



Camp AkeelaSM Circular



A Note From The Directors



Dear Akeela Families,

When we all return home at the end of each summer we often get the common question from our non-camp family and friends, "So, how was the summer?" It's a simple and very appropriate question, and yet each year we struggle to find an answer that really encapsulates our summer experiences. Saying, "Great!" just doesn't seem to give justice to our summer experience. Do you feel this way when you return home, too?

So much happens every day at camp. We experience emotional highs during those magical spontaneous moments, and have to acknowledge that spending as much time as we do around others during each day at camp is going to create some moments of disagreement and stress, which is OKAY. Taking time to reflect on those highs and lows both individually and with our peers each day helps make camp such a special place for us all. Sometimes it feels like we've lived a whole separate life for the summer, and trying to explain that to someone who didn't share those experiences with us is a daunting task!

As we look back on this summer, saying "Great!" is a good start to describing to our time at camp, but there is so much more that we can share. There was that time we went on a hike and took a wrong turn, got really muddy, but sang songs and played games along the way to keep everyone in positive spirits. Or that time when a few campers were uncertain about showing off our talents in front of all of camp, but blew all of their friends away with their performance. We remember seeing the joy and pride on camper's faces after that so vividly. We remember the feeling of community when each of you made announcements about your new friends in camp, even if you were unsure about meeting someone new. We remember the feeling of friendship that you shared with us by going out to breakfast with a new friend and their family on pickup day.

We hope that as you think back on your summer at camp, that you can reflect fondly on those special moments, the new friendships you made, and acknowledge the hardships you persevered through. We can't wait to share all of that with you again, and hope that we can all help each other answer the question, "So, how was your summer?" next year.

Fondly,

Kristin
Ken *Mike*

WHAT'S INSIDE

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Mike's Mic..... | 2 |
| New for 2020..... | 2 |
| Kristin's Konundrums..... | 3 |
| POISE-a-thon..... | 4 |
| Upcoming Birthdays..... | 4 |
| Arlo & Simon Trimble.... | 4 |
| Mark Your Calendars..... | 4 |
| Re-enrollment Reminder.. | 5 |
| Summer Highlights..... | 6-7 |
| Beyond Akeela Recap..... | 8 |



2020 DATES

WI FIRST SESSION:
June 29 - July 11

WI SECOND SESSION:
July 12 - July 24

VT FIRST SESSION:
June 27 - July 20

VT SECOND SESSION:
July 23 - August 15

BEYOND AKEELA
FIRST SESSION:
June 29 - July 17

BEYOND AKEELA
SECOND SESSION:
July 20 - August 7



MIKE'S MIC

Hey campers! I hope everyone's school year has started out smoothly. Depending on where you live, the leaves are turning those amazing fall colors and filling your lawns. The change in season makes me think about camp and how much I daydream about the summer during the cold months ahead. This is a great time of year to reach out to any camp friends that you have not had the chance to talk with much since summer ended. It is never too late to hear from someone who misses your time together! A phone call, text, Snapchat, Facebook message, Owl post, or email can be an awesome boost as the school days start to all feel the same.

This summer was my first experience being on the other side of the camp dynamic, when I had to pick out a program for my 6-year-old son. I have heard the expression, "it is different when it is your own kid," many times from other parents and professionals in educational fields. This rang so true for my wife and I as we went through this process together. We were both an anxious mess walking around different day camps and thinking of our son being away from us with strangers. I think I asked the waterfront directors 99 questions each! We finally picked out a summer program and held our breath for the entire first day. When we picked up our son, he was covered from head to toe in dirt and the only thing I could see was his bright white smile. Even as a camp professional I needed to be reminded to trust the process and being a good parent requires a certain level of space. Did I have a different kid by the end of the summer? I don't really know, but I can tell you I had a kid who walked into school and wasn't afraid of his next camp called "first grade."

