



Camp AkeelaSM Circular

A Letter from Debbie & Eric

Greetings from wintery(ish) Philadelphia! Is it possible that it's already February? This is the time of year that we start counting down the days until we'll be back together in Vermont. We have been extremely busy meeting new Akeela families and welcoming them into our camp family. Meeting all of them leaves us feeling so lucky that we are a part of a community that is filled with interesting, funny, smart and kind people.



Speaking of kindness, February is "Kindness Month" and we wanted to talk about all of the ways we see kindness happen at camp every day. We also want to remind you that, even though you're not with us in Thetford, you can continue to carry on the Akeela spirit of kindness at home. Here are some reminders and suggestions:

At camp, you were kind by:

- Pitching in with Dining Hall Duty for the good of the larger community
- Making an announcement at evening meeting about a friend who was helpful or successful
- Cheering on a friend who was climbing the rock wall
- Saying, "Nice job!" to a friend who won a game of GaGa
- Sending a letter home telling your family you're thinking of them

At home, you can demonstrate your kindness by:

- Helping a sibling make his/her bed before school
- Inviting a classmate to join you for lunch
- Asking someone over to your house to hangout
- Calling a friend from camp to say hello
- Going to visit a camp friend

As you'll read in the camper updates, many of you are getting together with your camp friends and that makes us so happy! It takes some work to maintain friendships - especially when you don't go to school together. If you're someone who doesn't like talking on the phone, send an email! Tell your camp friend what you're up to, what you're looking forward to in the coming months and what you can't wait to do when you're back at camp this summer!

We're excited to see you back on the shores of Miller Pond soon - time flies when you're dreaming of camp!

Love,

Debbie *Eric*

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First Session in Vermont is almost FULL - if you haven't enrolled yet, please call the office to see if there's still room for 2020! We don't want anyone to miss out on another amazing summer.

IMPORTANT 2020 DATES

OPEN HOUSE IN VT:
June 7

VT FIRST SESSION:
June 27 - July 20

VT SECOND SESSION:
July 23 - August 15

FAMILY CAMP:
August 18 - August 23

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:



4 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.



3 MONTHS BEFORE CAMP



2 MONTHS 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!



1 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. Please put this toward the top of the to-do list to ensure timely delivery of your child's medication.



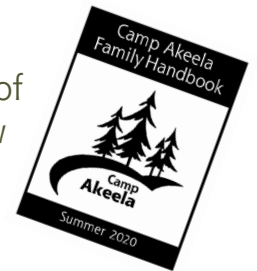
PHYSICAL EXAMS

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 (Family Log In link at campakeela.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 Family 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.



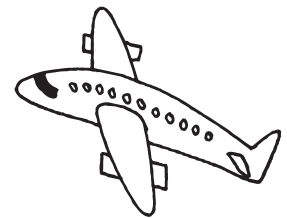
AKEELA GEAR

Instructions for how to purchase Akeela gear will be sent with the Family 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/campakeela/>. 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 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 24 or July 20). 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 Family Handbook.

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

Our Winter Weekend reunion we held last month was an absolute blast! I always love seeing campers reuniting with bunkmates and friends from the previous summer. Despite being a little shorter than past years, the amount of enthusiasm, fun and friendship was the same. One other great thing I love from these reunions is that campers often meet new Akeela campers, perhaps people from a different session. This allows for the chance to make new friends which is always great to see!

Over the weekend campers had the chance to play outside, create awesome winter themed art projects, and battle it out in the sports arena. We also had the opportunity to try new and exciting activities that will be at camp 2020 - so keep an eye out! I wanted to express a huge thank you to the amazing staff who came from far and wide to help out over the weekend. They are the special people who lead activities, help with meals and travel with campers on the bus.

All in all, that was the clear highlight of the winter. Seeing Akeela people always excites me for the upcoming summer and I have now officially started my countdown until we are all back at the shores of Miller Pond! Until then, I will be busy fine tuning our program activities, special event days and speaking to new staff members.

Best,
Ben

WINTER WEEKEND 2020



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CAMP?

We're excited to introduce the Akeela community to our new site manager, Keefe Traendly. After the sudden passing of our longtime site manager, Blayne Hill, this fall, we were lucky enough to be introduced to Keefe by our mutual neighbors (and beloved Akeela friends) John and Terry Halpin. Keefe has jumped right into the job, already showing an incredible amount of passion for Akeela, along with a wide array of talents.



Keefe Traendly

Site Manager

Keefe Traendly was born in nearby Lebanon, NH, and grew up along with his two brothers and two sisters right down the road from Camp Akeela! He graduated from Thetford Academy in 2000 and began working as a carpenter for several years before deciding to move to North Carolina to attend college. After 10 years down South, the opportunity arose to come back home to Vermont to help his ailing father run his contracting business. Since then, Keefe has made carpentry into a career, one that gives him the type of satisfaction most only dream of. In 2013, Keefe married his wife, Yvette, who is a special education teacher at the Newton School in Strafford. His hobbies are hiking, fishing, hunting, and going to see as much live music as possible!

