



# Camp Akeela<sup>SM</sup> Circular

## A Letter from Debbie and Eric

Happy New Year! After a balmy fall, winter has finally arrived here in Philadelphia! We're thrilled that 2016 is here... it means that in 6 short months, we'll be back on Miller Pond with many of you. We can't wait!



Eric, Kevin and our daughter, Margo, had the thrill of seeing more than 50 of our campers earlier this month at our "Winter Weekend" reunion in Massachusetts. It was wonderful for campers to reconnect with friends and be embraced by a community that really "gets" them. The staff and campers all report having a wonderful time! We also had 17 families join us at the Cranwell Resort and Spa for a gathering we called Family Stay & Play. We're proud to be a part of a community that loves to support and learn from one another. As always, we learned a lot, too, and have taken away some great ideas from the parents who were there. Here are just a few of the ideas that came up:

- **Help build the Akeela parent community.** All Akeela parents are encouraged to request membership to the closed Facebook group called "Camp Akeela Parents". This can be a great place to ask questions and seek advice from a trusted community of adults who are having similar experiences. We will also look into starting a "listserv" for those who prefer to track conversation in that format. Stay tuned!
- **Help campers stay in touch.** We will be looking into having live webchats with groups of Akeela campers. The goal of these webchats will be to provide our campers with a (virtual) opportunity to reconnect and to be reminded of their accomplishments at camp. Campers will sign up if they would like to participate when it's their cabin's turn to chat. More to come soon.

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## IMPORTANT 2016 DATES

CAMPER FORMS & PARENT  
HANDBOOK MAILING:  
March 15 (Approx)

FINAL TUITION PAYMENT  
DUE:  
April 30

CAMPER FORMS DUE TO  
PA OFFICE:  
May 1

OPEN HOUSE AT CAMP:  
June 12

FIRST SESSION:  
June 25 - July 18

SECOND SESSION:  
July 21 - August 13

VISITING DAYS:  
July 18 & August 13

FAMILY CAMP:  
August 15 - 21



# A Letter from Debbie and Eric (continued)

- **Help transfer "camp life" skills into "real life".** We've been asked to provide some printable reminders of camp expectations and accomplishments at the end of each summer. These can help families carry routines from the summer into the school year.
- **More opportunities for in-person connection for parents.** There was a lot of momentum for parent-organized social gatherings around camp drop-off and pick-up dates. It seemed like a natural way to take advantage of times when many families are in the same geographic location (e.g. near camp for Open House or Visiting Day, or at one of our camp bus pick-up spots).

We're looking forward to seeing these ideas come to fruition and to many more opportunities to stay connected with all of you.

Finally, we're thrilled to report that we have an extraordinarily high staff return rate for this summer. Many of our fantastic 2015 staff have been rehired, along with some familiar faces from 2014 and earlier! We are particularly proud that our Senior Staff is comprised almost entirely of returners this summer. You will be familiar with our entire Program and Head Counseling Teams ... and many of you will remember our Head Nurse, Naomi Deutschman from summers '10, '11, '12 and '14. To get to know our senior staff members better, please visit this web page:

<http://campaakeela.com/about-camp/directors-staff/>

All of these talented and passionate camp professionals, paired with the highest return rate of campers in Akeela's history bode well for an amazing 2016 season! We hope all of you will be a part of it.

Love,

## Kevin's Korner



Dear Akeela Families,

Before I started as Akeela's Accounting Intern in 2009, I never could have imagined that I'd be working full-time with Eric and Debbie seven years later. Of course, now I can't imagine doing anything else! What's kept me so attached to Akeela is the sense of community it fosters. Campers, parents, and staff alike leave at the end of each summer with a new family.

At the Akeela Winter Weekend it was amazing to see campers and staff reconnect with each other as if they never left camp. We all happily fell right back into "camp mode." Even in the chilly winter weather, it still felt like camp! Hearing parents who had never met each other talk about a new "Camp Akeela Parent's Association" they formed at the Family Stay & Play further confirmed the strength of the Akeela community.

Another way we continue to cultivate the community amongst our staff in the off season is through our annual staff fantasy football league, "The Grumpy Old Campers." After our inaugural season in 2011, many of our staff dream of getting their name printed on The Grumpy Old Campers trophy. I'm proud to announce that this year's winner was the middle boy's head counselor from first session in 2015, Joe Torok! Joe ousted lead hiking specialist Jack Baker in a two week finals match-up. His name will soon make its way onto the prestigious trophy!

We look forward to another fun season in 2016, as we continue to build the Akeela community.

Love,  
Kevin

# BLAYNE'S BULLETIN



Our site manager, Blayne, and his crew are working on a number of projects this year. Shortly after camp ended, they moved the pool house from the top side of the pool to the area down below, towards the lake. We think this small change will make a huge difference in the look and feel of the Main Lawn. In addition to giving us more space for playing, snacking and hanging out with friends, it has also opened up more of a view of our beautiful lake! Next on Blayne's agenda was constructing a stone wall along the entire entrance of camp, alongside Miller Pond Road. It's absolutely stunning and so Vermont-y!

Coming up this spring, we'll be building a new climbing structure on the ropes course. This will replace the existing climbing wall, and give us the flexibility to add additional climbing elements in future summers. We're also replacing both basketball hoops with entirely new poles, backboards and rims. As always, Blayne will provide countless other improvements to camp, including some new porches on boys' cabins, more finishing touches on The Lodge and exciting new program equipment.

## UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS...

### CAMPER BIRTHDAYS

Elizabeth L.....January 1	Jonathan P.....February 15	Sam S.....March 7
John R.....January 1	Jack P.....February 16	Jack G.....March 8
Nate G.....January 2	Johannes S.....February 16	Dylan W.....March 11
Julius R.....January 3	Harrison L.....February 17	Morgan T.....March 13
Ella H.....January 4	Emily B.....February 19	Celina T-K.....March 13
Bianca S.....January 5	Jack R.....February 19	Jacob P.....March 16
Spencer K.....January 7	Jessica S.....February 19	David F.....March 18
Jackson J.....January 12	Emma G.....February 20	Cameron S.....March 19
Robert T.....January 12	Nicholas D.....February 21	Matthew S.....March 20
Nathaniel L.....January 13	Zachary A.....February 23	Madeline K.....March 21
Jordyn O.....January 14	Caleb K.....February 23	Maya B.....March 22
Ava E.....January 18	Nicole K.....February 23	Leo E.....March 24
Gabby S.....January 22	Lukas M.....February 23	Matthew W.....March 24
Hannah S.....January 22	Jordan G.....February 24	Sean R.....March 25
Jeremy W.....January 26	Isabelle M.....February 24	Ryan D.....March 26
Elias M.....January 27	Jacob C.....February 25	Steven H.....March 26
Robert O.....January 29	Jacob O.....February 25	
Matthew K.....February 1	Tatum U.....February 27	
Spencer M.....February 2	Daniel W.....February 28	
Sydney B.....February 8	Ross V.....March 1	
Ezra P.....February 9	Ben S.....March 2	
Daniel S.....February 10	Matthew L.....March 3	
Clare M.....February 12	Michael L.....March 3	
Christopher C...February 14	Blake B.....March 6	
Baila G.....February 15	Alena M.....March 6	



Taylor W.....January 21
Michael H.....January 27
Eli B.....January 28
Ethan L.....February 10
Jeremy M.....February 18
Jack B.....February 22
Annie B.....February 26
Aaron K.....February 28
Nacho D.....March 2
Edward F.....March 4
Laura H.....March 11
Alana T.....March 18
Jose C.....March 21
Sarah G.....March 24
Silvana A.....March 31

### STAFF BIRTHDAYS

Shamus A..... January 2
Nicole D..... January 2
Catherine H.....January 4
John L.....January 6
Alexandra WM...January 8
Isabel F.....January 10
Rob GJ.....January 12



# WINTER WEEKEND RECAP

In early January, we were lucky enough to hold our second annual Winter Weekend for campers at Camp Winadu in Pittsfield, MA. This popular event grew from 38 campers in 2015 to 52 this year! We celebrated birthdays together, tried new camp activities, and spent a lot of quality time reuniting with our camp friends. Just like camp, we ended our time together with a closing campfire.

We're already thinking about next year's Winter Weekend, and can't wait for it to get here!



## AKEELA RIDING PROGRAM - IT'S (HORSE) BACK!

Last summer, 24 Akeela campers participated in our off-site horseback riding elective, provided by High Horses Therapeutic Riding Program in the neighboring town of Norwich, VT. It was a fantastic experience for everyone involved. In fact, the staff at High Horses reported that their time with Akeela campers was their favorite part of the summer. Learn more about the program on their website:

[www.highhorses.org](http://www.highhorses.org)

### What can you expect from the riding program?

Over the course of one session, campers who enroll in the program will participate in six classes at the High Horses riding center. The cost (including all lessons and transportation to and from camp) will be \$550 per camper. The classes will be led by High Horses' instructors, and Akeela staff members will join each group at the facility. Through this fun and engaging program, campers will improve balance and coordination, gain confidence, and improve upon expressive communication.

### Who can register?

Anyone! No previous experience is necessary, and experienced riders will find new challenges through the program. Riding registration forms will be available with the other camp forms later this winter.

**High Horses**  
THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM



## **REMINDER:**

**Re-enroll TODAY to avoid losing a spot!!!!**

One last reminder that we now have a number of cabins that are full for the 2016 season. If you have not re-enrolled your camper and would like him/her to join us at camp this summer, please send the enrollment form and deposit in today! We would hate to have to turn away any of our old friends!

### ***A note about...***

## **MEDICINE**

Once again, we will be partnering with CampMeds to make medication distribution safe and accurate for all of our campers. Please note that it is MANDATORY for all campers to use our system for ANY medication (including vitamins, supplements and OTC meds) that is taken DAILY. If there is a specific brand that you require for your child, you can send it IN ADVANCE to CampMeds so they can pack it for you. You'll need to do that in the early spring -- please do not wait until May or June!!! In addition, please remind the doctor who writes the prescription to do so with as much detail as possible. For example, if a physician writes a prescription as "2 times a day", it will be given at breakfast and dinner. If there are specific times when a medication should be given, it needs to be written as such on the prescription! Please call us or CampMeds if you have any questions. (Their phone number is: 954-577-0025)

## **FORMS UPDATE**

A few of you have asked if there's any paperwork that we need from you at the moment. Forms will be available online for you to complete as of March 1st. You will also receive the Parent Handbook in March. In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to email or call us!



## **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY**

We are lucky to have such talented staff with us in the summer, many of whom work "in the field" during the school year. Katie Wauchope (Akeela staff 2014) is conducting undergraduate research at the University of Glasgow in Scotland. She would love to have anyone in our community complete her online study. This is for anyone at least 16 years old, including camp parents, campers, siblings and friends. The link to her study is: <http://experiments.psy.gla.ac.uk> and once you've signed up, it's the study titled *Who Would You Leave Your Bag With?* We know that Katie appreciates your participation!