



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

## A Letter from Debbie & Eric

It's hard to believe that March is already here! This winter has flown by and even though there's been some snow here on the East Coast, there are some hints of spring peeking through as well! It's about this time every year that we get even more excited about being back at camp. We are so looking forward to getting another wonderful summer underway – to reconnect with old friends and to introduce our new friends to the magic of Akeela.



Speaking of old friends – we had another amazing time in the Berkshires during our Winter Weekend Reunion. The sub-zero temperatures didn't keep anyone away! Kevin, our staff and our campers had an amazing time at the Winadu Lodge and even braved the cold for some outdoor play in the snow! We loved catching up with everyone at the bowling alley and were struck by how happy everyone was. It's always so special to see our campers so quickly re-connected to one another; it's a true testament to the strength of their summer bonds. We also enjoyed having some time with the Akeela parents who stayed in Pittsfield for the Family Stay & Play Weekend. As always, the group was fun and thoughtful and we learned a lot from them! (We know they had fun getting snowed in together, as well!)

As those of you who will be returning to Akeela think about camp, we know that you'll be excited to meet some new friends this summer. We have met and enrolled a lot of first-time Akeela campers this year and we can't wait for you to meet them! We have campers joining us from some amazing places and each camper will bring with them to Akeela an amazing new energy! We know you'll help us welcome them to our community.

Later this month, we -- along with Kevin, Kristin & Mike -- will be heading to the largest gathering of camp professionals in the world. "Tri-State" is a 3-day conference where we'll learn from some of the leaders in the world of education and child development, share best practices with other camp professionals, and visit with old friends. It's one of the highlights of our year. We'll be sure to post some pictures on Facebook – stay tuned!

As always, don't hesitate to call or email us if you have any questions or just want to chat about camp. We can't wait to see you up at camp – summer will be here before you know it!

Love,

*Debbie Eric*

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## IMPORTANT 2018 DATES

OPEN HOUSE IN VT:  
June 15

VT FIRST SESSION:  
June 26 - July 19

VT SECOND SESSION:  
July 22 - August 14

FAMILY CAMP:  
August 16 - August 21

# It's not too soon to start planning for camp!

We know it's still winter; for those on the East Coast, it's cold and snowy and summer seems very far away. But the next few months will pass quickly and before we know it, we'll be together at camp! As we gear up for the summer here in the office, we thought that it might be helpful for you to start preparing at home, too. Here are some suggestions of things you might do between now and summer to get ready for an amazing experience at Akeela:



**MONTHS  
BEFORE CAMP**

- If you are a returning camper, email or call an Akeela friend. Get in touch and see how he/she's doing. Talk about what you're looking forward to at camp. Maybe set up a time to get together, in person, or online.
- If you are a new camper, explore the Akeela website to see a daily schedule, photos of camp and more details about the community that you'll be joining. Make a list of any questions you'd like to ask us or your pen-pal (whose contact information you'll get in the late spring).
- Talk to other people you know who have been to camp and find out what they loved about their experience.

- Make a list of all of the things you're excited to try at Akeela this summer.
- Review the camp videos so you can really try to picture what camp might be like.
- Plan a sleepover outside of your home to get used to sleeping in a different bed.
- Order any Camp Akeela "gear" you want for camp.



**MONTHS  
BEFORE CAMP**



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BEFORE CAMP**

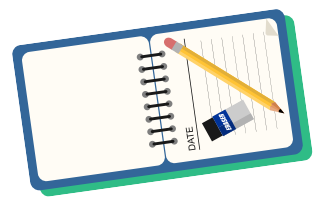
- Start gathering a list of family and friends you might want to write to while you're at camp.
- Address envelopes to those people with your parents and put stamps on now ... It's one less thing to do when you're busy at camp!
- Practice doing more things on your own like making your bed, picking out your clothes, etc.
- Make sure your parents sent all of your camp forms in!

- Get in touch with your pen-pal. Ask him/her questions about him/herself. Talk about the things you're excited about trying at camp!
- Make sure you and your parents have everything you'll need to pack – look at the list and check things off.
- Practice the camp daily schedule (wake-up, meal times, showering every day, bedtime routines).
- Start limiting your "screen time" (TV, video games, etc.) so that you're feeling ready to jump right into your fun- filled, electronics-free camp life!



