



Welcome to the newsletter!

It's February, and in this issue of Akeela News, we tell you how camp will look this summer, highlight our upcoming events, and find out what our Program Director Ben has been up to for the last few months!

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AKEELA NEWS

February
2021

Bringing you all the Akeela news throughout the year!

A letter from the directors

With cold weather and more snow than we've had in a number of years here in Philly, we are even MORE excited that camp is on the horizon! We cannot wait for June! Eric and Ben have been spending a great deal of time

interviewing staff who have impressed us with their talents and passion. We've also rehired a number of former staff members who can't wait to get back to Miller Pond. And, of course, we've loved catching up with all of you by phone, emails and on our virtual programs. Debbie has been busier than ever meeting and enrolling new campers who are so excited to join the Akeela community this summer.

Camp is happening and we're ready for it!

Of course, we know many of you have questions about

how camp will be different this summer due to COVID. Many of you have visited



our COVID web page that is updated regularly and we encourage you to do that if you haven't already, and to check back frequently. Eric is on monthly calls with folks from the State of Vermont, which will be

making the final decisions regarding camp policies and regulations for this summer; we update our webpage as we learn new information from those calls.

We want to share a few important pieces of information here for your reference, and those are **on the following page**.

As always, please reach out to us with questions or concerns.



We will plan on having a few Zoom calls (which we will also record) as we get closer to camp so that we can explain procedures to you and your camper(s) and answer any questions. More than ever, we know that our campers need a summer filled with the magic of camp friends, fresh air and some fun! We're so thrilled that we'll be able to share that with our community this summer.

Fondly,

Debbie

Eric

Ben

HOW WILL CAMP WORK WITH COVID?

Camp will operate as a modified “bubble”:

- Once staff and campers arrive at Akeela, we will be limiting the frequency and the circumstances in which people come in and out of camp. Doing so will help reduce the opportunities for someone to bring COVID into our community.

Health and Safety:

- In order to minimize the chances that someone brings COVID to camp this summer, we are planning for a three-tiered testing regimen for all campers and staff. This will include a required test a few days prior to arrival, a test performed by our medical staff upon arrival, and a third test 7 days after arrival.
- Daily temperature checks and health screenings will be a required part of camp.
- We will have a team of housekeepers regularly disinfecting all cabins, bathrooms, and public areas.
- Handwashing times will be built into campers’ daily life and hand sanitizing stations will be available throughout camp.

Cohorts and Mask Wearing:

- Campers will be in small cohorts for at least the beginning of the summer. Each cabin group will be its own “pod”. These are like a household -- when within their cohort, campers will not have to practice social distancing or mask wearing. When outside of the cohort, or when groups are together, campers should expect to wear masks and social distance.
- For the first 8 or 9 days of camp (until we get the results of our 3rd COVID tests) each cabin group will remain its own cohort. After this time period, our intention is to grow cohorts to include multiple cabins of the same age group.

Our Camp Program:

- For the first week of camp, all activities will be scheduled by cabin group. After this time period, we plan to introduce more of our elective programming into the daily schedule.
- Our Outdoor Adventure Program will remain an essential part of Akeela. We will continue to run day hikes for all campers and hope to offer our optional “outdoor adventure” trips (canoeing, overnight camping, cycling and rock climbing).
- We will likely be unable to offer our horseback riding program this summer due to the fact that it takes place at an off-site facility.

Dining:

- We will expand our dining area with a large tent located behind our Dining Hall.

Camper Travel:

- In an effort to make the start of camp as safe as possible, right now we are NOT planning on providing bus transportation to camp. Instead, we are going to ask every parent to drive their child to camp. We recognize that this presents a significant inconvenience for our camp families and greatly appreciate our families’ partnership in helping to create a healthy environment for campers.
- We do plan to bus campers to designated locations near Boston and New York at the end of each camp session.

UPCOMING EVENTS

VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR CAMPERS & STAFF



24
7:30pm EST

February Trivia Night

Zoom link will be sent to parent emails.



31
7:30pm EST

March Trivia Night

Zoom link will be sent to parent emails.



16
7:30pm EST

March Games Night

Zoom link will be sent to parent emails.

VIRTUAL EVENTS FOR FAMILIES



28
7:30pm EST

REGISTER
HERE FOR
FREE

Camp Launcher Webinar with Dr. Anthony Rostain and Dr. B Janet Hibbs:

Helping My Neurodiverse Child Get Ready for Life's Transitions (Including Going To Camp!)

Camp can be an exciting and memorable experience! Often, camp is the child's first time away from home so it can also be a challenging and concerning moment for the family. Dr. Anthony Rostain and Dr. B. Janet Hibbs, co-authors of *The Stressed Years Of Their Lives*, will address the parents' role during significant times of transition, including their importance in supporting the social and emotional readiness of their children. In this free webinar, the speakers will combine the scientific and the personal in their dynamic discussion, and address your questions and concerns.



02
7:45pm EST

REGISTER
HERE FOR
FREE

Akeela Webinar with Ryan Wexelblatt (The ADHD Dude):

Building executive function skill and independence at home

Parents and professionals often believe that executive function skill development is about building academic organizational skills, yet that is only a small part of it. Many students diagnosed with neurodevelopmental challenges such as NVLD, Asperger's and ADHD begin college but do not make it through their first semester. Typically, this is not a result of academics, but because their core executive functioning challenges have not been adequately addressed and they have not developed a level of independence required to manage college successfully.

During this presentation Ryan will explain some of the core executive function skills that parents can help develop at home and show practical strategies to help build these skills. This will not be a presentation about timers, checklists, etc. Those strategies are typically ineffective for today's generation of visual learners. There will be time for questions at the end of the presentation.



Ben's Banter

G'day! For those of you who are new to the Akeela community, my name is Ben Jerez and I am from Australia. I am Akeela's Program Director during the summer. During the off-season, I recruit and hire all the incredible staff members who work at camp!

Because of COVID, I haven't been able to work from the Akeela office with Debbie and Eric this year. Instead, while counting down the days until Summer 2021, I have been on a wild (COVID-safe, of course) adventure through America's Northeast and Midwest. I saw this unusual time as an awesome opportunity to jump in the car with my dog, Juniper, and stay at safe places across the country! I am currently staying in a huge old farmhouse in southwest Michigan. The house belongs to our colleague camp, Lake of the Woods. Some things I have learned on this road trip so far are:

- Boots are an essential item if living anywhere that gets snow. Lets just say I learned the hard way...
- If you're without a window scraper and your windshield has ice, a credit card does the trick!
- Nothing quite matches the mountains of Vermont!

Over the next couple of months I will slowly make my way back through Philly, pack my summer gear, and then up to Vermont mid-to-late May. Along the way, I will continue to zoom with all of our 2021 staff members to get them prepared for the best summer of their lives. I certainly miss home, in particular the beach! However, what has kept me feeling connected and excited has been our monthly Games and Trivia Nights over zoom. Seeing all of your familiar faces answering riddles, dancing and winning prizes just gets me amped for the summer. I hope to see more of you there on our next call! Until then,

Ben

Highlights from Past Akeela Quizzo & Game Nights

1. February is Black History Month. What Decade was the first Black History Month officially recognized?
2. Donors have recently pledged to plant trees and grasslands across 5000 miles of land to prevent the continued expansion of this desert.
3. This company's stock Price skyrocketed from \$4/share to over \$300/share recently after a group of Redditors took offense to how certain Wall Street leaders were betting against the company.

ANSWERS - 1. 1970s 2. Sahara 3. GameStop

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