



Welcome to the newsletter!

It's November! Fall is well and truly here, and we hope that everyone is safe, well, and making the most of this crisp, cool weather (here in the Northeast)! In this issue, we look at another blog on the Akeela website, and see what some of our great campers have been up to!

01 Highlights from the Akeela Blog

02 Upcoming Events Good News!

AKEELA NEWS

November
2020

Bringing you all the Akeela news throughout the year!

Highlights from the Akeela Blog

Want to read more? Click [here!](#)

Chris Rock and NLD: Why His Diagnosis Matters

As most people have already heard, comedian Chris Rock shared that he was diagnosed with NVLD (Non-Verbal Learning Disorder) in September. All of the entertainment outlets shared the news with the world - along with the TV show Rock was promoting, of course - and found themselves having to teach the public what NLD actually IS! It's helpful when someone famous shares personal information with the public as it often has the effect of educating others. We're thrilled that this often overlooked and misunderstood diagnosis is getting a bit more attention.

Camp Akeela specializes in young people who have Asperger's and NLD (aka NVLD). When people see the term "Non Verbal Learning Disorder" on our website, they sometimes ask if that means that our campers are "nonverbal", meaning unable to speak. In this regard, the name of the diagnosis could not be more misleading! In truth, and Chris Rock is now a very shining example of this, those with a diagnosis of NVLD (or NLD) are highly verbal. Our campers are incredibly bright and quite adept at oral communication.

Rock received his diagnosis after a friend wondered if Rock had Asperger's; the

two diagnoses overlap a great deal. Like individuals with a diagnosis of Asperger's, those with NLD often find it challenging to initiate and/or maintain relationships with others. They may see the world in a more black and white or rigid way and many are not diagnosed earlier on in their childhoods because they are doing so well in their academic setting. All of this applies equally to many people who identify with the Asperger's label, or a similar ASD or neurodiverse profile.

At Akeela, we frequently talk about labels being unimportant in almost all settings. To a great extent, labels are most useful in that they help kids and teens receive the services they need and deserve. Schools and insurance companies often look for the official diagnoses before approving those services. However, we've come to learn that there is another way in which labels and diagnoses can be important: Many of our campers tell us that having a professional tell them WHY they might be struggling socially

can be life-changing and affirming. It gives them a language with which to better understand themselves and a community to which they belong.

I can only imagine how Mr. Rock felt when he got the diagnosis. In interviews he alludes to a new sense of understanding and an ability to push himself in new ways, in an effort to learn and grow. As an example, he recently started to learn how to swim and he views diving into the deep end, even though it filled him with fear, as a great metaphor for his life today. If more people are aware of what it means to be living with the cluster of traits that make up NLD or Aspergers

or ASD, then maybe they will have access to more support and will feel that they can dive into the deep end when they're ready.

Speaking of perfect metaphors, there is no better first step off that diving board than going to sleepaway camp!

Want to read more from our blog? Click [here!](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS

VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR PARENTS & PROFESSIONALS



29

7:30 - 8:30pm ET

FREE Parent webinar. Education Lawyer (and Debbie's childhood friend from camp!) Nicole Joseph will explain how the IEP process has changed in the time of COVID and will answer your questions. Complete [this 4-question form](#) to receive the zoom link.



15

7:30 - 8:30pm ET

In conjunction with CampLauncher (formally POISE), Debbie and Eric will join forces with Elise Wuff (from MGH Aspire) to talk about the how and why of setting limits at home. [More information can be found here.](#)

VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR CAMPERS



09

Akeela Games Night with Ben!

Zoom link will be sent to parent emails.

7:30 - 8:15pm ET



19

Akeela Trivia Night with Quizmaster Kev!

Zoom link will be sent to parent emails.

7:30 - 8:15pm ET

GOOD NEWS!

Akeela Alum, Aviva Stein, (now a Senior in high school) writes:

Last year I took United States History through a lens of hidden disabilities. We spend the year learning how to be good historians, and about the struggles people with disabilities have faced (and continue to face).

Second semester, we worked in pairs and chose an unknown (or not very popular) story of Boston/Massachusetts disability history. Through this semester-long project, I got the chance to do extensive research, and conduct interviews with some of Boston's most prominent disability activists. My classmate and I each wrote our findings as papers at the end of the year. My teacher really liked them and submitted them to the Disability History Association (DHA) for their series on the ADA turning 30. The DHA liked it, so over the summer I combined both my classmate's and my papers, rewrote them for publication, and resubmitted it.

The paper was recently published, and I wanted to share it with you. [Here is the link.](#)

Sam and Andreas Krause went on an RV trip to the grand Canyon and Zion amongst other places. They were sad that they did not get home from the trip and two days later head off to camp as we had planned back in 2019 when we booked the RV for the trip!But they are looking forward to camp this summer! As you can see from the picture, Andreas is sporting his akeela T-shirt!!



Akeela Pride!

National Camp T-shirt Day is November 10th! Show your pride by posting a picture on social media wearing Akeela swag and use the hashtag #camptshirtday (and also #campaakeela)!

Do you have some good news to share with our community? Let us know! Please send it to us at rob@campaakeela.com