**MONTH  
BEFORE CAMP!**

## WE'LL SEE YOU SOON!



# PARENT PLANNER

## A FEW REMINDERS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR BEFORE CAMP!

### MEDICATION

We will be working with CampMeds again this year and require full participation from Akeela families to help make medication administration run smoothly. More information about CampMeds will come in the early spring, and please put this toward the top of the to-do list to ensure timely delivery of your child's medication.



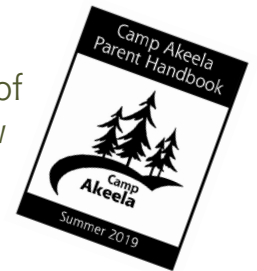
### PHYSICAL EXAMS



Every camper is required to have a physical within 12 months of their arrival at camp. Going to the doctor soon? You can access the Physician's Exam and Immunization Forms through the CampMinder portal (Parent Log In link at [campaakeela.com](http://campaakeela.com)) in the "Forms & Documents" section. Please remember that a doctor's signature is required on the Physician's Exam form.

### FORMS, GLORIOUS FORMS!

The Parent Handbook will be coming to you in early spring, along with a list of required forms for your camper's participation in camp. More information on how to access and complete the forms will come with the Handbook.



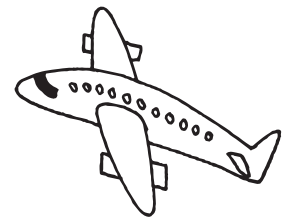
### AKEELA GEAR



Instructions for how to purchase Akeela gear will be sent with the Parent Handbook. We are using Lands' End again this year, and you're welcome to get started on making any purchases through them today! Here is the link to purchase Akeela gear: <http://business.landsend.com/store/campaakeela/>. As a reminder, the only required item is one white or grey Akeela T-Shirt, which must be purchased through Lands' End.

### TRAVEL PLANS

Will your camper be flying into Boston Logan Airport on opening day? Camp families are starting make their travel plans, so please give us a call when you are ready to start booking your camper's trip to New England! For families in the Northeast, we offer round trip transportation from Tarrytown, NY and from Lexington, MA.



### BAGGAGE SHIPPING

Unpacking and setting up our cabins before campers' arrival is a vital part of how we welcome them to Akeela. Regardless of how your camper is getting to camp, all trunks/duffels must arrive at least 3 days prior to the start of your child's session (i.e. June 23 or July 19). You can use any shipping service (e.g. UPS, FedEx or USPS), or sign up for R&B Camp Baggage's door-to-door service. More information about R&B will be distributed with the Parent Handbooks.

### TUITION

Invoices will be coming via mail and email before each planned payment date. The first half installment was due on January 31, and the second half is due on April 30. Please let us know if you have any questions at all about payment or would like to speak with us about setting up a payment plan.



# Ben's Banter



G'day! With the countdown on until camp begins, I am getting all the more excited for my new role as Program Director for the 2019 summer. I can't wait to play a role in creating new special event days and exciting evening activities, along with offering all of your favorite bunk activities and specialty periods.

For those of you I haven't yet met, my name is Ben Jerez and I first started work at Akeela in the summer of 2015 as a hiking specialist. In 2017 and 2018, I returned as the Outdoor Adventure Director. I loved having the opportunity to contribute more to Akeela's fantastic program. While I am away from camp I reside in Perth, Australia! I spend a lot of my free time surfing, hiking and camping. I guess one perk of living in the southern hemisphere is that I get two summers every year!

I look forward to seeing everybody together at Akeela. You'll be able to find me out and about, mingling with campers, playing a sport or setting up for the next activity. Throw me a shaka, or as those in the USA call it, a 'hang ten' and say g'day! Until then, start thinking about some of the new things you may want to try this summer, whether that be signing up for the canoe trip, conquering the zip line, or even participating in the talent show! I am so excited and I hope you are too!

