



Camp Akeela Circular



A Letter From The Directors

Well, it took an EXTRA long time this year but spring is finally here. We're seeing evidence that the warmer weather is coming - flowers and trees are in bloom here at our winter office in Philadelphia and we know that means that, before we know it, we'll all be together on Miller Pond! This is certainly an exciting time of year for us. This time last year, it was also one of anxiety for us. We were getting ready to be first time camp parents ourselves! Our older daughter, Margo, went to her own sleepover camp for three weeks last summer and Debbie was especially nervous. Packing and filling out forms was certainly a lot of work but mostly, there was a disquiet about not knowing. Not knowing if she would be happy, if she would be cold at night, lonely or successful at making new friends. We think we did a good job at hiding our own worries from Margo so as not to transfer our fears on to her - she has her own anxiety to manage and certainly doesn't need OURS! And, the day we dropped her off, there were only a few tears - and they were all Debbie's! Three weeks flew by for all of us and when we picked her up on her final day of camp, we were thrilled to see that the tears now were hers as she hated to leave her new friends and a place she now calls her second home.

So, why do we share this with you? Well, for many of you, you are now first-time camp parents and may be apprehensive. We want you to know that we understand. For many of you this is NOT your first time sending your child to camp and you may still feel anxious. We understand that too! Camp is certainly a gift we give to our children and it's also a leap of faith. We know that you are trusting us and that you have hopes for what your child may learn and how he/she may grow at Akeela. Please know that you can always call us and we will give you an honest report about how your camper is doing. We never hide information from parents so if we say your child is happy, please know that we mean it! We do our best to be great communicators during the summer, sending emails and calling, in addition to posting photos and news from camp every day. Your children may not be the best communicators when they're with us - stopping to write a letter home is often NOT a priority for our campers! We'll encourage them to write to you but always remember that no news is good news! (We know how hard it is to not hear anything from a camper; we received ONE letter from Margo last summer!)

Again, if you need anything from us, please send an email or call us directly. We know there's a lot to do between now and the start of camp - please take our advice and get the forms done sooner, rather than later!

Fondly,

Debbie Eric

WHAT'S INSIDE

What to Expect on the First Day of Camp.....	2
What Camp Directors Do...	3
Greg's Gab.....	3
A Note About Baggage.....	4
Optional Outdoor Adventure Trips.....	4
How we Assign Counselors...	4
Camp Forms.....	5
Open House.....	5
Pen Pals.....	5
Camper Mail.....	6
Geography Update.....	6
POISE-a-thon.....	6
Clothing Orders.....	6
Parent Communication.....	7
Welcome New Campers.....	8
Upcoming Birthdays.....	8
Introductions to the Program Heads.....	9-10
Camper & Alumni News....	10
Important Reminders.....	11

2018 DATES

OPEN HOUSE:
June 17

FIRST SESSION:
June 27 - July 20

SECOND SESSION:
July 23 - August 15

VISITING DAYS:
July 20 & August 15

FAMILY CAMP:
August 18 - 24

What to Expect on the First Day of Camp

Dear Akeela Camper,

Summer is almost here and we hope you are excited about camp, even if you're also feeling a little nervous about it. Many kids go away for part of the summer. Some visit family, some go on teen travel or community service programs, and some go to sleep-away camps. Almost everybody worries about how they will like a place that's new to them. It's OK to feel that way and we're here to help make your transition to camp as easy and smooth as possible. We think that one way to do that is to help you know what to expect...



If you're taking one of the camp buses to camp, you and your parents will meet some of our counselors at the bus pick-up location. They will be there to welcome you and to introduce you to other campers. They will help you find a seat on the bus with a new friend and will be there to answer any questions you might have. The travel time from NY is approximately 5 hours and the time from Boston is approximately 2.5 hours. You will bring lunch on the bus and there are bathrooms on both buses!

Those of you flying to Boston on Opening Day will be met at the airport by Akeela staff members. They will be there to greet you and to introduce you to other campers who have also flown in! You and your new friends will be driven by our staff in a camp van directly to camp. It will take approximately 2.5 hours to get to Akeela. If your parents are driving you to camp, you will be dropped off at 2:00. Your counselors will be there to meet you at your car and help you carry any last-minute items you have brought with you that day. You, your parents, and counselors will go to your cabin, where you'll see all of your belongings have been unpacked and organized for you so you can easily find your bed. You'll then say goodbye to your family and begin your camp adventure!

