



Camp AkeelaSM Circular



A Letter From The Directors

Happy spring, friends! This has always been the most exciting time of year for us, as we gear up for the camp season. This year is even more exciting as we are preparing for our first summer at our new Wisconsin site! As a family, our transition from Philadelphia to Wisconsin is a busy one, but it will be well worth it as we eagerly anticipate spending this summer with you at camp!

In addition to our excitement, we also feel a bit anxious about our transition. Katie especially always gets "butterflies" in her stomach when she leaves home. When she first started as a counselor at Akeela in 2011, she felt very homesick flying from her home in Ohio to a place that was totally new to her. Even though it's now her 7th year at Akeela, she stills feels a little homesick at the start of every summer! We want our campers to know that all of these feelings – being excited, nervous, sad, anxious – are all normal and once at camp, our community will be there to support them. Katie can attest to the fact that after the initial settling-in period, camp feels like a second home and time flies by faster than we'd like!

Many people ask us what we do during a typical day at camp ... and our answer is that "it depends"! Between June 11th and the 16th, we'll be at our site in Vermont, along with our head counselors, Lauren and Dr. Dave, collaborating, sharing ideas, and going over expectations for the summer. This Senior Staff training is a great opportunity to come together as a larger Akeela team, to share best practices, and to make sure that there is consistent implementation of our greater camp goals at both of our sites. On June 16th, the Wisconsin Leadership Team packs up and heads to Appleton! The rest of the staff arrives on June 19th, and we spend that week training our counselors and preparing for campers' arrival.

During a typical camp day, we spend as much time as possible on campus with our campers and staff (rather than in the camp office, which is why we rarely answer the phone during the camp season.) Our primary responsibility - and our favorite thing to do - is to make sure everyone at camp is safe and happy. One of the most wonderful aspects of our job is that we never know exactly what each day will bring; we make ourselves available to the people who need us most at any given moment. That includes those of you at home who have trusted us with the care of your children! You should expect to hear most often from your camper's head counselor, who will call with updates and concerns, and will return your phone calls. However, you can always feel free to send us an email or call the office and ask to leave a message for Dave or Katie. We generally return parent phone calls in the evenings, after our campers are in bed.

We can't wait to kick off the summer of 2017 and lay the foundation for many more years of community, friendship, growth, pride, and fun at Camp Akeela in Wisconsin!

Love,

Dave Katie

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2017 DATES

FIRST SESSION:
June 26 - July 8

SECOND SESSION:
July 10 - August 22

WHAT ARE HEAD COUNSELORS?



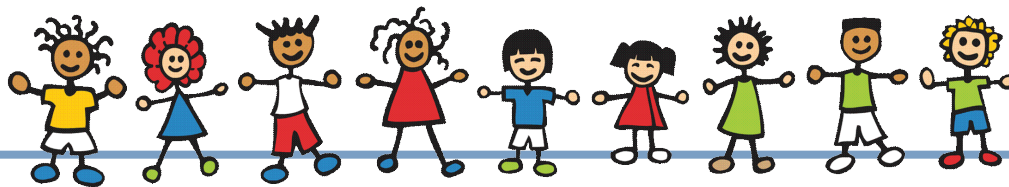
Lots of people get confused about the actual role of these important leaders in our community. Perhaps it's the title that's misleading ... **head counselors** are not the wonderful staff members who live in your child's bunk group. Those are **cabin counselors** and **specialists**. Our head counselors are adults who live in our community and who supervise between two and three bunk groups. They oversee the well-being of the campers and staff in those bunks 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, the head counselors focus on their two or three cabin groups!

Please let us know if you have any questions about your child's head counselor this summer. (You will find their profiles later in this newsletter.)

How We Assign Counselors to Bunks

Often, parents and campers ask us who their counselors will be for the upcoming summer. Something you may not know about is how we decide which staff members will work with which campers. We actually don't determine counselor placement until 4 or 5 days before campers arrive. We first take time to get to know each staff member, see how they work with others, get a sense of their strengths and actually take the time to ask THEM with which age group they feel most passionately about working. Only then does our Senior Staff assign staff members into co-counselor groupings and assign them their bunk groups. It is probably the day the staff look forward to the most during their training. We will post an online news item with photos of the staff members who will be working most closely with your camper(s).



GEOGRAPHY UPDATE

Something we have always taken great pride in at Camp Akeela is our diverse community. We are thrilled that our new camp in Wisconsin is filling up quickly with people from all over the country and the globe! We have camper and counselor representatives from 22 different states, Washington D.C., and three countries outside of the U.S.!

