

AKEELA NEWSLETTER

Friendship, Community, Growth, Pride and Fun!

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTORS

March has arrived and with it some signs of spring, which are great to see after all of the cold and snow we had here on the East Coast this winter. Earlier this month, we - along with Erin, Nick and Kevin - attended the annual Tri-State Camp Conference. Tri-State is the largest gathering of camp professionals in the world. It's a 3-day conference where we learn from some of the leaders in the world of education and child development, share best practices with other camp professionals, and visit with old friends. It's one of the highlights of our year, in large part because it's the unofficial sign that the camp season is right around the corner!



Some of the team pictured at the annual Tri-State conference

We have met and enrolled a lot of first-time Akeela campers this winter, all of whom will bring an amazing new energy to camp. They come from all over the country and have so much to offer the Akeela community. We can't wait to introduce them to all of our returning campers, and to see new friendships flourish. Of course, camp is also about reconnecting with old friends, and we're delighted to have so many returning campers this summer. (See the list later in this newsletter.)

We're very excited to announce that we're doing a complete renovation on the Camper Kitchen, home of Akeela's culinary arts program. Our site manager, Keefe, and his year-round crew have been hard at work making improvements to that building. Pretty much everything will be new, including the floors, walls, lighting, windows, food prep areas and teaching surfaces. Most notably, the space is now much BIGGER! The area that was previously the covered porch is now inside the building, creating a much more open, airy and flexible space for campers to enjoy while creating (and tasting!) their delicious food.

That's just one of the new and exciting things we look forward to sharing together this summer. Keep an eye out for news about this summer's special events -- they're going to be awesome!

As always, don't hesitate to call or email us if you have any questions or just want to chat about camp.

Love,

Debbie Eric



A mid-construction view of the Camper Kitchen's new extension (where the porch used to be.)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Mandatory Camper and Parent/Guardian Zoom Meeting

Wednesday evening, May 27, (Time TBD):
Discussing Akeela's Community Expectations

Zoom link and specific meeting times will be sent out later this Spring.

We will distribute a recording for anyone who can't attend live.

Optional "Office Hours" with the Directors

Join us for any of the following casual Zoom meetings. Come with any questions you have leading up to the camp season:

Wednesday, March 18, 12:00 - 1:00pm EST

Wednesday, April 8, 7:00 - 8:00pm EST

Tuesday, April 21, 12:30 - 1:30pm EST

Check your email for the Zoom link for all of these Office Hour meetings.

MAKING YOUR LIFE EASIER



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!](#)



Through Campanion, you will receive a personalized stream of content featuring photos and news. It's also the easiest way to complete your camp forms. To get started with Campanion:

- [Download the Campanion app.](#)
- (If that link doesn't work for you, find the [Android version here](#) or the [Apple iOs version here.](#))



REMINDERS



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

The [Camp Spot](#) 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 prior to your camper's session
- Arrange shipment through UPS, FedEx or USPS



WHAT IS A HEAD COUNSELOR, AND WHO ARE THE 2026 HEAD COUNSELORS?

Your camper's Head Counselor will be the person you are most in-contact with this summer! They are adults who, in their professional lives outside of camp, are often educators and school counselors, and have a large amount of experience working with children. During camp, they oversee an age group at Camp Akeela (3 to 4 bunks), ensure the well-being of the campers and staff in their campus, and are the "point person" for communication with home. They'll be giving you updates on your camper, and although the main focus of their role is being out in camp supporting the campers, they check emails and messages a few times a day and return all communication as soon as possible. Check out 2026's head counselors below!

ROB BRENNAN



Rob was born and raised in Ireland, near the town of Dundalk. Since graduating from university in 2017, he has worked as a primary school teacher in Dublin in both mainstream and special education settings, and is currently studying for a Postgraduate Diploma in Education Leadership while working as the Assistant Principal of his school. Rob first came to Akeela as a Cabin Counselor in 2016 and he instantly fell in love with camp. He returned the following year as a Ropes Specialist and then became the Ropes Director in 2019. After a few years away from camp, Rob returned to Akeela as a Head Counselor in 2024. In his free time, he enjoys playing piano, camping and spending time with friends and family.