NEW FOR 2020! 10TH GRADE PROGRAM UPDATES

After our first year of incorporating "Teen Time" into the program for 10th graders at Akeela, we are excited to continue building in opportunities for choice and independence for our oldest campers! Here are some highlights from last year:

- Seven campers walked away from camp with a CPR/AED certification that they can put on their resumes.
- The community leadership groups put together two successful and engaging evening activities, and helped beautify Lawrence University's campus.
- The tech tent crew built a complex robot as a team and created a few different iterations of it!

We will expand the opportunities for 10th graders in camp to explore their independence, leadership, and self-advocacy during their afternoon activity periods...

- Healthy Exercise: Campers will have the option to choose from any type of exercise activity in the Health & Wellness activity (including swim) each afternoon!
- Leadership: Campers will choose between community service projects, creating a camp news team, and spending time supporting younger cabin groups to hone their leadership skills.
- Activity Choice: There will be opportunities to get off campus and explore downtown Appleton, enjoy some of their favorite camp activities, and have meaningful discussions about teen topics like social media and healthy relationships.

We can't wait for our 10th grade campers to experience the next step in their camp careers!

Kristin's Konundrums

Conundrum: (noun)

1. A confusing and difficult problem or question
2. A question asked for amusement

If there is anything I have learned during my time working as a school counselor and as a director for Beyond Akeela, it is that everyday poses new and challenging questions. Take for example, I need to decide what I will eat for lunch. Will I choose the picked over, luke-warm pizza from the school cafeteria or will I have a slice imported from a small family restaurant in Italy? I'm not sure about you, but I would much rather choose the latter; however, I don't believe Yelp, Grubhub, or any other food delivery service, would be willing to trek across the pond to retrieve a slice of margherita 'za for me on my lunch break. So, I begrudgingly choose to pick up the last, sad looking slice of cheese pizza and return to my office.

In this scenario, I was faced with a problem in which I had to make a choice. I weighed my options and thought rationally about what it was that would give me and others around me the best outcome. Sure, I would have loved to taste the fresh basil, sweet ripe tomatoes and milky mozzarella from the streets of Italy (I digress. Can you tell I'm hungry while writing this post?) However, choosing this delicious option would have been financially straining for my family, and I would not have eaten lunch for 10-14 business days, thus becoming "hangry" and not being able to serve my students to the best of my abilities.

Given my scenario is silly and overdrawn at this point, it is not meant to minimize the problems young teens are faced with everyday. Its purpose is to provide a parallel; what seems small to one, may be a major dilemma to another. Allowing time for reflection is important while making difficult decisions. Sometimes it's important to take a step back from the problem at hand and think about how your actions would best serve yourself and others.

At Beyond Akeela, one of our goals as directors and advisors is to prepare our teens to make difficult decisions independently. We often ask, if I weren't here to help you, what might you do? Allowing space to converse about possible solutions to a challenging situation are priceless in our teens' journeys to independent problem solving. It is more likely for our campers to be successful in their post-secondary endeavours when they have confidence in their decision making skills. We have seen that increased confidence in our campers by the end of a session, and we hope they take this often newfound confidence and continue to grow and nurture it throughout the school year.

With that, I will leave you with a question to ponder. Everyday at camp, new questions are posted on white boards to serve as conversation starters and for each of us to find common ground. One of the most controversial of all is by far my favorite. Is a hotdog a sandwich? Email your argument to kristin@campakeela.com to have a chance at being featured in our next newsletter.

Talk to you next time! Maybe I'll eat before writing my next article so I am not always mentioning food and possibly making you hungry in the process. Thanks for reading!



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 \$16,000 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!)



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS...

