



March 25, 2020

Shalom Ramah New England Families,

We hope you and your families are healthy and are coping well with the challenging times we are facing. This email is to update you on *kayitz*(summer) 2020, our policies and the steps we are taking.

We remain hopeful that Ramah New England (Ramah) will run both our overnight camp in Palmer and our day camp in Germantown as scheduled. We think that we will not know for sure until much closer to our start dates. We will give you a status update by May 1, understanding that this may be only an update and not a final decision. The situation remains fluid; it is possible that camp will run as scheduled; there may be modifications to dates and sessions; or camp may not be able to run at all. We appreciate your patience and partnership as we work through these scenarios. Our decisions will be based on the health and safety of our camp community and the guidance of our National Ramah and local Ramah health committees and government authorities.

We have always operated Ramah on the belief that we share a deep commitment to raise the next generation of committed Jews. Sometimes it is hard to remember that Ramah is also a not-for-profit business that will be in grave danger if our camps cannot open.

The rest of this letter lays out both our refund policies if our camps are unable to run and how you can help ensure that Ramah will be able to survive if this happens. You don't need to take any action now; this is just to give you the information you will need if we need to close our camps for *kayitz* 2020.

In the event that our camps are not able to run this summer, Ramah is committed to offering to refund tuition to our overnight and day camp families. Because Ramah has already spent a significant portion of this year's tuition to prepare for the summer, we will need all the help we can get to meet these financial obligations and to allow our camps to open again in 2021. We have collected approximately \$3M of tuition money and we have already spent over \$1M on our normal preparations for camp. We also continue to incur ongoing expenses to ready our camps for operation in 2020 and/or 2021.

In the event we are forced to not open in June, we will be asking our families to select one or a combination of the following choices:

1. Donate some or all of your current payments as a charitable donation to Ramah. This is obviously the best option for Ramah's ability to survive this crisis. A gift will lower the amount of money that we will owe to families and will provide us with funds to help ensure we can continue to operate. For those who give at least \$1,000, we will keep 2021 tuition at our 2020 rates.
2. Roll over some or all of your payments to enroll for summer 2021. This will be very helpful in securing our cash flow, allowing us to continue to operate, and giving us time to address our financial situation. For those who roll over at least \$1,800, we will keep 2021 tuition at our 2020 rates.
3. Request a refund for your 2020 tuition. We understand that some of our families will not be in a position to choose options 1 or 2, and we will refund your tuition. Our board of directors and professional staff will work out a schedule of how and when you will receive your refunds. We appreciate your patience as we figure this out.

If we determine camp will not be able open, we will contact you with details on each option and how to make your choice. Again, no action is required now. We will update you by May 1 on where we stand.

Some of our Ramah families have already encountered financial hardship due to this health crisis. If you have new or additional scholarships needs, please reach out to our Director of Finance and Operations, Ed Pletman, at edpletman@campramahne.org, to discuss how to request financial aid.

All of us at Ramah New England want to help during this time by offering our support, by bringing our camp communities together virtually, and by providing fun and meaningful programming. [Our Ramah M'Rachok programming is listed on our blog.](#) We also are available to help and listen to anyone – just email us and we will set a time to talk.

I have had the opportunity to talk to many of you over the past weeks and I am touched to know how much Ramah means to your family. The Coronavirus has had a significant impact on our campers. In many ways, it has robbed them of the carefree spirit of childhood. Camp, for many of us, is our happy place where the childhood spirit lives in all of us. Going to camp is a beacon of hope for many; the possibility of camp not happening this summer is a source of great anxiety to some. Please assure your children that we will do everything we can to open our camps safely and that no matter where we are, Ramah cares about them very much.

In the meantime, keep washing your hands, observing physical distancing and reaching out virtually to us and each other. We'd love to see you at a Ramah *M'Rachok* event this week!

L'hitraot B'Palmer and Germantown!

Rabbi Ed Gelb (He/Him/His)
CEO, Ramah New England