We have members of our community coming to us from...
California, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Vermont, Washington D.C., Wisconsin, The Bahamas, Costa Rica, Guatemala



CAMP FORMS

Most of this year's camp forms are available online only.

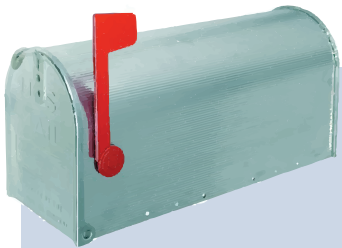
TO ACCESS THEM:

1. Go to the camp home page, www.campakeela.com
2. Near the top right corner, click on "Parent Log In"
3. If you don't know your password, click on "Retrieve/Set Password" and enter your email address; it will be sent to you.
4. Log in and click on "Forms and Documents"

Forms with a computer icon are to be completed and submitted online. Those with a downward facing arrow are to be printed, completed and mailed back to the camp office (in Pennsylvania until June 1 and to the WI summer address thereafter, please). Please note that the Physician's Examination Form requires a physician's signature AND the "As Needed" Medication Form requires a physician's signature IF your camper takes "as needed" medications not listed on the form. If you haven't already made a doctor's appointment, please do so right away. (These forms don't necessarily require an additional physical if your child has had one within 12 months of their arrival at camp; however some physicians won't sign the form based on a previous physical.)

In addition to these online forms, you should have received in the mail: a Parent Handbook (with packing list), the Land's End flyer, and a flyer from our preferred label retailer. Please be sure to look carefully at these items.

We know you understand that all of this information is collected to ensure that your child has a safe and rewarding summer at camp. Thanks for your cooperation and let us know if you need any help!



ROOMMATE SURVEY AND PEN PALS

Camper, you are probably very eager to know who you are going to be living with summer! As promised, we are busy finalizing our roommate questionnaire and we will send that out to parents via email soon! As our enrollment and admissions process is rolling, we will have camper roommate assignments roughly 1-2 weeks before your camp session begins.

It's really helpful to know someone before you arrive at a new place. A few weeks before your camp session begins, we will send you the email address and phone number of another camper in your bunk group. (It will get sent to an adult in your house and he/she will share that information with you.) This person may or may not be your roommate while at camp. We know that it's not always an easy thing to do, but we ask that you please make contact with your pen pal so that everyone at camp feels connected to someone else.

NOTE TO PARENTS & GUARDIANS:

If you would NOT like us to share your contact information with other camp families, please call or email us right away to opt out of the Pen Pal program.

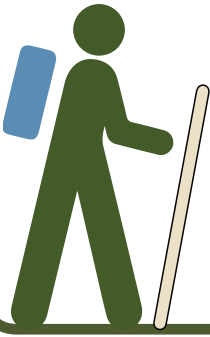
UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS...

(EITHER BEFORE CAMP OR WHILE WE'RE AT CAMP!)

Ava C, May 20
Kael A, May 28
Ross B, June 1
William H, June 14
Emmett K, June 18
Casey G, June 21
Owen H, June 24
Ethan S, July 5
Cole M, July 16
Lucy M, July 23



OPTIONAL OVERNIGHT HIKING AND CAMPING



Campers looking for a little extra adventure in their summer can sign up (in advance, with parental permission) our overnight hiking and camping trip! Campers and staff will head off on an adventure in one of the many Wisconsin State Parks around campus. On the trip, campers will set up their campsites, sleep in tents, and cook their food over an open flame. Of course, what's a camping trip without a campfire and s'mores?!

Details, prices and registration instructions are included in the online form. Spots are filling up quickly; if you're interested please get us your trip form soon!



OFF-CAMPUS TRIP DAYS

Twice per session, our campers will spend their afternoons off campus for their weekly trip days. For the first trip day of the session, the entire camp will go on a hike at one of the local hiking trails (and stop for a treat afterwards)!

The second trip of each session, the campers are given the opportunity to choose between four different activities. The camper trip choice form will be sent out in early June. The four options for the second trip day are as follows:

THE BUILDING FOR KIDS CHILDREN'S MUSEUM (BEST FOR YOUNGER CAMPERS, AGES 8-12)

Campers will participate in a museum-led wacky science or engineering exploration activity. After the activity is complete, campers will have an opportunity to explore the museum's many exhibits for free play. For a further look at The Building for Kids, check out buildingforkids.org!

HIGH ROPES ADVENTURE COURSE (ALL AGES!)

Campers will attend the beautiful Appleton Area School District high-ropes adventure course for activities rooted in team building, enhancing communication skills, problem solving, trust building, and self-confidence. No ropes course experience is necessary, and campers will be challenged by choice on the zip line, rock wall, and many other exhilarating high ropes course elements!