Regardless of how you get to camp, here's what you can expect to happen the rest of that first day:

- You will have a chance to see what camp looks like and enjoy some planned activities with your bunkmates. You might take a tour, play some games, or jump on the jumping pillow.
- You'll also meet our nurses so that they can give you a quick "health check" to make sure you're healthy!
- Our great Chef, Catarina, will give you a small preview of her culinary expertise and provide a delicious snack for you and your new friends to enjoy.
- There will be some time after everyone arrives for each bunk to start spending some time together before we meet for dinner. This is a great time to get to know your bunkmates and counselors, and talk about "bunk expectations," so you know what to expect from each other.
- We will all have dinner and Evening Meeting together as a community. You'll eat dinner with your cabin, just like you will for all your meals at camp! Evening Meeting will be at the amphitheatre and you'll get to hear from Eric and Debbie, and have a chance to make announcements about the new friends you've already made!
- Then it will be time for our opening campfire and evening snack. We'll sing songs and do skits as a community by the fire. It's one of our favorite parts of camp!
- Before bedtime, you will preview the next day's schedule and then Debbie or Eric and your Head Counselor will stop by to say good night. Before you know it, your first day will be over and we will all be getting ready for bed!

Many campers worry that they might be sad or homesick on the first night of camp. That is very normal. All of your counselors will be right in your bunk with you to help you. In addition to talking to them, you might want to look at photos from home, write a letter to your family or read a book. We know that after a short time, you will be having such a great time at Akeela, it will feel like your second home.

We can't wait to see you at camp. Many of you will be joining us for our Open House on June 17th. If you're not able to attend Open House, you'll be able to see photos of the event on the camp website. We're so excited for an amazing summer at Camp Akeela. See you soon!



Camp Directors: A Day in the Life

Many people ask us what we do during a typical day at camp ... and our answer is that "it depends"! Between June 1st and 10th, we'll welcome the first wave of staff who come for various trainings and certifications, and who help prepare the camp facility as part of our "pre-camp" crew. Eric and Kevin spend a great deal of time supervising that work and supporting our newly arrived staff members. Debbie spends her first week at camp making final preparations for staff training, settling in the Sasson family, and welcoming staff to camp. On the 11th, our Senior Staff will arrive and we start training for our Leadership Team, our Program Directors, and our Head Counselors. We'll spend time building our own sense of trust and community while we work on specific training goals. Finally, after our 10 Year Reunion Celebration on the 16th and Open House on the 17th, the cabin counselors and remaining specialists will arrive on June 18th. We will then be leading our full Staff Orientation & Training right up until the moment we've all been waiting 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 incoming phone calls. However, you can always feel free to send us an email or call the office and ask to leave a message for Debbie or Eric. 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 2018!



GREG'S GAB

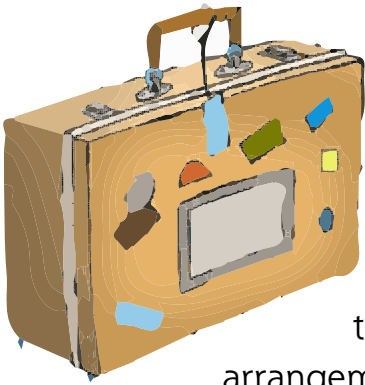
With camp only a couple of months away I have started to transition in to my summer role as the Program Director. It is so exciting to see so many of you signing up for our optional trips program. If you would like to participate in the Biking, Canoeing, Overnight Camping trips or the High Horses Therapeutic Horseback Riding program please sign up as soon as possible!

Also keep an eye on your inbox as your summer session approaches as we will be sending out Week 1 Specialty request forms. Those of you who are new to our community, your specialties are activities which you will sign up for a whole week. In those activity periods you will get to harness your skills in that particular activity and meet other campers with the same interests! Our amazing specialists have already started planning lessons and coming up with cool, creative ways to teach you a new skill or guide you in your already existing talents.

