



Camp AkeelaSM Circular



A Note From The Directors

In late August of 2007, we were given the opportunity to start our own camp. It was a dream come true – especially for Eric, who had been working in camping full-time for almost 10 years. We have such vivid memories (aided by some of Debbie's photos) of our first walk-around on the property that would soon become Camp Akeela. We can laugh now about how nervous we both were, seeing how much work the site needed. Buildings were falling down, the dining hall was dark and dirty, and there were virtually no indoor gathering spaces. The beauty of a great partnership is that where one partner sees trouble, the other sees possibility and beauty. That has been true for us both professionally and personally. While Debbie cringed in fear that the site would never be ready in time to welcome campers in less than a year, Eric saw endless potential and his excitement was palpable. Thank goodness, because in those 9 months, Blayne and his crew literally moved buildings and earth, built a new health center, dug a pool, transformed the cabins and created our amazingly beautiful site.

We just finished our 10th summer at Akeela and we are so proud and honored to have been a part of the creation of such a special community. Over 1,000 campers have attended Akeela, 8 staff couples have gotten engaged or married after meeting at camp, and countless lifelong friendships have been forged. We are working on plans for an official 10-year reunion for our campers and staff and will let you know once we have a finalized date and itinerary.

Thank you for being a part of our community. We look forward to many more years of friendship.

Debbie

Eric

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2018 DATES

FIRST SESSION:
June 27 - July 20

SECOND SESSION:
July 23 - August 15

BEYOND AKEELA
FIRST SESSION:
June 25 - July 14

BEYOND AKEELA
SECOND SESSION:
July 17 - August 5

AKEELA WINTER WEEKEND...

We're looking forward to hosting the 4th annual Winter Weekend reunion in the Berkshires. It's been wonderful to see our campers reconnect with each other, and we can't wait to recreate the magic of camp once again this winter.

When: January 19th – 21st, 2018

Where: The Lodge at Camp Winadu in Pittsfield, MA

Who: 2017 campers who are currently in grades 6–12

** Day camper option available to all 2017 campers



Program includes winter activities at Camp Winadu, a bowling outing, and lots of time to play & hang out with friends. Our amazing staff will be there to supervise and ensure that campers have a wonderful weekend.

Registration forms are available on our website now. Be sure to reserve your camper's spot, as space is limited and will fill up quickly!

...AND FAMILY RETREAT AT CRANWELL

10 years at Akeela and 6 summers of Family Camp have taught us how much joy, community and connection comes from bringing together not just Akeela campers, but their families, too.

To this end, we're hosting another Family Stay & Play at the Cranwell Resort in Lenox, MA. While your camper enjoys our Winter Weekend reunion, you can relax and play with old and new friends at this world-class resort.

Reserve your family's spot now!
Registration is available on our website!



Summer Memories 2017

This past summer, Akeela's 10th, was our best ever ... and 2018 is sure to be filled with even more friendship, community, growth, pride and FUN!





**THANK YOU
FOR A
WONDERFUL
SUMMER!**



SURVEY THANK YOU AND RESULTS

We owe a huge thank you to everyone who took the time to fill out the camper and parent surveys. These are a vital way for us to continue to improve the overall camp experience for our campers and their families. Here are just a few of your great suggestions that we're already working on implementing for this year:

- Providing a more diverse program to our oldest campers, including more leadership opportunities in camp.
- Continuing to improve our end of summer reports, with more detailed information about interactions with peers.
- Including daily schedules in news postings throughout the summer.
- New programming in music, mindfulness, and yoga for all our campers.

thank
you!

POISE-A-THON

We are proud to announce that through their participation in our POISE-a-thon community service events, Akeela campers (at our Wisconsin and Vermont locations) raised over \$13,000 for charity this summer. All of these donations will go directly to camper scholarships at Akeela, MGH Aspire or other similar camp programs. Thank you all for your participation and generosity.

(If your child participated in the POISE-a-thon and you have not yet had an opportunity to send your corresponding donation, it's not too late! Please visit www.poisescholarship.org to make your contribution. Thanks!)



POISE

Come see us!