## *Another Akeela Wedding...*

Mike Miller (Boating) and Ale Garcia Velazquez (Kitchen) met at camp in 2017 and this winter, we are delighted to announce that they were married! This was Akeela's 9th staff wedding!





# WINTER WEEKEND 2019

Our fifth annual Winter Weekend was a huge success! Campers and staff members gathered together for a fun filled weekend at Camp Winadu in Pittsfield, MA. We're so proud of how our campers represented Akeela throughout the weekend by reconnecting with each other and welcoming new faces to the community.





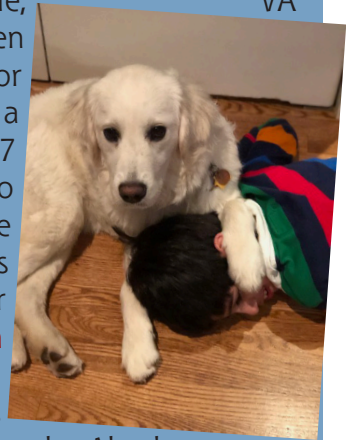
# Camper News



**Jonathan M** is having a great year in 7th grade. His big news is representing his school Oak Hill Academy in the Dallas Texas JIAA all area golf tournament on March 25th! He can't wait for another summer at Akeela... **Braden S** has continued his horseback riding lessons from camp and has learned to canter!... **Ethan S-S** has taken up the violin and is enjoying it a lot. He also went to Hawaii in December with his family and will be going on a STEM trip to San Francisco in April with his 6th grade class. He looks forward to returning to Camp Akeela this summer... **Rider D** captured 2nd place in his Middle School Geobee! [see picture]... **Noah D** had his 16th birthday party on Super Bowl Sunday. He got a lot of new Pokemon cards!...

**Ava T** won the National Geographic GeoBee at her school, St Thomas Aquinas in Derry. She will be going on to represent her school in the state competition. She also loved seeing all of her camp friends at the Akeela Winter Weekend!... **Ben G's** undefeated JV basketball team has qualified for the Illinois Special Olympics tournament in which they will play for the state championship. Ben performed a keyboard rock medley in his school's annual talent show. He also traveled to Charlottesville, VA

this fall and will road trip to Myrtle Beach, SC in the spring... Since camp, **Max S** has been playing a lot of Minecraft and also his drum kit. He has been to upstate New York for hiking and to see his grandparents in North Carolina. And biggest news of all, Max has a new puppy, Apollo, who is an English Golden Retriever [see picture]. She is now almost 7 months old and can sit and fetch and eat anything left out around the house. She loves to chase Max around the house and sleep next to him whenever she can... **Sarah B** became a Bat Mitzvah in January! She loves telling family and friends about her great experiences at Akeela... **Benji G** recently got a dog. He is a rescue named Rudy and he is a 1-1/2 year old Pomeranian Husky mix. Benji had a lot of fun at the Akeela Winter Weekend!... **Ryan O** will be performing in his school's spring musical, The Addams Family. He has spent time with **Ian M**, **Hayden K**, **Adam F**, **Jeffrey M**, and **Jack C** over the past few months. He's also been skiing at Belleayre Mountain in the Catskill Mountains and had a great time at the Akeela Winter Weekend!...



... **Jason N** joined the Civil Air Patrol this fall and his passion for aviation has enabled him to achieve the rank of Sr. Airman. He also got a new dog (Brie) this past January and has enjoyed having him by his side on a daily basis... **Spencer K** has been enjoying high school. He is a contributor to the Schreiber Times and had an article published! He also joined the coding club and has gotten involved in robotics. He continues to ski all winter with his seasonal group at Stratton and looks forward to spring when he rows for Port Rowing Crew. He can't wait for camp!... **Lorilye Q** started a new school in the fall and loves it. She has made a bunch of new friends. She went