Supporting our specialists this summer we have 5 incredible staff members who I am absolutely ecstatic to work alongside. The wealth of knowledge, expertise and passion that Ben, Julia, Keith, Kyle and Uttunga bring to the program team is essential to the success and delivery of the overall program. I am so excited to get the summer rolling; with this year's program team and specialists it's sure to be Akeela's best summer yet!

A note about...

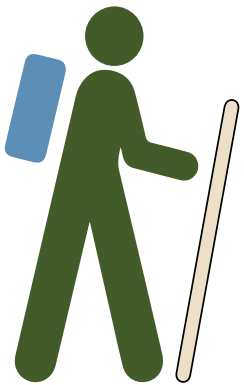
BAGGAGE



Please remember that **ALL** baggage must be sent to camp before your camper arrives. Baggage should arrive at least three days before the start of your camper's session. If you're coming to Open House on June 17, or are close enough to drive bags to camp on another day, you're welcome to drop them off. Otherwise, please check out the information we sent about R&B Camp Baggage, or make delivery arrangements through USPS, UPS Ground or FedEx Ground.

OPTIONAL OUTDOOR ADVENTURE TRIPS AND HORSEBACK RIDING

Campers looking for a little extra adventure in their summer can sign up (in advance, with parental permission) for one or more optional Outdoor Adventure Trips. Each session, we are offering a bike ride along a scenic rail trail, a canoe trek down the Connecticut River and an overnight camping trip. We're also ecstatic to be working with High Horses Riding Center yet again. Their professional PATH certified therapeutic riding instructors continue to provide a fantastic, fun and safe program to Akeela's hippophiles!

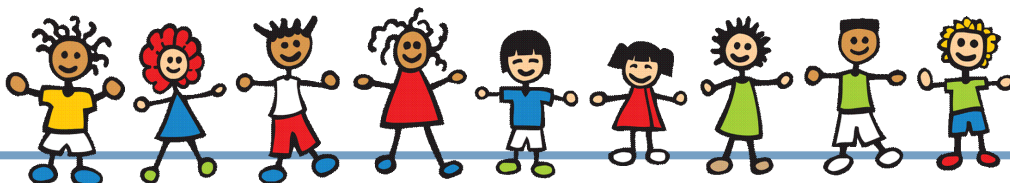


Details, prices and registration instructions for all of these optional programs are included in the online form. Spots are filling up quickly, if you're interested please get us your trip and/or riding registration forms soon!



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 bunks. 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).



CAMP FORMS

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

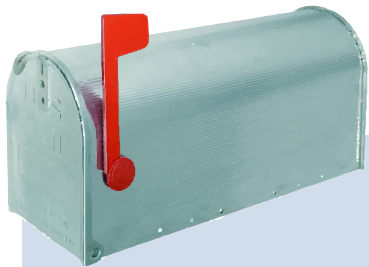
TO ACCESS THEM:

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 (as of June 1, to our Vermont address, please). *Please note that the Physician's Examination Form requires a physician's signature.* 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 information about LabelDaddy, our recommended method for labelling campers' belongings. 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!



PEN PALS

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 one of your bunkmates. (It will get sent to an adult in your house and he/she will share that information with you.) 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.

