 2 hats with brim
- 1 fleece jacket or heavyweight jacket
- 1 knee-length rain jacket or poncho with hood
- 1 pair rain boots
- 1 sleeping bag (if camper intends to participate  
in camping specialty)
- 1 flashlight
- 1 water bottle or canteen (All Campers MUST bring)
- 1 bottle insect repellent
- 1 pr. hiking shoes- please break in before camp  
(or sturdy sneakers)
- 1 bottle sunscreen
- 1 small backpack

## OPTIONAL:

- Sunglasses
- Camera
- Music player (without screen content)
- Baseball glove
- Musical instrument
- Tennis racquet
- Fishing rod
- Books
- Crazy Creek chair (or similar)

**Lands' End is our official camp outfitter! Feel free to take a look at the online catalogue for any optional Akeela gear! <https://business.landsend.com/store/campakeela/>**

## SHIPPING BAGS TO CAMP

At Akeela, we ask that all camper bags be sent to camp before your camper arrives so that our counselors can unpack and organize each child. This policy is a very important part of our philosophy. We find that campers feel less anxious when there is less settling in to do upon arrival. They feel at home when they walk into a bunk that's already set up – they find their stuff and suddenly, the bunk feels familiar to them. In addition, we find that campers have an easier time staying organized when they start off organized! Finally, our counselors love getting to know each child before they even arrive... especially if you place a photo and note in the bag for them to discover! ;-)

You can ship your camper's bags via USPS, UPS or FedEx (or you can drop them off if you come to our Open House in June). We also work with a camp shipping company, R&B Shipping, which will come right to your door to pick up your camper's bags. (Information about R&B will be sent to you this spring.) Regardless of how you ship the bags, we ask that they are delivered to us at least 3 days before your child's scheduled arrival at camp.

## MEDICATION

In our on-going commitment to meet the needs of our campers as well comply with strict state regulations, we work with CampMeds, a pre-packaging medication program founded by a former camp nurse. CampMeds has been packaging and shipping medications directly to summer camps for over 10 years.

Our policy and procedure for dispensing and administering medicine requires camp families to have ALL of your child's daily medicine dispensed by CampMeds and sent to camp prior to their arrival. There is a \$55 fee for this service.

### CampMeds will fill:

- Prescription medication in pill form (daily)
- Prescription medication in liquid form (daily)
- Prescription nose sprays, eye/ear drops, inhalers and creams/ointments
- Non prescription items (OTC) such as allergy medication (daily)
- Vitamins and supplements (call CampMeds to confirm they can provide). The exceptions are: Accutane, growth hormone, insulin, injections, & birth control pills.

More information about registration will be included in our Spring mailing. In the meantime, if you'd like to learn more about CampMeds, you can find them at [campmeds.com](http://campmeds.com).

## NO PACKAGE POLICY

In an effort to reduce unnecessary competition among campers and constant pressure on parents to send packages, Camp Akeela has a NO PACKAGE POLICY.

Food of any kind (including drink mixes, candy, gum, etc.) may not be sent and will be discarded. Please share this information with relatives and friends.

If you need to send appropriate camp items (clothing, replacement items, etc.) please call our camp office to let us know a package is coming.

## STAY CONNECTED!

In order to stay up-to-date on Akeela news, feel free to join our parent and camper groups on Facebook by sending "Camp Akeela" a note through your FB account. We're also on Twitter! You'll also find newsletters from earlier this year on our website on the "Current Families" page under "News and Events".



## TRAVEL TO AND FROM AKEELA

We provide buses to camp from Westchester, NY and the Boston area. When possible, we recommend having your child travel to camp on our chartered coach buses. Counselors and senior staff ride the buses and we carefully assign seating to help campers get to know each other. There is no additional transportation charge for taking the bus to camp.

Of course, parents can also feel free to drive their child to camp if they prefer. Campers who are coming to Vermont from further away who are flying can meet up with our staff at Boston's Logan airport. We ask that flights arrive as close to 11:30am as possible. (Please contact the office before booking any flights.)

At the end of the camp session, we provide transportation back to Logan Airport, the Boston suburbs, and Westchester County, NY. There is a small fee for these return transportation options.

## A WORD ABOUT HOMESICKNESS

Most campers attending overnight camp feel some anxiety about being away from home. In fact, we believe that managing and overcoming homesickness is an integral part of the camp experience. Camp is the best place for young people to learn coping skills, gain independence and enhance their self-esteem. Adapting to camp life, with the help of a caring and attentive camp staff, is a challenge that helps young people develop those important life skills.

We have many years of experience helping children through homesickness and will specifically train our staff to assist campers in their transition to camp. We also recommend that campers email us ([directors@campakeela.com](mailto:directors@campakeela.com)) with questions or concerns about coming to camp. The more comfortable they feel with us and our staff before arriving, the easier it will be for them to adjust to camp life.