We'll be attending three conferences in the upcoming weeks, and we'd love to see you there! All of these are great educational and networking opportunities for camp parents and professionals.

- **AHA-NY Fall Conference:** October 28th, Adelphi University, Garden City, NY.
- **ASPEN Fall Conference:** October 29th, APA Hotel Woodbridge, Iselin, NJ.
- **AANE Fall Conference (featuring Temple Grandin):** December 2nd & 3rd, Bentley University, Waltham, MA.

WELCOME GREG!

We are excited to announce that Greg Walker, a six year Akeela staff veteran, has joined our year-round team as the Staffing Director! Greg's primary focus will be finding the incredible staff who work in our communities over the summer. He will also help manage our daily office operations, develop new programming ideas, and assist with camper recruitment. We're excited for the energy Greg brings to our office, and his passion for camp!



GREG'S GAB

Now that fall is here, I look back on last summer with fondness. It was my sixth summer at camp but my first as a Head Counselor, and I knew that there were going to be many new challenges ahead of me.

I am sure many of you have faced your own new challenges since leaving camp. Maybe it's a new school? A new activity you've taken up? Anything in life that's new can be challenging, but remember that your Akeela friends are there to help you. As I said to the 10th graders on their overnight trip last summer, Akeela doesn't have to be just three and half weeks. Here are a few ideas (with the help of technology) to help you stay connected with your camp friends:

- Access the camper directory and become email pen pals
- Find out their phone number and ask to FaceTime or Skype
- Find out what their gamer-tag is and play videogames together
- Organize a time to see each other in person to have a sleepover or go to the movies

I met some of my best friends at camp and we keep in touch all year round ... that's what I hope for each of you, too!

Kev's Korner

Dear Akeela Families,

"Transitions" is a word we are hearing a lot these days from parents and professionals in our community. I was recently at a conference in Wisconsin that had a specific focus on the transition into adulthood for teens on the autism spectrum and with learning differences. While I was there, I was expecting to meet lots of professionals and parents with older teens. I was surprised and pleased to see there were many other families of younger children who were already starting the transition process in their homes.

The literature I've reviewed, echoed by the keynote at this conference, suggests that families start working on their child's transition to independent living when they are 12 years old. It made me think about how daily life at Akeela directly supports the transition process. Our campers work on their independence in their morning and nighttime routines, practice living with new friends, take responsibility for helping the larger community, make countless decisions for themselves, and even get to learn some new culinary skills!

I often like to reflect on the five pillars of camp. My time at the conference gave me a real sense of Pride in the work we do each summer. We are all proud to be part of an organization that sets our kids up for success far beyond their time at camp!



Beyond Akeela

Last summer's opening of Akeela in Wisconsin allowed us to give Beyond Akeela a home base, running alongside our traditional camp on the campus of Lawrence University. It proved to be a perfect fit! Our new program offers a balance between time at camp, off-campus programming and travel, all with a focus on preparation for life after high school. Highlights from this summer included an awesome white water rafting trip, engaging community service work, meetings with university faculty to learn more about transitioning to college, and exploring all Chicago has to offer! We are very proud of the campers who led the way this summer, and can't wait for the next group of Akeela leaders to join us next year!

We're also thrilled to announce that our long-time assistant director, Kevin Trimble, will be focused on developing and growing Beyond Akeela, and will be the dedicated in-season director of the program going forward! We're excited for the continuity this will provide to our campers graduating from camp in Vermont and Wisconsin into the Beyond Akeela experience.

Want to learn more about Beyond Akeela? Check out beyondakeela.com, or give the office a call and ask for Kevin!



More Akeela Wedding Bells!

We are thrilled to announce two more Akeela staff weddings coming up!



Former Waterfront Director, David Leach, and former Ropes Director, Amanda Perry, will be married in February near Manchester, England. David is currently stationed in Devon, England, where he just completed a year of Royal Marine Young Officers training. He will become a First Lieutenant Royal Marine Commando in December, and he and Amanda will move to wherever David is stationed (they hope Scotland). Once they are married, Amanda will become a U.K. citizen and she will be studying to become a behavior consultant. David and Amanda are the SEVENTH Akeela staff couple to fall in love in Thetford Center and get married and we wish them a lifetime of love and happiness!