Open House

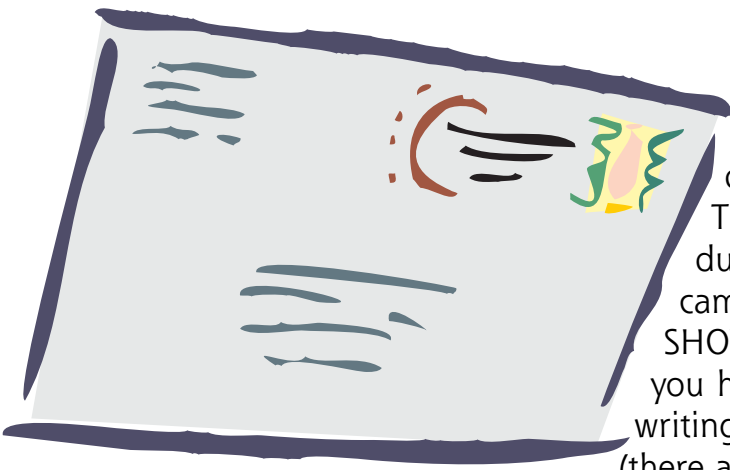
Reminder - Please RSVP



We hope to see many of you at this year's Open House on Sunday, June 17th between 10AM and 2:30PM. Please note that you do not need to arrive exactly at 10AM. In true open house fashion, there will be on-going tours and activities taking place all morning, including an optional Q&A with Debbie and Eric at 11:30. At noon, we'll enjoy a big BBQ lunch together on the main lawn. After lunch, everyone is invited for a few "work projects" to help get camp ready for opening day! This is a great opportunity to meet other camp families, for your campers to see their new bunks, and for new campers to get oriented to the camp setting.

To RSVP for this event, please complete the online form available on the Forms page of the Current Families section of our website.
Thank you!

CAMPER MAIL



As we mentioned in our opening letter, we know how hard it is not to hear directly from your camper. We will do our best to encourage your child to write letters home. This is often not an easy task as there are a lot of distractions during the day. You can make this process easier for your camper by pre-addressing and stamping a few letters and **SHOWING** your camper the stationary you have packed. If you have a child who struggles with writing, please consider writing a "fill-in-the-blank" letter or buying one pre-made (there are some on Amazon if you search for "camp stationary").

GEOGRAPHY UPDATE

For the past 10 years, we've published articles listing all of our campers' home states. Each summer, we found that our campers represented more than 20 US states and several other countries as well. We're proud of Akeela's diversity so we counted again this year ... this time including our Vermont and Wisconsin campers. We got an incredible result: 32 states and 5 other countries!

Here's the entire list, as of the end of April: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Washington D.C., Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin. We also have campers coming from the UK, Ireland, Japan, Norway and Guatemala.



POISE-A-THON

We are delighted to announce the eighth annual 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 their method of participation, all of which will help raise money in support of a great cause.

Pledge forms can 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.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AT AKEELA

Once again this summer, we are delighted to have Rob Glyn-Jones working with us as our **communications director**. Rob, who travels to us from the north of the UK, has worked at Akeela for nine summers now - although 2018 will mark his 23rd summer of traveling to the US to work at camps. Having been a head counselor and program director, last summer saw Rob take on a new role as communications director - a position entirely new to Akeela. Working extremely closely with Debbie, Eric and the head counselling team, Rob's role is to continually better how we communicate all of the successes happening at camp with the outside world!

One of the most crucial parts of our program at Akeela is how we partner with parents, to ensure that every camper gets the most out of their stay with us. Keeping these lines of communication open is vital to this process, and we are aware that there is no "one size fits all" solution - every parent will need something different from us - it's our job to make sure that as many of these needs as possible are met!

With the efforts of head counselors, the office team, our camp photographer, the health center, and our cabin counselors, here are some of the communications you can expect from Akeela during your camper's summer!

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.

CALLS FROM YOUR CAMPER'S HEAD COUNSELOR

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 post as many photos as we can each day and do our best to capture 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 or makes a trip to the doctor, you will be notified by our nursing staff.

EMAIL REMINDERS FROM CAMP

Please check your email regularly throughout the camp session, as we frequently send reminders from camp!

MAIL FROM CAMPERS

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 reach you.

CAMPER CALLS

Parents may elect to schedule one phone call with their child during the camp session. 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 your child's head counselor -- or Debbie, Eric or Rob -- if you have any concerns. While we are frequently out in camp during the day, we always check our messages and return calls as quickly as possible.

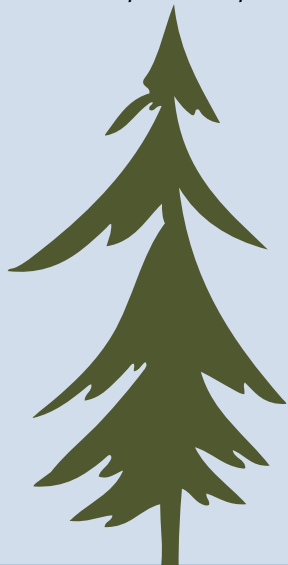
WELCOME NEW CAMPERS!