Favorite Book: *Oh, The Places You'll Go* by Dr Seuss

Place I'd like to Visit: Brazil

Favorite Camp Food: S'mores

Keefe has been completing a variety of improvements around camp, including cabin upgrades, program areas, and tree & grounds work. One big project we wanted to share with you is the tennis court. We've expanded and rebuilt the entire playing surface. It will now be more level and have significantly more space between and around the two courts. The fence has also been replaced with a sturdy chain link.



The tennis courts in the early fall



Lots of snow on the new courts, plus Keefe's fantastic dog, Brady.

Camper News

FIRST SESSION

Jackson B (Bunk 4) ran into his bunkmate **Jude H (Bunk 4)** on a flight home from Paris last September! ... **Lincoln B (Bunk 18)** says, "I had a great time at Winter Weekend and I'd like to thank everyone who was there for sharing that experience with me, especially because it was my first time there. I am turning 12 soon and that is really exciting. I can't wait to see you all when we get back together at camp!" ... **Noah D (Bunk 8)** recently turned 17. He was able to hang out with bunkmate **Jeffrey M (Bunk 8)** while Jeffrey's family visited the West Coast over the holidays. The boys went to the zoo, an escape room, went swimming and just had an all-around good time together! ... **Christopher F (Bunk 15)** has been keeping in touch with **Ryan O (Bunk 7)** from NYC since summer the end of camp. They hope to get together at some point - maybe even in Edinburgh! ... **Ben Goldenberg's (Bunk 1)** high school basketball team qualified for the Special Olympics Illinois state championships. He and his mother are going to Ice Castles in Wisconsin, while Ben and his father are planning a spring break road trip to Panama City Beach, Florida ... **Lola G (Bunk 5)** says, "Just before New Year's, I met up with some camp friends: **Rori H (Bunk 5)**, **Abby V (Bunk 5)**, and **Chris A (Bunk 1)**. It was really fun, we hung out all day, and even had a sleepover afterwards! I also got a new pet, a puppy named Daisy. Everyone in my bunk still keeps in touch and we all have plans to come back this year!" ... In September, **Noah J-T (Bunk 4)** and his bunkmate **Spencer H (Bunk 4)** had a sleepover and celebrated both their birthdays at Melting Pot, a Fondue restaurant in Bedford, MA. They had a blast! They keep in touch via text and playing Xbox One online games. Noah regularly plays D&D at Lexington High School and goes to Guard Up in Burlington, MA for weekly LARPing! ... **Liv M (Bunk 16)** says she had a great time at Akeela Winter Weekend and shared, "I am volunteering at the Oak Bluffs Public Library one afternoon a week in the children's section, which I'm very excited about. Also I came up with the idea of a Peer Mentorship Program that is being carried out as my Service Learning Project in my school. It is to help and mentor younger kids by having 8th graders spend time with them and inspire them to carry out their interests. I will be an Art Mentor. Many of my classmates are joining in and becoming mentors too. Hopefully this will help kids who struggle with social anxiety." ... **Nini O (Bunk 2)** writes, "I've been really busy. I'm still drawing and doing my hobbies and Bowling Green is great. I had a piece of art in a traveling art show and I'm making the Gucci gang a graphic novel (after my bunk). I decided to mix it up, but I'm keeping the main character Irish in Kentucky. Last fall I flew to Philly to see **Ryan O (Bunk 7)**, **Luke D (Bunk 8)** and **Rishi A (Bunk 18)**." ... In August, **Ryan O (Bunk 7)** went on a fun family vacation to Italy. He keeps in contact (and hangs out) with former and current camp friends. He had a great time at Akeela Winter Weekend, and is looking forward to Beyond Akeela. He's also going to try out for his school's spring musical, James and Giant Peach! ... **Nina P (Bunk 16)** is loving her new school, Marburn Academy. It is a wonderful place that she describes as "just like Camp Akeela, but it's school!" Nina also had a super fun weekend in Boston with **Bella M (Bunk 2)** and **Amanda C (Bunk 3)**. Nina is also very excited that her sister, Annie, will be an Akeela counselor this summer! ... After camp last summer, **Hugo Salathe (Bunk 17)** spent time at a real horse ranch in Montana for a week with his family.



SECOND SESSION

Paolo C (Bunk 13) had a great sleepover in NYC with **Elias B (Bunk 13)**. He also got a new kitten, named Stella. **Avery C (Bunk 18)** has enjoyed multiple visits to Connecticut to see **L.J. O (Bunk 18)** and recently met up with **Spencer W (Bunk 6)** and his family in New Jersey. That visit included a trip with Spencer's family into NYC to see West Side Story on Broadway. Avery is looking forward to Session 2 this summer and talks about camp and her friends often. ... **Harper F's (Bunk 18)** writing has continued after a year-long hiatus and she is going to adopt a pet snake in February ... Since leaving Akeela last summer, **Josh F (Bunk 17)** has missed Vermont (and talked a