to **Sarah B's** Bat Mitzvah in January and it was amazing!... **Lily W** had her Bat Mitzvah in November and 9 friends from Akeela attended to celebrate with her! [see picture]. Lily also attended the Bat Mitzvah of **Sarah B**, and had get-togethers with **Reese K**, **Amelia W**, and **Otelia S**. Despite the winter weather delays, Lily was overjoyed to see so many camp friends and counselors at the reunion in January! She was honored to be cast as the lead female (Wendy) in her school drama production of *Neverland* in February... **Christian H** is continuing with drum lessons so that someday he can play in his high school jazz band and is attending ballet/tap/jazz lessons in preparation for his May recital... **Mateo B** has been learning to play the recorder this year, and can do great renditions

of "When the Saints Go Marching In," "Old MacDonald" and "Ode to Joy." He's so looking forward to camp this summer!... **Luke D** stays in touch with **Ryan O** via text, which he really enjoys. Luke was recently a guest reader in his former kindergarten class. The 5 year old students were able to interview him with all kinds of questions (favorite food, color, what it's like to be in high school, etc.). Also, Luke has recently been doing a lot of cooking and baking -- hopefully he'll bring some of his favorite recipes for Akeela's cooking program!...

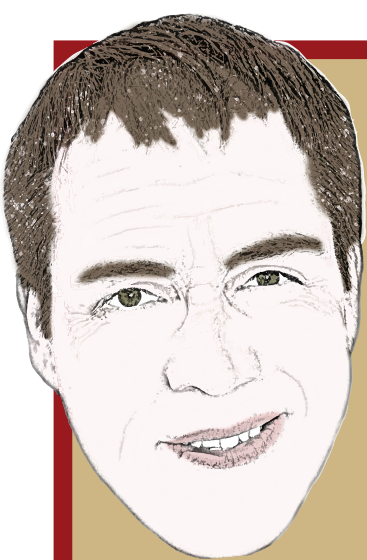
**Jackson B** is excited to go to both sessions at Akeela this summer. After that, he's going to London and Paris!... **Jack M** is enjoying his first year in high school. He has joined the Super Mileage team at school where they

build gasoline and solar powered cars and race them. The biggest race is coming up in May... **Jacqueline B's** family started making an apartment over their garage for people whose family is in a hospital near them... **Cate B** says, "I started 7th grade and am making more friends than ever! Though 7th grade is tough, I am steadily getting through it, one step at a time. I am so excited for this summer when I see my camp friends. Our two dogs (Chloe and Ace) are doing well, and being trained constantly. I hope everyone else at Camp Akeela is having an AMAZING time, and ready for the summer (when it comes)!"... **Dermot M** would like to share that he is participating in the school spring musical, *Bright Star*. He was also in the fall Drama, *Clue*. He is keeping in touch with many camp friends, including **Ryan D**, **Andrew G** and **Ryan O**... **Jared T** loved *A Series of Unfortunate Events* on Netflix and threw a viewing party for the last episode of the last season. He created an invitation written in the style of Lemony Snicket and invited some close friends who came in various costumes from the characters in the series. The food was thematic to the series and included chilled cucumber soup, pasta puttanesca and lemon bars. The finale, at the party, was the opening of "the lost sugar bowl" and then Jared gave homemade gifts of periscopes with rolled up thank you notes to his guests.