One of our favorite parts of camp is having so many campers return summer after summer. We love what that tells us about how they feel about each other, our staff and the Akeela community. At the same time, nothing excites us more than being able to share the Akeela experience with first-time campers. Soon, there will be no distinction between "old-timers" and "first-timers", as we all become one community. In the meantime, we wanted to welcome the following campers to the Akeela family:

FIRST SESSION

Ryan A, Dresher, PA
 Lincoln B, Malden, MA
 Mateo B, Chicago, IL
 Sami B, New York, NY
 Lachlan C, Carlisle, PA
 Ricky C, Weston, MA
 Declan C, East Greenwich, RI
 Kaitlin C, New York, NY
 Samantha D, North Reading, MA
 John D, Chevy Chase, MD
 Jake F, New York, NY
 Andrew G, Ridgewood, NJ
 Benjamin G, Vernon Hills, IL
 Faith G, Delray Beach, FL
 Hayden K, Fairfield, CT
 Julia L, Wellesley, MA
 Sam L, Bath, ME
 Dev M, Westport, CT
 Jack M, Plymouth, MN
 Lucinda M, Broomall, PA
 Jacob M, Wellington, FL
 Asher M, Yardley, PA
 Jeffrey M, Bronxville, NY
 Bennet P, Hanover, NH
 Ethan R, Hopkinton, NH
 Margaret R, Cooperstown, NY
 Levi R, Delray Beach, FL

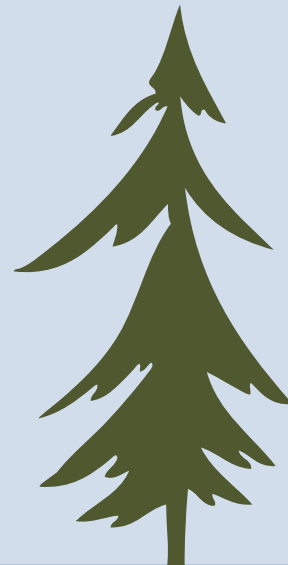
Jack R, Needham, MA
 Benjamin S, Piedmont, CA
 Ethan S, Austin, TX
 Athena S, Hamilton, MA
 Braden S, Bellaire, TX
 Jaden S, New York, NY
 Aidan T, Gypsum, CO
 Wilem T, Lexington, MA
 Martha V, Bloomfield Hills, MI
 Nathaniel W, Andover, MA



• SECOND SESSION

• Jacqueline B, Wynnewood, PA
 • Mary B, Wynnewood, PA
 • Alec B, Martinsville, NJ
 • Andrew B, Sherborn, MA
 • Aidan C, Darnestown, MD
 • John C, Walpole, MA
 • Samuel C, Lexington, MA
 • Matthew D, Winchester, MA
 • Elizabeth F, New York, NY
 • Seamus G, Weymouth, MA
 • Christian H, Little Rock, AR
 • Tyler H, Palo Alto, CA
 • Nora H, Dracut, MA
 • Teddy H, New York, NY
 • Alexa K, New York, NY
 • Andreas K, Bethesda, MD
 • Julian K, Pelham, NY
 • Samuel K, Bethesda, MD
 • Helena L, Hillsdale, NY
 • Devin L, Livingston, NJ
 • Elyse M, Lincolnshire, IL
 • Lauren M, Pleasantville, NY
 • Chloe M, Salt Lake City, UT
 • Jonathan M, Dallas, TX
 • Lila O, Easton, CT
 • Max P, Ann Arbor, MI
 • Lorilye Q, Bedford, MA

Jaden S, New York, NY
 Ava T, Derry, NH
 Fiona T, Manchester, NH
 Jared T, Alameda, CA
 Sara T, Lexington, MA
 Martha V, Bloomfield Hills, MI
 John W, Denver, CO
 Nicholas Z, North Wales, PA



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS...

