

# Camp Akeela Circular

## Letter from the Directors



Dear Akeela Families,

While we are still in February and the days



While we are still in February and the days remain chilly with winter weather around us, we can feel the excitement of another summer swiftly approaching! A few recent & upcoming events have us particularly excited. Kevin had the chance to spend time with our Vermont campers at a reunion in Massachusetts in late.

January, and was amazed by how the campers recreated camp magic while it was -11 degrees outside! We're looking forward to sharing that same camp energy with you all at the upcoming Wisconsin camper reunion in the Chicago area. Campers are coming from as far as California to join in the fun, and we can't wait to meet so many of you there. While we're in Chicago, we're also excited to be meeting with some new prospective Akeela families during an information session. If you know a family in the area who might be interested please let us know! area who might be interested please let us know!

So how can you keep the camp magic alive at home? Here are some tips to speed past this cold winter and make summer feel right around the corner!

- Get in touch with a camp friend from this summer (or last!). There are so many ways to connect these days, through video calls on FaceTime or Skype, video games, emails, social media, etc. Dig out that old camper directory from your parents email inbox, find a friend you've been missing or wanting to get in touch with, and say hello! For new Akeela campers, we'll be sending out pen pals for you to get in touch with closer to the start of camp!
- Take some time to reflect on your last summer at camp, whether that be at Akeela or another camp. Remember the times you were surrounded by your best camp friends, enjoying campfires, pool parties, and so much more. Sometimes it's helpful to stroll back down memory lane by looking at some photos from camp. You can also take a look at our brand-new camp videos that we finished this fall! We're so happy with how they turned out, and you can see them here: http://campakeela.com/about-camp/videos-from-camp/. If you haven't been to camp before, watching the videos will help you get a better sense of what Akeela will be like for you this summer!
- You can also start to think more about this summer and what goals you have for your time at camp. Your goal could be trying a new activity for specialty, starting or joining a club based on your interests to help you meet a new friend, or anything else that will help you make this summer the best one yet. Everyone at camp has goals (even the staff!), and we find it helps make each summer new and exciting for all of us.
- For our double session campers, think about activities you might want to play a leadership role in during second session! We have been chatting with Lauren (head counselor) and Catricia (program director) about ways to improve camp, and one thing we've discussed is how to help keep 2nd session fresh for our double session friends. Part of the plan is to give youmore leadership in activities you have a particular

We can't wait for summer to arrive and are looking forward to sharing another amazing experience with you all!

Fondly,



### WHAT'S INSIDE

Start Planning for Camp2
Parent Planner3
New Program Leaders4
Mike's Mic4
Camper News5
Returning Campers6
Camp Birthdays6
Upcoming Events6
Alumni Spotlight7

## **IMPORTANT 2019 DATES**

WI FIRST SESSION: June 24 - July 6

WI SECOND SESSION: July 7 - July 19



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

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:



- 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.
- 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.





- 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 shared interests and 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!



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 March, 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 Parent Log In link on our website, 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 March, 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: <a href="http://business.landsend.com/store/campakeela/">http://business.landsend.com/store/campakeela/</a>

#### **TRAVEL PLANS**

Will your camper be flying into O'Hare 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 Chicago! For families in the Chicago area, we offer round trip transportation from Highland Park, IL.



#### **TUITION**

Invoices will be coming via mail and email before each planned payment date. The first half installment is due on March 15, and the second half on May 15. 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.

# Meet your new Program Leaders



### Caroline McFadden

Arts Director

Caroline McFadden is so excited for her 4th Akeela summer! In 2015 and 2016 she was an art specialist in Vermont and then was happy to go home to the Midwest and join Akeela Wisconsin for its first year! She is originally from Evanston, IL and moved to the east coast to attend Vassar College, where she studied art, education, and mathematics. She currently teaches early childhood and art classes at the Children's Museum of Manhattan. She spends her free time making art, reading, and learning how to roller blade! She can't wait to spend another amazing summer making art and memories with the fantastic Akeela campers and staff!