HIKE DAY (ALL AGES!)

Campers who like to explore the great outdoors will love this hiking adventure, which is slightly longer and more challenging than the all-camp hike from earlier in the session.

WATERFRONT DAY (ALL AGES!)

Stay tuned for more details and information regarding this option!

POISE-A-THON

We are delighted to tell you about the seventh annual (and our first at our site in Wisconsin!) Camp Akeela POISE-a-thon. This will be a fun and exciting community service project offered as a special event in each of our two camp sessions.

Campers will choose to either shoot baskets at our basketball court, swim laps in our pool, or run laps on the track in our wellness center, as a way of raising money for the POISE scholarship fund. (See poisescholarship.org for more information.)

Details and pledge forms will be mailed out soon, and can also be found on the Forms Dashboard via the Parent Log In today! Donations in support of your child's participation can be made directly to POISE at:

www.poisescholarship.org



POISE

CLOTHING ORDERS

Camp Outfitter's by Land's End is ready for your orders! Land's End tells us that it takes 5-7 days to process orders. Please allow enough time to receive and label your items before camp begins. Our "store" can be found at: <http://business.landsend.com/store/campakeela/> click on "show packing list" to see the camp items available.



We also want to clarify that campers are only required to have ONE t-shirt (grey or white) ordered from Land's End. Everything else on the Land's End website – while wonderful products – is optional.

SENIOR STAFF AND LEAD SPECIALISTS

We would like to introduce you to our wonderful head counselors and lead specialists who will be integral parts of your child's summer at Akeela. These professionals provide support to our amazing counselors and specialists and also directly work with our campers throughout the summer. They are all experience members of our community and the head counselors will be your go-to people for hearing about your camper's amazing summer!



Dr. David Baker Sr.

Head Counselor

David Baker Sr. comes to Akeela with over 30 years of administrative experience in the public school system. He has his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Rhode Island College and his Doctorate of Education from the University of Vermont. Throughout his years working in education he has served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and superintendent. He is currently the Superintendent of Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union in Vermont.

In his younger days, he worked as a Head Counselor at a day camp in Rhode Island for six summers, and a camp chef at a Boy Scout camp in the Catskills of New York. He currently lives in Danville, Vermont, with his wife, Mary Ann. Together they raised seven children (three of whom currently work at Camp Akeela!) and have seven grandchildren, with one more on the way. In his free time he loves to watch sports, spend time with his kids and grandkids, and sip on Dunkin' Donuts coffee with Mary Ann!

Favorite Book: 1984 by George Orwell

Place I'd like to Visit: Ireland

Favorite Camp Food: Sloppy Joes



Lauren O'Brien

Head Counselor

Lauren O'Brien currently lives in Appleton, WI and has recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and English as a Second Language. Lauren joined Akeela last summer in Vermont as a cabin counselor and is so thrilled to take on the role of head counselor in her homeland of Wisconsin. Lauren fell in love with camp life last summer and couldn't be more excited for another summer filled with awesome camp traditions (Evening Meeting and campfire being personal favorites) and a wonderful crew of campers and counselors.

At the end of the summer, Lauren will be moving to Denver, Colorado to pursue her career in education. Lauren couldn't think of a more perfect way to spend her last few months in Wisconsin than with the greatest community out there!

Favorite Book: Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult

Place I'd like to Visit: Ireland

Favorite Camp Food: Tacos and desserts



Catricia Morris

Lead Program Specialist

Catricia Morris currently lives in St. Paul, MN where she works as a behavioral therapist for kids on the Autism Spectrum. She recently graduated from Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Educational Studies. Catricia joined the Akeela staff in 2015 as a cabin counselor and is so excited for her new role as the lead program specialist in Wisconsin. Catricia loves the feeling of being at camp and is looking forward to her third summer with the Akeela community!

After this summer, Catricia will move to the Boston area to pursue a Master's Degree in School Counseling. In her free time, Catricia loves to dance, listen to music, and spend time with her family and friends.

Favorite Book: My Sister's Keeper by Jodi Picoult

Place I'd like to Visit: India

Favorite Camp Food: Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup

SENIOR STAFF AND LEAD SPECIALISTS

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Meg Phillips

Lead Swim Instructor

This will be Meg's first year at Camp Akeela, and she's looking forward to an amazing summer! Meg is originally from Grosse Pointe, Michigan, but moved down south to study Special Education at Vanderbilt University, where she became interested in pursuing a career in speech-language pathology. Although she is spending this semester studying in Edinburgh, Scotland, she will be a rising senior at Vanderbilt this fall.

