



# AKEELA NEWS

SPRING 2024

## MANDATORY CAMPER AND PARENT/GUARDIAN ZOOM MEETING

**THURS., MAY 9, 8PM EST:** DISCUSSING THE AKEELA COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS  
IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND LIVE, PLEASE LET US KNOW.

## OPTIONAL INFORMATIONAL ZOOM CALLS FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

**SUN., APR. 28, 5PM EST:** TRANSITION INTO CAMP, MISSING HOME, COMMUNAL LIVING



## A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS

One minute it was cold and snowing and the next minute everything was in bloom! Spring is finally here and now we're getting excited for the start of summer! Here, in the Sasson house, we're doing the same things you are (hopefully!) as we prepare our daughters for their summer away at sleepaway camp. We're busy completing forms, taking forms to the pediatrician's office for signatures, getting prescription info to CampMeds, and going through the bins of camp clothing/gear to see what we need to get new for this summer. Phew - it's a lot of work! We appreciate how much effort is needed to get your camper ready for camp and we want to say - IT'S WORTH IT! Getting some of the logistics sorted out now means that you can focus on the more important things, like helping your camper prepare emotionally! Hopefully, our parent Zoom sessions have been helpful. Don't forget to read the Family Handbook closely - most of what you need to know is there!

Speaking of getting ready, families (and campers) often ask us what it takes to get camp ready each year and what we do to help welcome and prepare our staff for the arrival of our campers. Here's what the spring looks like for us....and our team!

- Eric and Erin head up to camp at the end of May in order to welcome our "Pre-Camp" crew of counselors who help us get our physical space ready! This team will be painting, building and moving lots of equipment and setting up our program areas. We're grateful for this crew!
- Debbie will follow about a week later (answering calls in our Philly office and spending a few more days with our kids) to help prepare for our Open House and finalize plans for Staff Orientation. Around the same time, our aquatics team, support staff, and senior staff will arrive for their pre-camp training
- Finally - our entire staff will join us at camp on June 12th! We'll then spend 10 days building our staff family, instilling in them our values of community and preparing emotionally and physically for the summer ahead. If you're curious about the topics we cover in our staff training some of them include: Building Relationships with Akeela Campers, Child Development, Social Skills in a Camp Setting, Program Philosophy, Waterfront Safety, Emergency Preparedness, Wellness (physical and emotional)....and much, much more.

This is a busy and exciting time of year and we can't wait to see your children in-person soon. As always, please call or email us with any questions or concerns!

*Debbie Eric Erin*

# HELPING CAMP RUN SMOOTHLY

Last newsletter, we introduced our amazing Head Counselors – the people you’ll be most in touch with throughout the summer to get updates on how your camper’s time with us is going! This time, we’re getting to know some of the important folks at camp that ensure our days run as smooth, fun, and safe as possible!

## Rob Glyn-Jones – Assistant Director of Communications and Operations



Rob has been working with us since 2010, has a 25-year career in summer camping, and comes to us each summer from England!

During summer, Rob heads up all of our communications (outside of Head Counselor contact) and works to ensure folks at home are kept up-to-date with all the camp goings-on, so you’ll hear from him often via the Companion app and our weekly newsletters! He’s also the resident Dungeon Master and leads all of our D&D campaigns, making him a firm camper favorite!

## Sky Perlman – Program Director



Sky is a Speech Language Pathologist and is coming to camp all the way from sunny San Diego, California! They grew up attending (and loving!) summer camp, and has worked in several leadership roles at camps over the last decade.

At Akeela this summer, Sky will be our Program Director, spearheading all Special Event Days, Evening Activities, and more! They will also directly oversee the daily programming, ensuring that all our activities – aquatics, adventure, art, and everything in-between – are as high quality as our campers deserve! They are excited to lend their professional SLP eye to our programs, and help make them better than ever!

## Amy Rush – Head Nurse



Amy is a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, who has been working professionally as an NP for over a decade. This will be her third summer at Camp Akeela and she loves spending her summers in our beautiful corner of Vermont! Amy is the lead on all of our camper’s healthcare needs, oversees medication distribution, liaises with our local pediatrician, and keeps families in the loop on anything out of the ordinary.

Our campers love Amy, and feel safe and taken care of when visiting the Health Center. She comes to camp with her family; husband Josh and two kiddos, Evie and Miller (yep – named after Miller Pond!).

## Keefe Traendly – Site Manager



Keefe is the lucky person who gets to enjoy Camp Akeela year-round! He lives just down the road and as the Site Manager, Keefe knows all of Akeela’s nooks and crannies, which helps him to solve the daily tasks of running a mini-town, ranging from power outages, to hamburger grilling, to wrangling escaped goats! Akeela stays freshly mowed thanks to Keefe and his team, and he’s always excited to help the campers in the woodshop, sharing his love of carpentry.



For 13 years, Akeela has been proud to partner with CampLauncher, a nonprofit charitable organization that helps to increase access to specialized camps like ours. Every summer, our campers participate in a fun community service event that raises money for CampLauncher!

Igniting Neurodiversity Through Camp

The Launch-A-Thon is a special event that we run each session at Akeela. We talk to campers about how lucky we all are to be able to attend summer camp, and how great it feels to help others have a similar experience. Each camper selects how they want to participate: swimming, running, archery or basketball. The event itself is an uplifting, high-energy celebration of everyone's efforts. Parents and family members are asked to make a pledge that recognizes their camper's participation and ultimately supports CampLauncher with a donation (of any size).

## HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. Complete the CampLauncher Pledge Form in your forms dashboard
2. Make a corresponding donation at <https://givebutter.com/launch-a-thon2024>
3. Set up a personalized team page, using that same Give Butter link to involve friends and family in supporting your camper's efforts!

## REMINDERS

We're thrilled to be working with CampMeds, a pharmacy service that prepackages medication to ensure a high level of safety and efficiency for distribution at camp. CampMeds registration is required for all campers who take daily medication. **Please register now!**



Our Family Portal, CampMinder, now has an app! Downloadable on both Apple and Android devices, you'll be able to complete your camp forms, send emails to your camper, and receive a personalized feed of photos and news from camp! Please download CAMPANION now.

### PHYSICAL EXAMS AND OTHER CAMP FORMS

Please remember to submit all of your camp forms before **May 15**. They can be found after you've logged in using the Staff & Family Login link on our website, or via the CAMPANION app. **The app is easiest for uploading completed forms.** Please note that the Physician's Exam Form must be completed by your camper's doctor.



### AKEELA GEAR

CampSpot is our official camp supplier. To see our page on CampSpot, simply type Akeela where it asks for Camp Name on their home page. There is lots of great Akeela gear in our camp store, but **only the basic logo'd lightweight cotton t-shirt is required.**

### BAGGAGE SHIPPING

Unpacking our campers is a vital part of how we welcome them to Akeela. Except for our overseas campers, we require that all trunks/duffels arrive at camp at least 3 days prior to the start of your child's session. A few options for getting your camper's bags to camp:

- Sign up for ShipCamps - recommended for excellent rates and ease of use.
- Drop them off at camp during Open House in June, if you're attending
- Arrange shipment through UPS, FedEx or USPS



### OPEN HOUSE

We look forward to seeing many of our first-time camper families at camp on Sunday, June 9. If you haven't already sent your RSVP, which is available in your forms dashboard, please do so.