Favorite Book: The Illustrated Man by Ray Bradbury

Place I'd like to Visit: Antarctica

Favorite Camp Food: Grilled cheese and tomato soup



### Taylor Whitchurch

**Pool Director** 

Taylor started out at Akeela in 2015, working by the pool as a swim teacher. He loved it so much that he came back two more times. In between summers at camp, Taylor studied for his bachelor's degree in Medical Sciences at Bangor University, Wales, graduating in 2018. He now lives in Hereford, UK, and works in a residential home for adults with autism spectrum disorder. He also does some voluntary work with children in his local community. Following camp this year Taylor will be pursuing a PGCE in secondary education, specializing in biology and special educational needs and disabilities. In the world of swimming Taylor

has competed at a national level and has been a coach at both his university and home teams. In his free time, Taylor enjoys cooking and reading as many books as he can fit on his bookshelf!

Favorite Book: On the Road by Jack Kerouac Place I'd like to Visit: Copenhagen, Denmark

Favorite Camp Food: Fajitas

# MIKE'S MIC

Hey Campers!

With the holidays behind us and the cold weather in full force, I have been day dreaming more and more about getting to summer and hanging out with all of you. I have even started to re-watch some of my favorite summer camp movies to start thinking about my camp outfits I want to tryout this year, which is an activity I totally recommend trying. I am looking forward to trying new activities and acting goofy at times because that is what camp allows me to do and I hope you feel that way about camp, too. Kevin and I are meeting some really great staff members that will join the Akeela community this summer. We get excited chatting with them about the magic of Akeela and how much fun they will have meeting all of you. I hope everyone is having a nice school year, and on those

chilly days remember that camp is right around the corner!

# Camper News

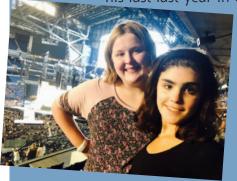
Robert W is conquering algebra this year and is on the school swim team. He has found joy with learning Dungeons & Dragons and Starfighter role playing games. He recently took the 16 personalities test and found out he is an "Architect"... Devin P made the Varsity bowling team at his high school as a freshman and had much success. He and his teammates ended up making it to the state tournament and finishing 12th in the state of Illinois. He has been named the most improved bowler on the team going from an average of 124 to an average of 190. Also, Devin and two

other guys from Camp Akeela have been having regular gatherings. He has been getting together with Alan D and Jacob M... Elena Q got 3 new pets - 2 kittens and a puppy!... 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. 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... Leo H started high school and is having a great year so far. He is still

building amazing Legos! He is going to Mexico over spring break and planning to go to Tulum... Charlie H began middle school this year! He also got a new cat named Mr. Kitty who is his best friend. He loves Fortnite and his PS4. He is excited to come back to camp to do LARPing and archery!... Casper L went to an airsoft tournament in Houston on New Year's Eve, and can't wait to come back for session 2!... Harry M is enjoying

his last last year in elementary school and being tested for selective admission high schools. He's



Ella joined the

very excited about his upcoming three-day class trip to Washington, DC this spring, as well as for major league baseball to restart (so he can put his future sports executive skills to test in another fantasy league)... Lucy M, Rainie P, and Keeghan D gathered in Indianapolis on September 15 for a sleepover and night out at a Taylor Swift concert. The girls had a blast! Keeghan also loved performing in Seussical the Musical last fall... Katina P earned her varsity letter for swim team, she is working on her Girl Scout Gold Award, the project will be about NLD! She is also on her way to once again being a cookie super seller with her goal this year of selling 1,000 boxes of Girl Scout cookies!... Mary B spent a week in Barcelona with the school's art program,

and competed in a Speech and Debate trip in Kiev. She has been completing a personal project involving encouraging use of the school library... Ava C still enjoys creating sprites and animations on her computer. For Christmas this year, Ava uncovered a sound clip of her two sisters recorded 6-8 years ago and animated to their voices. It was an awesome surprise gift which was crafted with much care, attention to detail, and had the added benefit of making her older sisters cringe upon hearing their adolescent voices again. Win/Win... Ella V is doing great and working hard at Denver Academy as she starts to prepare for high school next year.

