

Bringing you all the Akeela news throughout the year!



A Letter From The Directors

Happy spring, friends! This is the most exciting time of year for us, as our move to camp is just a couple of weeks away. We also send our two daughters to sleepaway camp in New Hampshire so, just like you, we're busy filling out forms, buying t-shirts that fit after a year of growing, and trying to help our kids connect with other campers so they feel less nervous. We understand ...it's a lot of work! Hopefully, you are using the Family Handbook as a guide and found the Parent Zoom (live or recording) to be informative as well. (If you haven't done so already, please read the Handbook and watch the Zoom video!)

For our part, we absolutely can't wait to be back at camp. Many people ask us what we do during a typical day once we're up at camp ...and our answer is that "it depends"!

In early June, we welcome the first wave of staff who come for various trainings and certifications, and who help prepare the camp facility as part of our "pre-camp" crew. Eric and Erin spend a great deal of time coordinating that work, while Debbie makes final preparations for staff training and welcomes staff to camp.

On the 10th of June, our Senior Staff arrive and we start training our program directors and head counselors. We'll spend time building our sense of trust and community while we work on specific training goals. Of course, that key leadership team will also help us host Open House on June 12th! A few days later, on June 15th, the rest of Akeela's cabin counselors and specialists arrive at camp. We will then be leading our full staff orientation right up until the moment we've all been waiting for: Opening Day of Camp!

During a typical camp day, we spend as much time as possible on campus with our campers and staff (rather than in the office, which is why we are rarely the ones answering the camp phone during the summer.) Our primary responsibility - and our favorite thing to do - is to make sure everyone at camp is safe and happy. One of the most wonderful aspects of our job is that we never know exactly what each day will bring; we make ourselves available to the people who need us most at any given moment. That includes those of you at home who have trusted us with the care of your children!

You should expect to hear most often from your camper's head counselor, who will call with updates and concerns, and will return your incoming phone calls. (Meet our 4 head counselors, Courtney, Kevin, Sarah and Justin, later in this newsletter.) However, you can also feel free to send us an email or call the office and ask to leave a message for Debbie or Eric. We generally return parent phone calls in the evenings, after campers are in bed.

We can't wait to kick off the summer of 2022, our 15th summer as directors at Akeela!

Debbie *Eric*

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IMPORTANT 2022 DATES

FORMS DUE:	May 15
OPEN HOUSE:	June 12
FIRST SESSION:	June 25 - July 18
SECOND SESSION:	July 21 - August 13
FAMILY CAMP:	August 16 - August 21

What to Expect on the First Day of Camp

Dear Akeela Camper,

Summer is almost here and we hope you are excited about camp, even if you're also feeling a little nervous about it. Many kids go away for part of the summer. Some visit family, some go on teen travel or community service programs, and some go to sleep-away camps. Almost everybody worries about how they will like a place that's new to them. It's OK to feel that way and we're here to help make your transition to camp as easy and smooth as possible. We think that one way to do that is to help you know what to expect...



If you're taking one of the camp buses to camp, you and your parents will meet some of our counselors at the bus pick-up location. They will be there to welcome you and to introduce you to other campers. They will help you find a seat on the bus with a new friend and will be there to answer any questions you might have. The travel time from NY is approximately 5 hours and the time from Boston is approximately 2.5 hours. You will bring lunch (for the NY trip) or a snack (for the Boston trip) on the bus and there are bathrooms on both buses! We also anticipate wearing masks on those bus trips this year.

Those of you flying to Boston on Opening Day will be met at the airport by Akeela staff members. They will be there to greet you and to introduce you to other campers who have also flown in! You and your new friends will be driven by our staff in a camp van directly to camp. It will take approximately 2.5 hours to get to Akeela. You can expect to wear a mask on that trip from the airport.

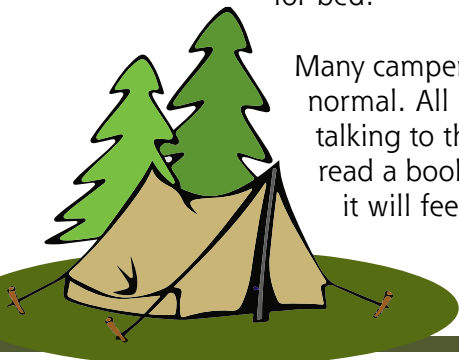
If your parents are driving you to camp, you will be dropped off between 2:00 and 2:30 in the afternoon. Your counselors will be there to meet you at your car and help you carry any last-minute items you have brought with you that day. You, your parents, and counselors will go to your cabin, where you'll see all of your belongings have been unpacked and organized for you so you can easily find your bed. You'll then say goodbye to your family and begin your camp adventure!