CAMPER BIRTHDAYS

Spencer W, May 4
 Yoni B, May 6
 Tyler R, May 7
 Kyle S, May 7
 Jacqueline B, May 10
 Christian H, May 10
 Mariah C, May 12
 Declan T, May 12
 Jacob M, May 13
 Martha V, May 14
 Amelia W, May 15
 Andrew W, May 15
 Bennet P, May 17
 Isabelle L, May 18
 Luke B, May 19
 Declan C, May 22
 Nicholas Z, May 23
 Jack M, May 24

Lachlan C, May 25
 Thomas H, May 28
 Alexander M, May 29
 Emma P, May 29
 Samuel C, May 30
 Ben R, June 1
 Joseph H, June 2
 Dev M, June 2
 Jonathan M, June 2
 Dolan M, June 5
 Ethan S, June 5
 Joseph T, June 6
 Mateus A, June 9
 Joe S, June 11
 Kali T, June 11
 Jonah L, June 13
 Lila O, June 16
 Marshall G, June 20
 Isabelle S, June 28



STAFF BIRTHDAYS

Sophie G, May 2
 Treelyn K, May 9
 Uttunga G, May 9
 Rayce T, May 10
 Tasha T, May 14
 Angie C, May 26
 Ellie T, May 27
 Billy N, May 28
 Caitlin H, May 29
 Grant U, May 30
 Desailly O, May 31
 Anna F, June 2
 Johann P, June 5
 Debbie S, June 7
 Jake F, June 9
 Greg W, June 11
 Nicole F, June 11
 Adiya V, June 11

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM HEADS

In an earlier newsletter (February 2018), we introduced you to this summer's amazing Head Counselor team.

Now we're featuring the wonderful group of people who head up our various activity areas at camp. These professionals design and implement programs that combine high quality instruction with an intentional focus on friendship-building and life skills such as communication, collaboration, resilience, creative problem-solving and so much more! Working with our program director, Greg Walker, they provide supervision and support to our program specialists and also work directly with campers on a daily basis.



Keith Hayes

Assistant Program Director

Keith Hayes is from Dublin, Ireland but is currently living in Ottawa, Canada. Keith studied health and fitness where he learned to organize group activities in settings such as surfing camps, running clubs, multi-sport programs and even equestrian groups - though he's terrified of horses! He has a passion for sports, such as archery and football (which you call "soc-cer" over here). His approach is very inclusive and promotes self-esteem, participation, team building and, most of all, FUN!

This is Keith's 4th summer at Camp Akeela, having spent the summers of 2013 - 2015 as a counselor and archery specialist. He's looking forward to returning to Akeela, reconnecting with old colleagues and campers and meeting new people. He's particularly looking forward to implementing new camp activities and getting to see everyone enjoy themselves in the great outdoors!

Favorite Book: Child 44 by Tom Rob Smith

Place I'd like to Visit: Vietnam

Favorite Camp Food: Pizza



Julia Schettler

Art Director

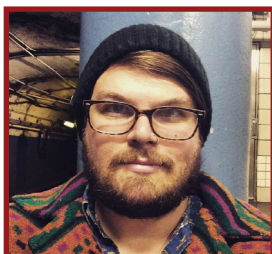
Julia Schettler is from Iowa and currently lives in Philadelphia with her husband (and Akeela's year-round staffing director and program director) Greg Walker. She is a graduate student in Drexel University's Master of Science program in Interior Architecture & Design. Before arriving in Philly, she worked at New Hope Village, serving a diverse population of adults with intellectual and physical disabilities. Prior to that, she was a residential instructor at the Middlebridge School in Rhode Island. She's also a certified yoga instructor!

She first came to Camp Akeela in 2013 after graduating from Iowa State University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Painting. Working as an arts specialist, she came to love the integration of her creative background with her drive to empower special populations. She is thrilled to help children embrace their creative expression in all forms and media

Favorite Book: It by Stephen King

Place I'd like to Visit: Costa Rica

Favorite Camp Food: Vegan Cookies



Kyle Bennett

Aquatics Director

Kyle Bennett is happy to be returning to Akeela for his sixth summer. He grew up in Iowa where he worked at New Hope Village, a living facility for adults with intellectual and physical disabilities. Kyle attended Millikin University in Illinois and earned his degree in theatre, after which he started spending his summers working at Akeela!