Holden W, October 1
Rowan G, October 3
Eric D, October 4
Jasaad G, October 8
Harrison M, October 12
Tristyn R, October 20
Gabriel S, October 22
Jacob B, October 25
Matteo G, October 30
Keeghan D, November 4
Leo H, November 5
Caroline M, November 10
Henry G, November 16
Tammy R, November 17



Joey V, November 17
Madelaine S, November 18
Emilie P, November 23
Michael K, November 30
Lauren O, December 5
Finn V, December 5
Megan K, December 6
Elijah C, December 10
Claire L, December 11
Kristin T, December 19
Dominic W, December 25
Helene P, December 27
Abby A, December 29
Eva T, December 29

Arlo & Simon Trimble ... our youngest Akeela campers!

Kristin & Kevin made it safely back to Philadelphia with their new twin boys, Arlo and Simon, on September 25th. Everyone is happy and healthy, and we are so grateful for the love and support you all shared with us. Arlo and Simon can't wait to spend their summer at Akeela and meet so many new friends!



Mark your Calendars!

We'll be in your area for the following events, and would love to see you there.

January 10 - Houston, TX - Gateway Academy Transition Fair. We will be meeting with schools in the area that are specifically designed for students with LD and ASD, and are attending a fair focused on transition options for students of those schools. More information on the event can be found here: <http://thegatewayacademy.org/transition/>

January 25 - St. Louis, MO - Summer Opportunities Fair. Kevin will be meeting with prospective families at John Burroughs School. The fair focuses on summer programs for children and teens in the St. Louis metropolitan area, nationally, and internationally. It's a free event, so come by and say hello! More information on the Summer Opportunities Fair can be found here: <http://www.summeropportunitiesfair.org/>

March 7/8 - Chicagoland - Camper Reunion & Akeela Information Session. Mike and Kevin will be in the area to welcome all campers for an Akeela Wisconsin camper reunion! We are excited to see everyone there and will share more details as they become available. We will be hosting an information session about camp this weekend, too. If you know any families who may be interested in joining the Akeela community, this weekend will be a great time for them to meet us!

April 22-25 - Minneapolis, MN - Autism Society of Minnesota Spring Conference. Mike and Kevin will be representing Akeela and networking with other professionals and prospective families in the area! We will be visiting schools in the area that cater to Akeela campers and hope to have a mini get-together with all Akeela families in the area while we are there. Here is more information on the conference: <https://www.ausm.org/events/ausm-events/state-autism-conference.html>



RE-ENROLLMENT REMINDER (WITH EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT)

Being a returning camper is incredibly special – seeing all your old friends, reliving memories from last summer and creating new ones, and being a leader and role model for new campers. That is what camp is all about! Don't forget to take advantage of our early enrollment discount – sign your camper up by Friday, November 15 at last year's prices! If you have any questions, please contact Kevin ASAP at kevin@campakeela.com or 866-680-4744.

Summer 2019 Highlights

We love scrolling through photos from the summer as we get settled back into our home office away from camp. It brings back so many fond memories from the summer and helps us keep the magic of camp alive during the off-season! It's a great way for you at home to do the same, and we encourage you to look back through the daily photos from last year, too! Here are some of our favorite highlights from the past summer...





**THANK YOU FOR AN
AMAZING SUMMER!**

Beyond Akeela Recap

With the early birth of Simon and Arlo which took Kristin away from camp, this past summer of Beyond Akeela was anything but "normal." Even with this major change early in the summer, we were thrilled with how the Akeela community rallied around the Beyond Akeela team to support the program and keep everything running without a hitch. Campers showed incredible amounts of flexibility and independence, and Akeela staff alumni stepped up to contribute to the community.

Beyond Akeela gives our teens space to take more initiative and control over their summer experience, and we were so proud of how they managed their newfound responsibility and independence, all while having a whole lot of fun! Beyond Akeela teens spend two weeks at Lawrence University building life-long social connections, practicing independent living on a college campus, engaging in meaningful community service, and exploring all Appleton and the surrounding area has to offer. The last week is spent traveling and creating memories through Wisconsin and down to Chicago! Check out some highlight photos here, and feel free to reach out to Kevin (kevin@campakeela.com) if you're curious to learn more about this program!

