

Kayitz 2018

Shalom Ramah Families,

Summer is coming! Summer is coming! We are pumped to return to our beloved home in Palmer. Our number one goal is to make this a great *kayitz* (summer) for each *hanich* (camper). Please contact us if we can be of help. We have wonderful *yoetzot* (who both provide “camp mom” like care to campers and act as parent liaisons) who are easily accessible during the summer. However, always feel free to reach out to me directly by phone or email.

We are excited to launch [our new on-line camp store](#)! For this first year, we have several different packages that we are offering for sale, featuring some of our most-requested items! The deadline for ordering is May 28th, 2018. All items will be delivered directly to your camper's bunk, in a special Camp Ramah bag, on the day your camper arrives (either first or second session, or the start of a Kochavim mini-session). At this time, we are not offering the purchase of individual items. Please contact Josh Czik at reception@campramahne.org with any questions!

[Click here to read our updated 2018 Family Handbook.](#)

I highly recommend reading the entire family handbook. Below, I am highlighting a few key points that I think are especially important. The rules are primarily for the safety of our *kehilah* (community) and to create a living and learning Jewish environment. I am asking you to review these points with your children to help ensure our success.

- We pride ourselves on being a warm and welcoming community at Camp Ramah. I think it is helpful to tell your children that they will meet all types of people at camp. Some of these people will become their lifelong friends and some of them they will just be friendly with. They should do their best to be inclusive of others and to be kind and patient and to take into account other people's feelings. If they need help with a particular person, they should reach out to their *madrichim* (counselors) or their *yoetzet*. You should also tell them that Talya Kalender (our Director of Camper Care) and I want them to come to us if they are having any problems. It is good for your children to develop these self-advocacy skills. We, of course, also spend a lot of time watching our *chanichim's* (campers) social dynamics and the *madrichim* (counselors), with advice and input from us, work on *tzrif* (bunk) unity and building friendships.

- We are grateful to our donors who have helped us to renovate our A-side sports field! Because this field now has a sprinkler system and nice grass it can no longer serve as our parking lot on opening day. We are finalizing our drop off procedures which will include A-side families to park on both sides of the main road. Safety is our number one priority. **We request that if you have the option of using our luggage service that you please use it. It will reduce the amount of interaction between traffic and pedestrians!** Additionally, the handling of massive amounts of luggage on opening and closing days

requires us to assign many staff members to support this process. Utilizing the luggage service allows us to have more of our staff available to our *hanichim* during these transition times. As always, for those who are required to use our luggage service, we appreciate your cooperation.

- We review our security procedures each year with our local law enforcement officials and security company. We continue to belong to several Jewish community and camping organizations that provide guidance. Last year we made some significant additions to our security protocols and training. This year we are installing some additional security cameras including at the edge of our property by the train bridge.

- Food at camp -- For both *Kashrut* and health reasons (primarily food allergy safety) reasons, we do not allow campers to bring any food to camp. We have a sacred trust to provide both a totally Kosher and food safe environment. We have many campers who have very serious food allergies. Please help us keep our campers safe by not bringing or sending any food to camp. We will confiscate and give away any food brought by campers to camp. We will treat violations of this rule as a disciplinary matter.

[Please click here to view this year's allergy protocol letter.](#)

- Packages – We are asking that families send a maximum of two packages to their camper(s) per session. We want to allow packages while not swamping our mercaz staff. Please remember that all packages are opened and that any food will be given to a local charity. Please do not feel obligated to send any packages.

- Tefilot (prayer services) – Tefilot will now take place after breakfast. We are implementing more music, spiritual exploration, and creative formats into our tefilot. We believe that both our campers and staff will benefit from being fully awake and fed for tefilot. We think this will greatly enhance the experience.

- Israel Education – At Ramah we are committed to supporting Israel. We recognize that there are varied beliefs and political viewpoints and want to make sure that Ramah remains a safe place for everyone to share their ideas. We are committed to presenting age appropriate programming that reflect these values. This year Israel will be our educational summer theme and will be highlighted throughout the summer.

- Visiting Day 2018 – **DUE TO TISHA B'AV, AS WE HAVE ANNOUNCED, VISITING DAY IS MONDAY, JULY 23!** We love welcoming everyone to our summer home on Visiting Day! First session camper pickup is from 10 – 11 a.m. Visiting Day is from 11-3:30. There will be a free BBQ for everyone at the *Chadar Ochel* (Dining Hall) from 12-1:30. Our *Tikvah* Program will be hosting a *tekes* (ceremony) at 2:30. Our *Nivonim* families are invited to a special program in *K'far Nivonim* at 3:30. We want to encourage people to stay to partake in the BBQ, but if you wish to leave camp you may do so.

- Full Summer Campers and Intersession -- Over the last few years, some families have been confused about whether we expect them to take their campers out of camp during intersession. We feel that the full session camper time between sessions is fun and meaningful. We have a robust program and we would prefer the kids to stay. If you have a need to take your campers out during that time period, you may, but please let us know at the beginning of the summer. If you do take them out, they need to go home at the end of visiting day and return with the second session campers on Wednesday, July 25, between 11 and 1 pm.

For the safety and well-being of our camp community, I encourage you to read the handbook. We can't wait for the *hanichim* to arrive. Thank you so much for entrusting us with your children. We look forward to an exciting and memorable *kayitz*.

B'Shalom,

Rabbi Ed Gelb
Director