lot about Whippi Dip) so much that his family decided to take a December trip to Mt. Snow. Josh tried skiing for the first time, did very well and is really enjoying being on the slopes. He cannot wait for the school year to end and to reunite with camp friends from last summer! ... **Jack K (Bunk 2)** is enjoying playing hockey for his travel and school teams. Also, he is preparing for a trip to Cojimar, Cuba in March with fellow classmates to participate in "Full Court Peace". There they will be repairing and painting basketball courts and making new friends. ... **Jonathan M (Bunk 2)** had a lot of fun attending the 2020 NHL Winter Classic at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas. The Dallas Stars beat The Nashville Predators. Jonathan is enjoying the 8th grade and is playing on the soccer, basketball and tennis teams. ... **Ava T (Bunk 18)** had a ball at the Akeela Winter Weekend. She has won the National Geographic Bee at school for the second year in a row and will be competing at state level in the spring.

Staff News

Lily Baker: "Moved house!"

Emily Bowen: "Been babysitting, working as a substitute teacher, cooking a lot, playing more piano and ukulele ... AND am on my way to Brazil, where I'll be teaching English to college students until November 2020."

Nicky Burdett: "Training for a half marathon!"

Jake Ferguson: "Finishing my final semester of college."

Gabe Martinez: "I have been teaching English in China for the past six months."

Cambell Maynard: "I will be travelling Europe in April before getting ready for camp."

Maggie Partlow: "Working in a classroom and I also bought a new car."

Tatiana Smith: "Started my Master's degree program at Western Michigan University for Spirituality, Health & Culture!"

Zak Steele: "I got a new tattoo!"



ROB'S RAMBLINGS

It's always in January that I start to wonder about the upcoming summer - even though it feels so far away. Which campers are going to be back, which staff are going to be back, who isn't coming back this year, how all of those differences are going to change camp.

One of the great things about camp is that no summer is the same as another. Old friends move on, and new friends arrive. New activities are put into the program, things are updated and looked at with fresh eyes... it's a challenge we give ourselves to always improve and build on the successes that we've had. But, change can also be a little scary - am I going to get on with the new people, will I enjoy as much as I have done in the past? Even after 25 years of camp it's still something that I have to consciously prepare myself for - and I know that I'm not the only one with these feelings.

Over the years, I've come to embrace those differences and treat each summer as a new adventure. It's not going to be the same, and that's OK. In fact, it's more than OK! Being able to push ourselves in new situations is a great learning opportunity, and everyone at Akeela is there to help. I can't wait to see you all for the adventure of 2020!

SENIOR STAFF INTRODUCTIONS



John Gallagher

Head Counselor

John, originally from Seattle, is a 6th grade English teacher in the St. Paul Public Schools out in frigid Minnesota. He worked as an Akeela cabin counselor in 2017, and is thrilled to be back on the shores of Miller Pond this summer as a head counselor! John received his Teaching license and a Bachelor's degree in English in the cornfields of Iowa at Grinnell College, where he also ran Track and Field and Cross Country. In his free time, John loves running, playing soccer, going to sporting events, and watching Netflix. John loves working at camp, because it gives him a chance to connect with awesome young people outside of the classroom.

Favorite Book: Wonder by RJ Palacio

Place I'd like to Visit: Wherever the 2023 Women's World Cup is!

Favorite Camp Food: Chef Trina's Bread Pudding!



Johnnie Alberts

Aquatics Director

Johnnie Alberts is eager to begin his first summer at Camp Akeela! Starting his camp career on the shores of Lake Cobbosseecontee, he began as a swimming and bunk counselor at Camp Cobbossee for Boys in Monmouth, ME. With years of competitive swimming experience, he quickly moved to the assistant waterfront director position. He spent two summers in that role, implementing a structured, safe, and of course engaging swim program in which campers strove to be the best versions of themselves. Over the last two years, Johnnie has spent four seasons working with kids and adults with special needs and challenging illnesses at Camp For All in Burton, TX. Making residential camping his career objective, his experience at Camp For All gave him a better understanding of not only why he does camp, but also the population he enjoys serving best. Johnnie believes camp has a monumental impact on those who truly step outside their comfort zones, and being able to provide a safe environment for campers to thrive makes places like Camp Akeela feel like a second home.

Favorite Book: The Body by Stephen King

Place I'd like to Visit: Tokyo

Favorite Camp Food: Cheeseburgers



Lily Baker

Head Counselor

After a one summer hiatus, Lily is so excited to be returning to camp as a head counselor in 2020! Lily started at Akeela in 2015 as the camp photographer, then became a cabin counselor, and in 2018 was an assistant head counselor. During the off season she has been working in a Vermont public school as a behavior specialist. She will be relocating after camp to Nashville to pursue her graduate degree in school counseling. Some of Lily's favorite camp activities are campfire, daraoke (a mixture of dance and karaoke), and the camper play. In her free time she likes to hike, camp, and eat cheese!

Favorite Book: The Help by Kathryn Stockett

Place I'd like to Visit: Hawaii

Favorite Camp Food: Oreo Pie