Regardless of how you get to camp, here's what you can expect to happen the rest of that first day:

- You will have a chance to see what camp looks like and enjoy some planned activities with your bunkmates. You might take a tour, play some games, or jump on the jumping pillow.
- You'll also meet our nurses so that they can give you a quick "health check" to make sure you're healthy!
- Our great Chef, Trina, will give you a small preview of her culinary expertise and provide a delicious snack for you and your new friends to enjoy.
- There will be some time after everyone arrives for each bunk to start spending some time together before we meet for dinner. This is a great time to get to know your bunkmates and counselors, and talk about "bunk expectations," so you know what to expect from each other.
- We will all have dinner and Evening Meeting together as a community. You'll eat dinner with your cabin, just like you will for all your meals at camp! Evening Meeting will be at the amphitheatre and you'll get to hear from Eric and Debbie, and have a chance to make announcements about the new friends you've already made!
- Then it will be time for our opening campfire and evening snack. We'll sing songs and do skits as a community by the fire. It's one of our favorite parts of camp!
- Before bedtime, you will preview the next day's schedule and then Debbie or Eric and your Head Counselor will stop by to say good night. Before you know it, your first day will be over and we will all be getting ready for bed!

Many campers worry that they might be sad or homesick on the first night of camp. That is very normal. All of your counselors will be right in your bunk with you to help you. In addition to talking to them, you might want to look at photos from home, write a letter to your family or read a book. We know that after a short time, you will be having such a great time at Akeela, it will feel like your second home.

See you soon!



WHAT ARE HEAD COUNSELORS?

Lots of people get confused about the actual role of these important leaders in our community. Perhaps it's the title that's misleading... Head counselors are not the wonderful staff members who live in your child's bunk. Those are cabin counselors and specialists. Our head counselors are adults who live in our community and who supervise 3 or 4 cabins. They oversee the well-being of the campers and staff in those bunks and are the primary "point person" for you to call when you have a question about your child's success at camp.



Our head counselors spend all day out in camp with their campers and staff, providing ongoing support and feedback. They check messages a few times a day and return parent calls (usually in the evening). They are a wonderful resource to us as camp directors and serve as our eyes and ears, as we cannot be everywhere at once! While we oversee the entire community (120 campers and more than 100 staff members), the head counselors focus on their 4 cabin groups.

You can find profiles of our 2022 head counselors up next!

MEET OUR HEAD COUNSELORS



Justin Rivera

Justin is from New Jersey, where he is an instructional support and intervention aide in elementary education. He has worked in education since 2013, while also pursuing a professional performing arts career as a dance and theater artist. Justin has worked as a social skills coach, instructor, and school support worker, and has been lucky enough to apply his theater and dance training to his work with children and young adults in creative ways. He joined Camp Akeela for the first time as a head counselor in Summer 2021. For the previous 7 years, Justin spent his summers in a similar role at a camp in Pennsylvania. When Justin is not busy working with students, he loves to practice yoga, go on trail walks and long hikes in his home state, or learn a new recipe. He loves new places, and hopes to resume traveling around the world soon. Justin also enjoys a casual game of chess, a nice cozy spot to read in, and a good song to sing along to.

Favorite Book: [A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man](#) by James Joyce

Place I'd like to Visit: Berlin

Favorite Camp Food: Ice Cream!



Courtney Smith

Courtney is a born and raised North Carolinian. After attending NC State and earning her degree in Communication Media, she decided to make Raleigh, North Carolina home. She is currently a K-5 Special Education teacher and recently obtained her Masters in Special Education from NC State, with a focus on students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. When Courtney first came to Akeela in 2019, she fell in love with camp and the lifelong friends she made that summer. This will be Courtney's fourth summer at camp and when she's not at Akeela, you can find her loudly and proudly cheering on the NC State Wolfpack in various sports, volunteering with Miracle League of the Triangle or playing in an adult sports league. Courtney also enjoys catching up with staff friends around the world throughout the year.

Favorite Book: [One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest](#) by Ken Kesey

Place I'd like to Visit: Santorini

Favorite Camp Food: Chef Trina's Brookies (half brownie / half cookie)

continued...