basketball team, despite never having played the game. She eventually found that she was an excellent defender and earned the moniker "The Beast" for her aggressive

defense. She was cast in an upcoming production of Peter and the Starcatcher as Mrs. Bumbrake, a British nanny who is tasked with keeping her two charges safe as they navigate Neverland. It is a comedic, character role, which allows Ella to show off her British accent. Ella regularly FaceTimes with many of her friends from camp and can't wait for camp this summer!... Rider D captured 2nd place in his Middle School Geobee!



# **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 returning campers already re-enrolled for this summer and which sessions they will be attending...

Ruby B (Session 2) Mary B (Session 1) Jacob B (Session 2) Jared B (Session 1) Ava C (Session 1) Eli C (Session 2) Keeghan D (Sessions 1&2) Will D (Sessions 1&2)

Matteo G (Session 1)

Will D (Sessions 1&2)

Matteo G (Session 1)

Charlie H (Sessions 1&2)

Leo H (Session 1)

William H (Sessions 1&2)

Emil J (Session 1)

Michael K (Sessions 1&2)

Nathan K (Sessions 1&2)

Jordan K (Session 2)

Harrison M (Session 2)

Lucy M (Sessions 1&2)

Jack O (Session 1)

Devin P (Session 1)

Austin P (Sessions 1&2)

Rainie P (Sessions 1&2)

Dominic P (Session 2)

Luke P (Sessions 1&2)

Katina P (Session 2)

Elena Q (Session 2)

Delia R (Session 1)

Ricky R (Session 2)

Ethan S (Session 2)

Aditi S (Session 2)

Gabriel S (Sessions 1&2)

Zachary S (Session 1)

Luc S (Session 1)

Benjamin S (Sessions 1&2)

Robert W (Session 2)

Andrew W (Session 2)

#### CAMPER BIRTHDAYS Jared B.....February 2

Luke P	February 2
Brendan O	February 7
Zachary S	
Jacob M	February 18
Aditi S	February 19
Charlie H	February 21

Devin P.....March 8

Benjamin S......March 18

Eamon K.....March 23

Alan D.....March 27

Arly D.....March 27 John K.....April 10

Will D.....April 10 lan J.....April 16

Casper L.....April 23

Jeremiah W.....April 26

Charlie H......February 21

Elena Q.....February 21 Zachary A.....February 23

Jordan G.....February 24 Jack S.....February 25

Rainie P.....March 11 Alexandria T.....March 12

Gabriel C.....March 20

Justin T.....April 10

Deija R.....April 20

Patrick W.....April 26

# Upcoming Events

• March 3: Camp Akeela Information Session

Mike and Kevin will be sharing the Akeela experience through an information session to prospective families in the area. Know a family in the Chicago area interested in camp? This is a great way for them to get to know what Akeela is all about! 10am - Watt's Center, Glencoe, IL

• March 3: Camper Reunion

Haven't registered yet? It's not too late! RSVP here (http:// campakeela.com/current-families/wi-reunion-rsvp/) if you're able to make it.

12:30pm - Pinstripes Bowl, Northbrook, IL

### • March 10-12: Tri-State Conference

The whole Akeela team will head to the biggest camp conference in the world at the American Camp Association's Tri-State Camp Conference. It is a special few days of sharing and learning, all with a focus on making camp better for everyone. We are proud to be part of group that is committed to excellence in the camp industry!

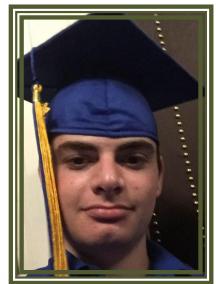
### • May 10-11: IECA Conference

Kevin will be representing Camp Akeela & Beyond Akeela at the Independent Educational Consultants Association conference in Chicago this Spring.

# 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