Our very own Assistant Director, Kevin Trimble, and Kristin Wills got engaged in Philadelphia just before going up to camp this summer! Kevin and Kristin met at camp in 2015, and have been living together in South Philadelphia ever since. While Kevin works in the Akeela office all year, Kristin is currently finishing up her Masters in Counseling at Temple University and hopes to be a school counselor in the Philadelphia area next year. Kevin first asked Kristin out at the tetherball pole on the Main Lawn, and he recreated that scene on their roof deck for the proposal. Kevin and Kristin will be getting married in Philadelphia in November 2018 - we couldn't be happier for them!



CHEF TRINA IS COMING BACK!



We're so excited to announce that Chef Trina is officially on board for Summer 2018! After an amazing first summer as our Head Chef, Chef Trina is excited to join the community again and spread joy through her culinary expertise. What we love about Chef Trina (in addition to her amazing food!), is her ability to create community among the kitchen staff. She empowers the staff she works with and creates a family-like atmosphere in the kitchen. We can't imagine a better match for Akeela and we're so happy to know that Akeela will be fed well yet again in 2018!



Camper News

Fall is here and our campers have been busy! **Michael K-F** has started a new school and is really enjoying it. Michael has spent time with **Justin R, Matthew L, DJ G, and Marshall G** a few times since camp ended. ... **Christopher W** has joined ping-pong club at school and participates in a workout class at a local sports club. ... **Sarah B** is enjoying middle school and has joined the cross country team. She is also looking forward to joining the basketball team in the winter. ... **Max T** is interning at a preschool where each week he engages with younger children and even tells them stories. ... **Skylar R and Liz M** met up recently and had an amazing time. Skylar also contributed to the 3D printing traveling exhibit at the Franklin Institute. ... **William W** has started taking horseback riding lessons at Bina Farms in Lexington after discovering his new found interest last summer at our High Horses Therapeutic Riding program. ... On a musical note **Elliot K** is learning to play the guitar and our very own **Jaden T** sang America the Beautiful at the US Open in Queens, NY to a crowd of 24,000! ... Staying in the creative vein, **Sophie A-S** came in third place at a local poetry contest, and has started a young adult writing guild. ... In addition, **Ben N** performed at a Gala honoring Carmine Appice and was able to do a drum solo for the room that included Grammy winners and a major recording artist. Ben has also been getting together with **Hayden F** and they

plan to attend the Anime-Con in November! ... **Chris J** is doing tennis after school and is about to start his 4th year on the ice hockey team. ... **Sam S** has started working one to one with a trainer and has been doing different exercises such as lunges and boxing. ... **Benji G** will be celebrating his B'nai Mitzvah on October 21st (Congratulations, Benji) and is later flying to Australia for a family wedding. ... **Lily W** is enjoying her new school this fall, and has gotten together with friends **Jamie O, Reese K and Sarah B**. Lily is in a theater production of "Elf the Musical" this fall, too. ... Reese got a new pet bearded dragon named Squirt, and just started taking a new cooking class that got featured in her local newspaper! ... **Vince R** recently went on a week long canoe trip down the Colorado River and loved it! He also been spending some time with his bunkmate **Henry G** in Los Angeles, and has been talking to **Ryan O** a lot too. ... **Jackson B** went on a family road trip from Denver to Las Vegas. He went hiking, rafting and did lots of swimming! ... **Matty A and Drew W** had so much fun hanging out together recently. They talked about how much fun we had at Akeela and our plans for next summer. ... **Joe T** recently held his fourth "Akeela-style" yard hockey tournament in Framingham, MA! There were 18 players on 4 teams and spectators, too. Let us know here at the Akeela office if you're local to the tournament and want to participate in the Spring Till Cup! ... **Jason N** had a great vacation after camp to drop his sister off at NASA space camp in Alabama. He loved visiting the space academy. His family then went to Nashville, TN where he went to the Grand Ole Opry, visited some civil war battlefields and saw totality of the eclipse. **Brayden T** performed in a community production of Legally Blonde the Musical as Professor Callahan and is an intern at a maritime history museum. He enjoys texting with his camp friends and looks forward to seeing them in January.