MEET OUR HEAD COUNSELORS (continued)



Kevin Hussey

Kevin currently lives in Madison, Wisconsin where he is a high school Special Education teacher. This past December, he graduated from Winona State University with a degree in Special Education with an emphasis on Developmental Disabilities. While pursuing his degree, Kevin worked as a research assistant exploring inclusive practices in schools, a teacher's assistant in a high school completion program serving incarcerated adults, and as a paraprofessional in an elementary school Autism Resource room.

Kevin started at Camp Akeela in 2019 as a Cabin Counselor and returned in 2021 on the aqua-squad as a swim instructor, teaching swim lessons to all campers at the pool and lake. When Kevin is not at camp, he loves spending his time being active outdoors— playing sports, and fishing. He is an avid Boston sports fan and loves cheering on the Red Sox and Celtics. Kevin is most looking forward to hike days, campfires, and evening activities with the entire Akeela community. He hopes that he can finally muster up the courage to try the zipline this summer!

Favorite Book: Harry Potter Series by JK Rowling

Place I'd like to Visit: Ireland and Greece

Favorite Camp Food: Cook-out cheeseburgers and Brookies



Sarah Weissman

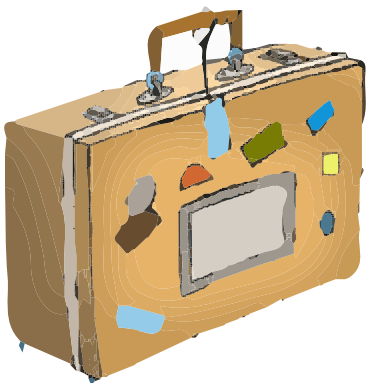
Sarah is so excited to join the Akeela team this summer! She currently lives in Astoria, Queens and just completed NYU's Master of Social Work program. A strong believer in the powers of play and creative expression, Sarah is interested in family and group-based interventions that allow participants to have fun and be creative! As a theater artist herself, she is especially interested in integrating theater into her work, both in clinical and non-clinical settings.

Sarah has worked with youth as a clinician, theater teacher, after-school program director, mentor, and camp counselor, and she is very excited to put her camp counselor hat back on this summer! She is a big fan of theater, rock climbing, exploring new places, dogs, pancakes, and a good story, and she would love to talk to you about any of these things (and more!).

Favorite Book: The Thing About Jellyfish by Ali Benjamin

Place I'd like to Visit: Finland

Favorite Camp Food: S'mores



A note about...

BAGGAGE

Please remember that ALL baggage must be sent to camp ahead of time, to arrive at least 3 days before your camper. For families that live in the Northeast, we recommend R&B Camp Baggage. For all other families, we recommend Ship Camps. Information on both can be found in the Family Handbook and your Forms Dashboard.

If you prefer, you can use USPS, UPS or FedEx Ground ... or simply drop off your campers bags at camp at least three days prior to their arrival at camp. Unless you're coming for Visiting Day / Pick-Up Day at the end of your camp session, please arrange for round trip shipment.

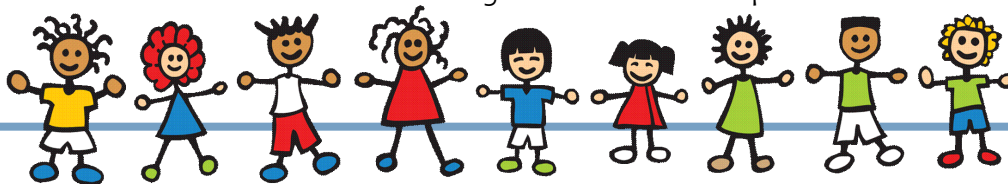
Congratulations To The Rush Family!

We are thrilled to announce the birth of Miller David Rush! Nurse Amy, her husband Josh and their daughter Evie, whom all of our 2021 campers will remember, welcomed Miller to their family on April 1st. (In case you're wondering, Amy and Josh did select Miller's name based on Akeela's own Miller Pond... and that's not an April Fool's joke!) We couldn't be more thrilled for the Rush family and are absolutely thrilled that the four of them are returning to Akeela this summer!



