

Camp Ramah in New England



Elevate your summer!

March 13, 2017

15 Adar 5777

New Ramah Opening Day Procedures

Shalom Ramah Families,

In observing how to make the transition to camp as smooth as possible for our *chanichim* (campers) and listening to your feedback over the last few years, we have made some changes to our Opening Day schedule.

Our primary concern is to help *chanichim* quickly and seamlessly transition into camp. This mitigates separation anxiety and homesickness. Using this criteria as the lens through which we look, we also did our best to be sensitive to those driving to camp from both near and far and our *chanichim* who fly to camp.

For Full, First and Second and Mini *Aleph* and Mini *Gimmel chanichim* (June 27 and July 25), the gates will open at 11:00 a.m. and drop off will end by 1:00. Mini *Bet* and *Daled chanichim* (July 11 and August 8) will drop off, as in the past, between 10 a.m. and noon.

It is a long standing tradition for those who drop their children off at camp to unpack and settle their children into their *tzrifim* (bunks). For those of you who do not drop your *chanichim* off at camp, don't worry, our *tzevet* (staff) will help with this process.

Once parents who have dropped their *chanichim* off have finished the unpacking process and had a chance to visit the health center, office, and/or meet with senior *tzevet* (staff), we will ask them to say their goodbyes, depart and we will begin *edah* (age unit) programming.

We will no longer be having an opening day carnival or BBQ during the drop off time. We have found that although the carnival and BBQ are fun, it causes both stress and confusion for our camp families. *Chanichim* feel the pull to be with their new and old friends but also to be with their parents. Some *chanichim* feel great anxiety about when their parents will leave. We want to make this transition smooth and clear. Parents will say goodbye to their children at the *tzrif* (bunk) where *tzevet* members (including *yoetzot*) will be available to help and then integrate the camper into activities with their *edah*.

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Senior staff (director, assistant director, director of camper care) will still be available to greet you and answer any questions during drop off time. Right now we are planning to be outside the *misrad* (office). We will update you if that changes. We also know that many parents and alumni like to catch up during opening day. If the drop off window isn't long enough, we recommend going to Rondeau's Dairy Bar down the street.

For campers arriving by plane, the gate opening time means that *chanichim* will miss very little programming. We expect the vast majority of those arriving by plane to be at camp by 1:00. They will be greeted by their *madrachim* (counselors) and will have time to drop their belongings off at their *tzrifim*. Luggage sent to camp on our MD, CT or MA luggage trucks will already be waiting in their *tzrifim* for the *chanichim* when they arrive from the airport.

At 1:30, camp will kick off with a whole camp sit down lunch in the new *chadar ochel* (dining hall). The *Tzad Aleph* (younger) campers will be inside the main dining room while the *Tzad Bet* (older) campers will eat in the OCH (*Ohel Chadash* – or pavilion). We feel having a sit-down lunch by *tzrif* will allow us to help *chanichim* transition to camp more easily under the watchful eyes of their *madrachim*.

After lunch, the camp will follow a new *Tzohoryim Tzrif* (afternoon of programming by bunk), that will allow us to have ice-breakers and other fun *peulot* (activities) and also to do some of our normal first day things like *agam* testing (waterfront evaluation). We want to get the kids active and involved from the get go!

At 5:30 the *chanichim* will go back to their *tzrifim* where any *chanichim* who have yet to unpack will be able to do so (with help from their *madrachim*) along with more informal activities for those who have already settled in.

At 6:15, we are going to gather for a *Tekes Peticha* (opening ceremony) as a whole camp to welcome everyone into the community. It should be a *ruach* filled and fun event.

After that, the *Tzad Aleph* campers will head to *aruchat erev* (dinner) while the *Tzad Bet* campers will attend a short orientation on our "Roo" (Sports team) program.

After dinner, each *edah* will have their opening *peulat erev* (evening activity) followed by *harga'ah* (bed time activity in the *tzrif*). After such an active and fun day we will help the *chanichim* get comfortable for a good night's sleep as they anticipate the start of a great *kayitz* (summer).

We hope that this letter helps you understand how deeply we have thought about how to make the first day both fun and comfortable for our *chanichim*. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to us.

L'hitraot B'Palmer (See you in Palmer),



Rabbi Ed Gelb
Director



Josh Edelglass
Assistant Director



Talya Kalender
Director of Camper Care