NICK MANSFIELD



Nick was born and raised just outside of Detroit, Michigan and initially began working at Akeela as a Cabin Counselor in 2022. After rising through the ranks and graduating with both a BA in Special Education and a MA in Special Education Leadership from Michigan State University. He is currently living in Chicago where he is a special educator for third and fourth grade students (and he coaches middle school sports). He loves running, reading, collecting onesies, and having fun with anyone who is willing!

COURTNEY SMITH



Courtney first came to Akeela in 2019 and couldn't be more excited to return for her 8th summer! She has a BA in Communication Media and her Masters in Special Education from NC State University in Raleigh, North Carolina - where she calls home. Courtney has been teaching for 10 years. When Courtney isn't at camp, working, or coaching, you can find her loudly cheering on the NC State Wolfpack in all sports and playing kickball and volleyball in an adult sports league in Raleigh.

NOELLE VAN CAMP



Noelle is a sixth-generation Californian, mom of two, MD, and summer camp enthusiast who joined the Camp Akeela team in 2024. She grew up in San Diego, CA., attended college and medical school at Harvard, and has worked as a pediatrician at Stanford since 2004. She loves history, literature and science, and speaks English and Spanish. She brings experience as a child health advocate and faculty mentor in medical education. Her passions include nature and gardening, working with diverse teams, and books.

BARB WOLFSON



Barb comes to us from Wayland, MA, and is a retired Special Educator. She has been a part of the camp community for a long time, including as the owner and director of the camp where Debbie and Eric met over 25 years ago! She first joined Camp Akeela as a Head Counselor in 2017. She enjoys spending her days with her family and stays active by doing yoga, pilates, gardening and being outdoors. When relaxing, she loves to knit, read, cook, and listen to Bruce Springsteen.

RETURNING AKEELA STAFF

We're so lucky to have a large number of returning staff members who bring years of experience!
Welcome back to:

- Adam
- Amy
- Daniela
- Dara
- Ellie
- Emily
- Fatima
- Fred
- Freya
- Haydn
- James
- Jamie
- Johnny
- Judy
- Jose
- Kendall
- Kevin
- Leilany
- Lucie
- Maggie
- Mia
- Mike
- Miranda
- Olivia
- Riley
- Savannah
- Shawn
- Stan
- Mr. T
- Tyler