## Staff News

**JoJo Palo** had the most wonderful and heartfelt opportunity to perform a concert in December for the inmates at the California Institute for Women in Chino, CA! He is also in the progress of presenting a Junior Recital in partial fulfillment for his Bachelor's degree in music performance. He recently hung out at Dockweiler State Beach with Gabe Martinez, who was visiting California... **Nicole Frederick** is spending 9 months in Australia, getting to know the lingo, enjoying FREE parking at beaches, and starting a music therapy program at an inner city remedial school!... **Mark Gross** transferred to a new school (Middlebury College), which he is greatly enjoying so far!... **Danielle Logan** is currently working on her 14-week internship at a nursing home and will be graduating in May! She's also taken up snowboarding and is really enjoying being able to play in all the snow that they've been getting in Maine!... **Anna Formica** visited with **Alison** and **Rob** in Galway, Ireland in December. She is currently completing her clinical practicum at Mount Washington Pediatric Hospital in Baltimore, and will graduate in May as Anna Formica, M.S., CF-SLP. As much as she loves the hospital setting, she is definitely looking forward to spending the summer hiking and enjoying the outdoors with the Akeela community!... **Gabe Martinez** just graduated Western Washington University with a degree in English. He is applying for a teaching program in the fall with the Los Angeles school district. Between now and camp, Gabe will be living on the road on an extended road trip!... **Allison Playdon** is currently studying abroad in London, with an internship at an inpatient hospital for mental health treatment. She reports that it's been a wonderful experience!... After camp, **Barb Wolfson** spent a week with her family in Jackson, Wyoming. While hiking in Grand Teton National Park and visiting Yellowstone, they saw many bears, buffalo, moose & elk. In January, Barb and her husband, Jim, spent 2 weeks on the island of St. John. It was great to see how the island has recovered from Hurricane Irma. As always, Barb has been reading a lot, cooking, and spending time with family & friends. She is excited to be back for her 3rd summer at Akeela!... Since leaving camp, **Chef Trina** has gained an amazing roommate: **Angie Casiano**! They are moving into a new apartment in a few weeks. Trina is loving her job as the chef and food service director for a fraternity in Florida. Her dog, Bender, is also doing well!... **Angie Casiano** moved to Gainesville, Florida after camp last fall. She's a cook at a sorority there, working towards her goal of running her own kitchen one day. She'll be visiting Puerto Rico later this month and is super excited for her sixth summer at Akeela!... **Alex Welych-Miller** wrote from London, where she got together with **Rob Brennan** and **Elliot Long**. Next on her agenda was to visit with **Amanda Leach** (nee Perry) and **David Leach** in Exeter! [see picture]... **Bri Lemire** will be currently in Uganda for 6 weeks, doing occupational therapy fieldwork at a children's clinic in a refugee site. In addition to being a fantastic life experience, this fieldwork is also helping Bri progress towards her masters degree in OT.





# ROB'S RAMBLINGS

I love camp. It's one of my great regrets in life that coming from the UK (where summer camp isn't a thing) I never got the chance to be a camper. But then, I have the best job in the world, so who's complaining?! I am incredibly lucky that this summer will be my tenth summer working at Camp Akeela (and my twenty-fourth in camping!).

This year has been particularly special for me, as at the end of last summer, Debbie and Eric asked me if I would like to help with the staffing process for summer 2019. Being able to "meet" and talk with all of the fabulous young men and women who apply to work with us has been a great experience. Finding out about their backgrounds and enthusiasm for our campers has been very rewarding. We have some *amazing* staff members joining us this year, and I have no doubt our campers are going to love meeting and getting to know them!

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS...

### CAMPER BIRTHDAYS

Garrett D.....January 2  
Peter M.....January 3  
Dani S.....January 5  
Thomas C.....January 6  
Jonah V.....January 6  
Spencer K.....January 7  
Lorilye Q.....January 10  
Ricky C.....January 12  
Nathaniel L.....January 13  
Sarah B.....January 17  
Brady W.....January 19  
Jack R.....January 23  
Jared B.....February 2  
Spencer M.....February 2  
Jakob TB.....February 2  
Noah D.....February 3  
Nathaniel W..February 12  
Asher M.....February 13  
Hugo S.....February 15  
Jared T.....February 15  
Ian G.....February 16  
Ava T.....February 16  
Lilah W.....February 17  
Lincoln B.....February 23  
Isabelle M.....February 24



Nina P.....February 24  
Somer A.....February 25  
Zachary L.....February 27  
Duncan VDA.....March 5  
Sam S.....March 7  
Avi S.....March 8  
Christopher F.....March 9  
Alexandria T.....March 12  
Nora H.....March 24  
Wilem T.....March 29  
Isabella R.....March 31  
Noah O.....April 8  
Declan B.....April 9  
Andrew G.....April 9  
Harish A.....April 10  
Owen H.....April 10  
Mateo B.....April 14  
Sophie S.....April 15  
Aerin K.....April 18  
Benjamin R.....April 18  
Aidan J.....April 25  
Madelyn M.....April 27  
Christopher A.....April 29  
William B.....April 30