Meg spent most of her summers growing up around the water, swimming for a local team at her public park. She continued swimming competitively through club teams until the end of high school, and eventually began teaching swim lessons at these same public parks that she first learned to swim. Other than water activities, she also enjoys traveling, yoga, reading, and spending time with friends.

Favorite Book: The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

Place I'd like to Visit: Santorini, Greece

Favorite Camp Food: S'Mores



Caroline McFadden

Lead Art Specialist

Caroline McFadden is from Evanston, IL but currently lives in Poughkeepsie, NY where she is in her final year at Vassar College. She is a Studio Art major (and Math and Education minor) and is getting certified to teach elementary school. She's looking forward to student teaching in the fall.

She spends her free time drawing (of course), tap dancing, tutoring at the local middle school, drinking tea, and spending time outdoors. For the last two summers she was an art specialist at our Vermont site, and now she's excited to help combine two things she loves: Akeela and the Midwest!

Favorite Book: The Illustrated Man by Ray Bradbury

Place I'd like to Visit: Antarctica

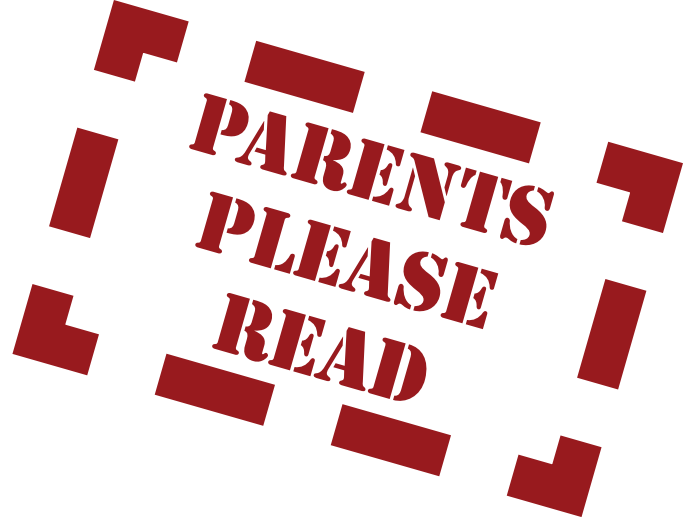
Favorite Camp Food: Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup

Welcome Adelaide Baker!

We are thrilled to announce the birth of Adelaide Baker! Dave and Katie welcomed Adelaide Grace to their family on March 6, 2017. Their dogs, Rudy and Luna, are still getting used to not being the center of attention, but they are enjoying her presence. Dave and Katie are so excited for all of the campers to meet her this summer and for Addy to spend her first summer on earth at Camp Akeela!



IMPORTANT REMINDERS



PARENT HANDBOOK

Please read through our Parent Handbook carefully. It contains important information about everything from first-day transportation to our electronics policy.

CAMPER PHONE CALLS (DOUBLE-SESSION CAMPERS ONLY!)

Please note our camper phone call procedures, outlined in the Parent Handbook. The online schedule system will be activated a couple of weeks before the start of your camp session. At that point, you can use the Parent Log In on our website (the same place you go for forms, photos and news from camp) to schedule one phone call during the beginning of second session. Of course, our team of directors and Head Counselors are ALWAYS available to speak with you about how your child is doing at camp. Call any time and leave a message for us and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

SPECIALTY PERIOD SELECTIONS

Keep an eye on your email box for a link to your camper's first week specialty selection form. Specialties are the individual choice periods that take place each afternoon at camp. As a family, you'll be able to send preferences for the two specialties in week 1. Campers will then make their 2nd week selections once they're at camp.

PACK AN ITEM FOR TIE-DYEING

Our art staff is planning to offer tie-dye as an activity. Please pack a shirt (or pillowcase, etc.) that you don't mind coming home multi-colored! We recommend labeling this item for our counselors so they can help have it ready for tie-dye day.

***** REQUIRING YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION: CAMPMEDS *****

Our medication policies require that ALL daily medicine -- including supplements and vitamins -- be dispensed by CampMeds. We want to be clear that we do expect 100% participation in CampMeds from families with campers who will take daily medication at camp. If your camper does not take daily medication, you do not need to register with CampMeds.

You will find details about how to enroll in CampMeds, along with an FAQ, on your family's online Forms Dashboard (accessible through the Parent Log In on Akeela's website). If you have any questions about CampMeds, you can reach them at 954-577-0025 or www.campmeds.com. Any other medication (i.e. items administered on an "as needed" basis) must be mailed to camp in its original packaging at least three days prior to your camper's arrival. Please call the office to notify us if medications will be arriving by mail. It is camp policy not to accept any medication (including vitamins, supplements, etc.) on Opening Day.