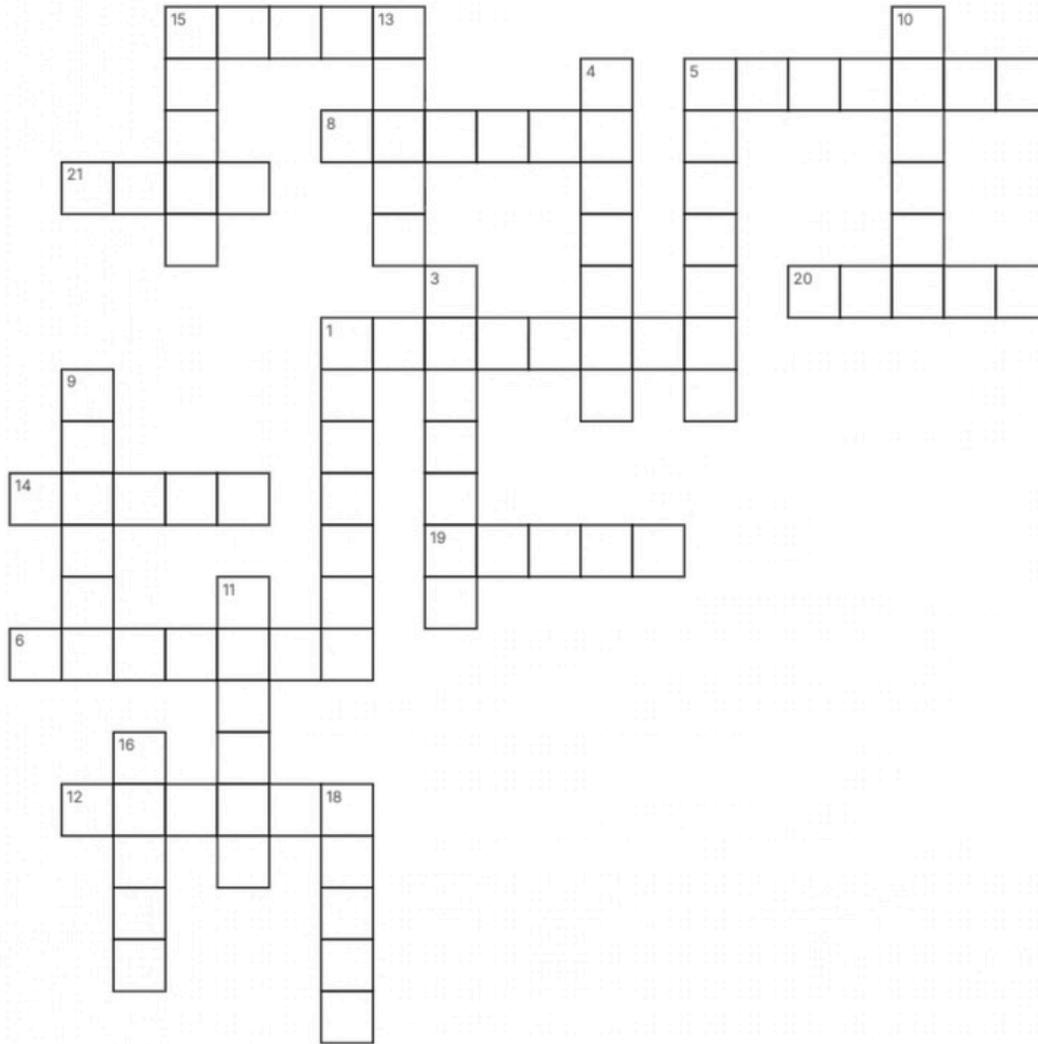
RETURNING AKEELA CAMPERS

WE CAN'T WAIT TO BE TOGETHER AGAIN!

A.J. J	Charles G	Jacob P	Patrick G
Aaron F	Charlotte C	James M	Persephone O
Abigail F	Charlotte D	James R	Phoebe L
Abigail T	Cherry P	Joseph K	Rebecca B
Adam W	Colin S	Josh B	Rehan U
Adelaide M	Declan C	Josie K	Rolf S
Aden M	Devan L	Judah H	Rory R
Aiden B	Duffy W	Julian R	Rosalie N
Alexandra R	Eli S	Keshav A	Rose L
Alison M	Ella N	Leah S	Ruben F
Ana M	Ella P	Leila F	Ryland K
Anders M	Elsa H	Lilly M	Salim Y
Anna T	Elsie S	Lily N	Sam H
Arlo C	Emma S	Lily S	Scarlett R
Ash P	Etienne T	Lily W	Selwyn T
Asher A	Felix T	Lylah R	Sloane M
Audrey M	Ford L	Madeleine d	Sofia M
Audrey W	Gabriel N	Matthew D	Sophia S
Bailey T	Georgina P	Max L	Talia W
Baxter P	Hazel B	Mia D	Theodore C
Bea d	Hazel G	Morris F	Theodore P
Beatrice G	Humza T	Natalie T	Tillem S
Beckett P	Ilana K	Nate B	Tobben F
Ben P	Isaac P	Nathaniel C	Todd H
Benjamin G	Isabella B	Niall P	Tristan C
Brady L	Isabelle S	Nicolas P	Veer J
Brendan G	Isla G	Nika W	Victoria A
Bridget F	Isobel L	Noah S	Vikas P
Bryce I	Jack C	Olivia B	Vivien S
Cali L	Jack J	Olivia H	William C
Carly B	Jacob M	Olivia K	Zaara S
			Zach K



AKEELA CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

1. Where you might throw pottery (8)
6. Akeela's state (7)
5. Friends Friends ___ (7)
8. ___ Pond - Akeela's Lake (6)
12. ___ Show evening activity (6)
14. Green stuff on the Main Lawn (5)
15. Necklace fastener (5)
19. Where to zip line (5)
20. Noodles (5)
21. With wind this makes a boat move (4)

Down

1. Weekly BBQ dinner (7)
3. Bow & arrow sport (7)
4. Hybrid dessert similar to a crownie (7)
5. LOTR or Harry Potter book genre (7)
9. Akeela Is A ___ (song) (6)
10. Mid-afternoon and bedtime treats (6)
11. British counselors call this football (6)
13. Last Akeela tenet alphabetically (5)
16. Wet stuff in the pool (5)
15. Another word for bunk (5)
18. Hiking path (5)