### STAFF BIRTHDAYS

Alex WM.....January 8  
Allison P.....January 12  
Rob GJ.....January 12  
Alex M.....January 13  
Valerie U.....January 27  
Courtney S.....January 28  
Nacho D.....March 2  
Chef Trina.....March 4  
Gio GF.....March 8  
William K.....March 16  
Ali H.....March 18  
Rob B.....March 19  
Callum G.....March 22  
Mark G.....March 24  
Alice M.....March 30  
Erick G.....April 5  
Rhys O.....April 8  
Cambell M.....April 10  
Mike D.....April 22  
John T.....April 29





# RETURNING CAMPERS

*We love having a great mix of returning and new campers at Akeela. First-time campers bring so much to our community: new friendships, fresh ideas, and a contagious enthusiasm for all things Akeela. They also benefit from the guidance and wisdom of Akeela "veterans". These returning campers are the keepers of camp traditions and understand in their souls how magical Akeela is. Here is a list of campers already re-enrolled for next summer...*

## IN FIRST SESSION

Adam L • Aerin K • Aidan T • Alexander K • Alexandria T • Amanda C • Andrew G • Asher M •  
Athena S • Ben G • Braden S • Christopher A • Dermot M • Dolan M • Elliot K • Elliot S •  
Ethan K • Ethan SS • Francisco B • Ian G • India GJ • Isabelle M • Isabelle S • Jack C • Jack M • Jack R •  
Jackson B • Jaden T • Jakob TB • Jamie O • Jared T • Jasper R • Jeffrey M • Jeremy G • Jose BM • Jude H •  
Julia L • Kali T • Lachlan C • Lena R • Lily W • Lincoln B • Lucinda M • Luke D • Mateo B •  
Max S • Nathaniel L • Nathaniel W • Nicholas Z • Nina P • Noah D • Noah JT • Noah O • Owen H •  
Peter G • Peter M • Ricky C • Ryan BA • Ryan O • Spencer K • Spencer M • Thomas C  
• Veronica D • Wilem T • Yoni B

## IN SECOND SESSION

Adam L • Alex K • Alexander M • Andreas K • Ava T • Aviva S • Benjamin G • Benjamin R •  
Benjamin W • Cate B • Chloe M • Christian H • Christopher A • Dani S • Devin L • Ethan K • Evan F •  
Hannah K • Harish A • Ian G • Jackson B • Jacqueline B • Jamie O • Jared B • Jason N • Joe S •  
Jonah V • Jonathan M • Jude H • Kyra A • Lila O • Lilah W • Lily B • Lily W • Lorilye Q •  
Lucas M • Luke B • Maddie M • Martha V • Mateo B • Mateus A • Matthew D • Michael KF •  
Norah H • Owen H • Rider D • Sam S • Samuel K • Sarah B • Somer A • Sophie S • Spencer K •  
William B • Xavier K • Yoni B

# RETURNING STAFF

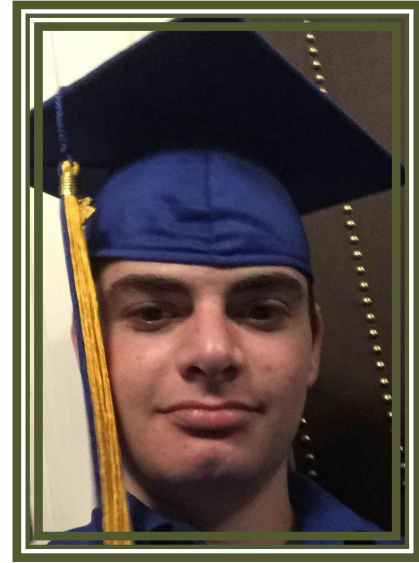
We're excited to have a healthy dose of returning staff members in camp this coming summer! They carry on traditions and bring extraordinary leadership to the community. Here's a list of who is returning this summer:

**Alex Maynard** – Woodshop Specialist  
**Alex Welych-Miller** – Head Counselor  
**Ali Haidaree** – Cabin Counselor  
**Alice May** – Cabin Counselor  
**Alison English** – Cabin Counselor  
**Allison Playdon** – Cabin Counselor  
**Amberlee Culp** – Nanny  
**Angie Casiano** – Sous-Chef  
**Anna Formica** – Trips Director  
**Barb Wolfson** – Head Counselor  
**Ben Jerez** – Program Director  
**Brianna Lemire** – Cabin Counselor  
**Callum Boucher** – Sports Specialist  
**Trina Triacca** – Head Chef  
**Dan Lock** – Golf Specialist  
**Dani Logan** – Aquatics Director  
**Dustin Frye** – Cabin Counselor  
**Ellie Turner** – Campus Coordinator  
**Erick Galindo Guzman** – Dishwasher  
**Gabe Martinez** – Swim Specialist  
**Harry Agombar** – Cabin Counselor

**Darwin Garcia Juarez** – Cook  
**Nacho Domínguez** – Prep Cook  
**Jesus Quirino Alvarez** – Maintenance  
**Johann Palo** – Cabin Counselor  
**Giovanni Gutierrez Flores** – Dishwasher  
**José Oneca Morales** – Baker/Cook  
**Lev Marcus** – Hiking Specialist  
**Angel Serena Gutierrez** – Dishwasher  
**Maremo Mokgabudi** – Swim Specialist  
**Mark Gross** – Cabin Counselor  
**Mike Deutschman** – Head Counselor  
**Myriam Armenta Ramírez** – Dishwasher  
**Nick Burdett** – Swim Specialist  
**Nicole Frederick** – Head Counselor  
**Rachel Gallagher** – Cabin Counselor  
**Rhys Owen** – Lead Swim Specialist  
**Rob Brennan** – Ropes Director  
**Rob Glyn-Jones** – Assistant Director  
**Rodrigo Aramburo Dartiguez** – Dishwasher  
**Sharon Stein** – Head Nurse  
**Zoe Till-Meiding** – Cooking Specialist

# AKEELA ALUMNUS: ZACH DUBIN

My three summers at Camp Akeela and subsequent summer with Beyond Akeela were the most incredible experiences I've ever had, and the friendships I made and kept will last forever. I was also introduced to the game of *Magic: The Gathering* at Camp Akeela, which is a big part of my life now.



After graduating high school in 2016, I accepted a scholarship to attend Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. After a semester of academic and life challenges, I realized that it wasn't the right fit for me, and took the next semester off at home. After weighing my options, I landed in Madison, Wisconsin, at a program called Mansfield Hall. I was reluctant at first, but through my two years here, I've grown academically and socially.

I have attended Madison College for the last two years and this fall, I will be transferring to the University of Wisconsin-Madison where I will be majoring in education. The academic support from Mansfield Hall has been a great resource for my academic success.

My social growth during my time in Madison has been incredible. I've stepped out of my comfort zone and experienced things I would have never thought I would do. I took a road trip to Indianapolis for a *Magic* tournament, attended a rock concert with a new friend, and then went to their wedding later that month. I started volunteering with an organization that feeds the homeless every week in the basement of the capitol building in Madison. I've taken a leadership role in the organization, running the cooking sessions every couple of weeks after running them all summer. I also worked for the local baseball team, the Madison Mallards, as a hospitality server in the private suites. The shifts were long and exhausting, but I gained valuable workplace experience in the service industry. I loved the baseball atmosphere, and will be working there again this upcoming summer. I learned a lot about helping others, and working as a team to provide guests with an amazing experience.

I was introduced to *Magic: The Gathering* by another camper at Akeela, and it has become a major part of my life. There is a great community of *Magic* players in Madison, and I've made some great friends who I see a few times a week to hang out and play games. It's a way for me to relax and put aside the challenges in life I may be facing, while also providing me an outlet for my competitive spirit.

Camp Akeela will always hold a special place in my heart, and the impact my time there has had on my growth is immeasurable. I am no longer the person who seeks to avoid social situations in which I may be uncomfortable, I now welcome that adversity into my life with open arms. I used to view the world with a pessimistic mindset. Today, I look at life as full of wonderful possibilities and opportunities for personal growth. Akeela made that possible for me.

*Zach was a camper at our Vermont campus from 2012-2014, and a Beyond Akeela participant in 2015*