How We Assign Counselors to Bunks

Often, parents and campers ask us who their counselors will be for the upcoming summer. Something you may not know about is how we decide which staff members will work with which campers. We actually don't determine counselor placement until 4 or 5 days before campers arrive. We first take time to get to know each staff member, see how they work with others, get a sense of their strengths and actually take the time to ask THEM with which age group they feel most passionately about working. Only then does our Senior Staff assign staff members into co-counselor groupings and assign them their bunks. It is probably the day the staff look forward to the most during their training. We will be hosting Zoom meetings for each bunk group to meet their counselors one or two nights before each camp session.



REQUIRED CAMP FORMS

All of this year's camp forms were due on May 15th

TO ACCESS THEM:

1. Go to the camp home page, campaakeela.com
2. Near the top right corner, click on "Staff & Family Log In"
3. If you don't know your password, click on "Retrieve/Set Password" and enter your email address; it will be sent to you.
4. Log in and click on "Forms and Documents"

Some are ready to complete online while others need to be printed, filled out and uploaded back to your Forms Dashboard. Please note that the Physician's Examination Form requires a physician's signature. If you haven't already made arrangements for your pediatrician to sign it, please do so right away.

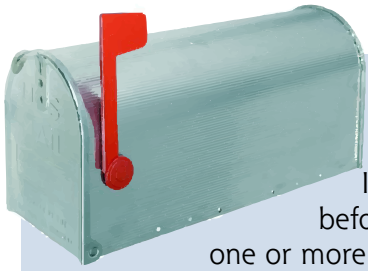
In addition to these forms, please be sure to carefully review the Family Handbook and our Summer 2022 COVID Plans, both of which can be found in the Current Families section of our website.

Thanks for your cooperation and let us know if you need any help!

CampMeds

Our medication policies require that ALL daily medicine -- including supplements and vitamins -- be dispensed by CampMeds. We want to be clear that we do expect 100% participation in CampMeds from families with campers who will take daily medication at camp. If your camper does not take daily medication, you do not need to register with CampMeds.

You will find details about how to enroll in CampMeds, along with an FAQ, on your family's online Forms Dashboard (accessible through the Parent Log In on Akeela's website). If you have any questions about CampMeds, you can reach them at 954-577-0025 or www.campmeds.com. Any other medication (i.e. items administered on an "as needed" basis) must be mailed to camp in its original packaging at least three days prior to your camper's arrival. Please call the office to notify us if medications will be arriving by mail. It is camp policy not to accept any medication (including vitamins, supplements, etc.) on Opening Day.



PEN PALS

It's really helpful to know someone before you arrive at a new place. A few weeks before your camp session begins, we will send you the email address and phone number of one or more of your bunkmates. (It will get sent to an adult in your house and they will share that information with you.) We know that it's not always an easy thing to do, but we ask that you please make contact with your pen pal so that everyone at camp feels connected to someone else.

NOTE TO PARENTS & GUARDIANS:

If you would NOT like us to share your contact information with other camp families, please call or email us right away to opt out of the Pen Pal program.

WHERE DO AKEELA CAMPERS COME FROM?

Every spring, we publish an article listing all of our campers' home states. We always find that our campers represent more than 20 US states and several other countries as well. We're proud of Akeela's diversity so we counted again this year ... and we got a similar result: 27 states and 3 other countries!

Here's the entire list, as of the beginning of May: Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Washington D.C. We also have campers coming from Canada, the UK, and Guatemala.



LAUNCH-A-THON

We are delighted to tell you about the eleventh annual Camp Akeela Launch-a-thon.

This will be a fun and exciting community service project offered as a special event in each of our two camp sessions. Campers will choose their method of participation, all of which will help raise money in support of a great cause. Details can be found on your Forms Dashboard.

Donations in support of your child's participation can be made directly to CampLauncher at:

www.camplauncher.org



CLOTHING ORDERS

The Camp Spot is ready for your orders! Not surprisingly, fulfilling orders is slower than usual this year, so we encourage you to act quickly. Please allow enough time to receive and label your items before camp begins. Our "store" can be found by typing Akeela in the green box at: <https://thecampspot.com/>



We also want to clarify that campers are only required to have ONE Akeela logo'd t-shirt (grey or white Lightweight Cotton T) from The Camp Spot. Everything else they offer – while a wonderful selection – is optional.

WELCOME NEW CAMPERS!

