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.
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 madrichim (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 madrichim.

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 madrichim) 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),

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