Staff News

After camp our wonderful staff go back to their everyday lives. **Jordan B** has begun his 4th Year rotation in pediatrics and loves it! ... **Lucia T** has moved to Bangalore, India for the fall and has explored some really cool places and seen some crazy animals! ... **Callum B** went traveling around the East Coast post camp for 2 weeks and is looking forward to returning back to camp in June for another enjoyable summer!

... **Mei-Li S** recently moved to Boston to begin Graduate school at Northeastern University for a Masters in Speech and Language Pathology! After camp Mei Li and **Gorka** met up a couple times and ate all kinds of food while they walked miles throughout Boston. ... **Celia O** has started her final year of grad school at Vanderbilt and has been able to see a few Akeela friends in Nashville since the end of camp, including **Adri B** and **Katey S**! ... **Cassidy R-S** has started her senior year and is currently applying to graduate school to get her master's in social work. ... **Nathan R** is taking some amazing classes about family and adolescent psychology and has a new job in a Chinese immersion school. ... Our favorite first session Head Counselors **Nicole F** and **Barb W** met up for lunch in Boston and then went to the park with **Amanda P**. ... Staying on top of his skills for the summer, our Outdoor Adventure director, **Ben J** recently climbed the tallest peak in Western Australia! ... **Scotty B** has moved to London and has started a Postgraduate Course in Investigative Journalism at Birkbeck University. ... **Thomas M** has started University back in the U.K and has joined a Rock climbing club after finding his passion for the hobby at camp! ... **Ale G** has started working towards her professional goal of becoming a motivational coach and **Yareli R** is studying abroad in Spain.



We also know that many of our campers were concerned about the devastating natural disasters that struck Puerto Rico and Mexico in September. Luckily all of our amazing support staff and their families were unharmed but we continue to keep them in our thoughts as they recover from the catastrophes.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS...

CAMPER BIRTHDAYS

Kyra A, October 2	Abigail A, November 7
Christopher W, October 6	Clem H, November 7
TJ C, October 6	Ryan B, November 8
William W, October 6	Natalie R, November 9
Thomas L, October 10	Tomas L, November 9
Evan G, October 15	Brayden T, November 10
John D, October 15	Reese K, November 11
Manny D, October 17	Joey V, November 17
Rory S, October 17	Lily W, November 17
Elliot S, October 21	Ross P, November 19
Noah J, October 23	Jaden T, November 24
Olivia S, October 24	Xavier K, November 24
Andrew S, October 27	Elliot K, November 25
Ben W, October 27	Jackson B, November 30
Amanda C, October 28	Michael K, November 30
Lukas S, October 28	Shannon R, November 30
Otelia S, October 28	Jared T, December 3
Samantha R, October 28	Alexander K, December 4
Christopher L, October 29	Connor S, December 6
Alex K, November 3	Ethan G, December 6
Margo S, November 3	Oscar F, December 7
Talia M, November 5	Elizabeth M, December 8



Hayden F, December 10
Jude H, December 12
Peter W, December 14
Cara W, December 16
Ian M, December 16
Grace T, December 17
Christopher A, December 22
Sean M, December 22
Max T, December 25
Peter W, December 29

STAFF BIRTHDAYS

Katey S, October 5
Stefan L, October 6
Thomas O, October 9
Anissa G, October 10
Lucia T, October 15
Darragh O, October 17
Lizzy A, October 17
Jenai B, October 19
Rodrigo A, October 19
Turner H, October 24

Nathan R, October 25
Paul C, October 26
Danielle L, October 30
Joelle S, November 1
Caroline M, November 10
Rachard N, November 11
Brianna L, November 12
Victoria G, November 24
Yareli R, November 24
Alison E, November 28
Rebecca W, November 29
Dave Baker, December 1
Jesus Manuel H, December 4
Eric Sasson, December 4
Lauren O, December 5
Gorka A, December 21
Thomas M, December 23
Luisa M, December 24
Celia O, December 29
Lev M, December 31