One of our favorite parts of camp is having so many campers return summer after summer. We love what that tells us about how they feel about each other, our staff and the Akeela community. At the same time, nothing excites us more than being able to share the Akeela experience with first-time campers. Soon, there will be no distinction between "old-timers" and "first-timers", as we all become one community. In the meantime, we wanted to welcome the following campers to the Akeela family:

FIRST SESSION

Frank A (Boonton, NJ)
Aiden B (Brooklyn, NY)
Oscar B (Winnetka, IL)
Kate B (Chadds Ford, PA)
Ella C (Wilton, CT)
Samuel C (Weston, MA)
Brynn C (Topsfield, MA)
Thomas D (Sammamish, WA)
India D (Woodbridge, CT)
Brooks D (Woodbridge, CT)
Parker E (Chappaqua, NY)
Corinne F (Arlington, VA)
Susanna F (Exeter, NH)
Jack G (West Hollywood, CA)
Scotty G (Bellmore, NY)
Nate H (Little Rock, AR)
Brianna H (Glen Head, NY)
Noah J (Roslyn, NY)
Kingsley K (Los Angeles, CA)
Omri K (New York, NY)

Zachary K (Austin, TX)
Timothy K (Chicago, IL)
Loie K (Portsmouth, RI)
Hershel K (Plantation, FL)
Daniel K (Croton on Hudson, NY)
Mia L (Brooklyn, NY)
Christian L (Libertyville, IL)
Isobel L (RYE, NY)
Patrick M (New York, NY)
Benjamin M (St Augustine, FL)
Leonard M (Norman, OK)
Sofia M (Lincoln, MA)
Oliver N (Fairfield, CT)
Finn N (Darien, CT)
Kyle N (Panama City Beach, FL)
Clem N (Vienna, VA)
Nicholas O (New York, NY)
Caroline O (Marblehead, MA)
Jenny P (New York, NY)
Lukas P (Needham, MA)

Beckett P (Berwyn, PA)
Gael P (Brooklyn, NY)
Anabel R (Brooklyn, NY)
Maggie R (Fairfield, CT)
Dash R (Pacific Palisades, CA)
Leah S (New York, NY)
John S (West Hartford, CT)
Cole S (Shrewsbury, MA)
Henry S (Ipswich, MA)
Ryan S (Dundee, IL)
Charles S (Centennial, CO)
Audrey S (Slate Hill, NY)
Nikhil T (Hopkinton, MA)
Ellis W (Snowmass, CO)
Bethany W (Virginia Beach, VA)
Patrick W (Manassas, VA)
Andrew W (Short Hills, NJ)

SECOND SESSION

Tabby A (Fair Haven, NJ)
Arianna A (Bowie, MD)
George A (REDDING, CT)
Isla A (Ridgefield, CT)
Daryn A (Brookhaven, GA)
Adam B (Longmeadow, MA)
Isabel C (Arlington, VA)
Josh C (Morristown, NJ)
Allison C (Denver, CO)
Jonah C (St. Anthony, MN)
Meredith D (Mt Washington, KY)
Timothy D (Reston, VA)
Kaylia D (New York, NY)
Sam D (Sudbury, MA)
Sabrina E (Forest Hills, NY)
Gemma F (Chicago, IL)
Ruby G (Brooklyn, NY)
Libby G (Burgess Hill, UK)
Kevin H (Braintree, MA)
Glenn H (Encinitas, CA)

Henry H (Providence, RI)
Kyle H (McLean, VA)
Jonathan H (Hollywood, FL)
Jack H (Lebanon, NH)
Thomas H (Los Angeles, CA)
Anna J (Severna Park, MD)
Pedro J (Pinecrest, FL)
Michael K (Bronxville, NY)
Devan L (New York, NY)
Samuel L (Annapolis, MD)
Oscar M (Boston, MA)
Jack M (Boston, MA)
Bella M (Menlo Park, CA)
Lilly M (Wellesley, MA)
Isabel M (Brooklyn, NY)
Felix M (Arlington, MA)
Emma M (Meriden, NH)
Izzy N (Long Island City, NY)
Yash N (New Providence, NJ)
Andrew P (Burlington, VT)

Aidan R (Menomonee Falls, WI)
Ethan R (Los Angeles, CA)
Felix R (Kensington, MD)
Atom S (Forest Hills, NY)
Max S (Larchmont, NY)
Phoebe T (Wayland, MA)
Kaden T (Chicago, IL)
Evan T (New York, NY)
Mira T (New York, NY)
Duffy W (Scituate, MA)
Talia W (Concord, MA)
Samuel W (New York, NY)
Jameson W (East Greenwich, RI)
Nola X (Newton, MA)
Henry Y (Bryn Mawr, PA)