Once he discovered Akeela, Kyle moved to Vermont and spent a year working as a behavior interventionist and helping troubled children in the classroom. Kyle now lives in New York City and is pursuing a career on the stage. In his free time he enjoys reading, taking his dogs to the park, and trying new restaurants in the city. At Akeela, Kyle has always worked in aquatics but enjoys dabbling in other aspects of camp and using creativity to have as much fun as possible.

Favorite Book: His Dark Materials Trilogy by Philip Pullman

Place I'd like to Visit: Mykonos, Greece

Favorite Camp Food: Eggs McKeela

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAM HEADS

continued from previous page



Ben Jerez

Outdoor Adventure Director

Ben Jerez is from a town called Bunbury in Western Australia, and moved to Perth, the state capital, to pursue a career in Education at Curtin University. He is so glad to be returning to Akeela for his third summer. Ben spends his time tutoring and mentoring young people in his community while also enjoying football, hiking and the occasional surf. Ben has a passion for travelling and looks forward to bringing his experience in places like Papua New Guinea, Iceland and Hawaii to his role as the outdoor adventure director.

Favorite Book: Wonder by R. J. Palacio

Place I'd like to Visit: Chile

Favorite Camp Food: Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwiches



Uttunga Gaikwad

Ropes Director

Uttunga - or Tony as he likes to be called - is joining us as our ropes director in his first summer at Akeela. He has been working as an outdoor educator in India for the past 8 years now, and is in his third year of a Bachelor's degree at the Mumbai University. He has been working with children, as well as in corporate set-ups, running programs based on experiential education. In his free time, he likes to explore new places and travel. Rock climbing really excites him. He is really looking forward to working with the wonderful staff and meeting all of our campers!

Favorite Book: Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer

Place I'd like to Visit: Yosemite Valley

Favorite Camp Food: Pizza

CAMPER & ALUMNI NEWS

Two of our recent alumni, Kate G (Akeela 2012-2016) and Drew B (Akeela 2010-2014), attend Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Wheaton recently hosted an innovation competition in which students answered the question: "What would you do to improve the world, if you had \$1 million?" Competitors presented a 3-minute pitch to a panel of social entrepreneurs who asked questions and then judged each idea.

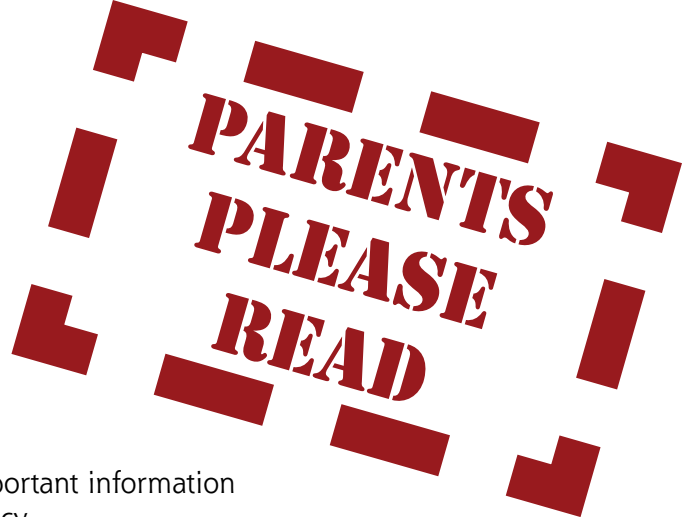
We're proud to say that Drew not only entered the competition, but he won the first-place prize! He presented a plan to develop an organization that will assist teachers in successfully serving students with special needs. Way to go, Drew!



Ryan O recently appeared in his school musical, The Wiz. He invited some Akeela friends to the show and is pictured here with Jack C, Caleb R and Adam F. Camp friends are the best!



IMPORTANT REMINDERS



PARENT HANDBOOK

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

SPENDING MONEY

Parents of campers completing grades 7 - 10 are asked to provide spending money for their camper's one-day trip out of camp. We recommend \$20 - \$30 for 7th and 8th graders and \$40 - \$50 for 9th and 10th graders. That can be mailed as a check to Camp Akeela, marked "spending money", given to a bus counselor on Opening Day, or dropped off at the camp office upon arrival.

CAMPER PHONE CALLS

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 camp 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 and 3rd 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.