



RAMAH DAY CAMP OF GREATER WASHINGTON, DC

Presented by Camp Ramah in New England



Family Handbook

Kayitz 2016

WELCOME!!

Shalom Ramah Families,

Welcome to Ramah Day Camp of Greater Washington, DC! After an extraordinary first season in 2015, we are so excited to be gearing up for our second summer at the beautiful Wellspring Conference Center in Germantown, MD. We look forward to many years of quality Ramah camping right here in the nation's capital. We hope you will stay with us as our program continues to grow and expand in the years to come!

Enclosed is information about our program that will help you and your child best prepare for camp. If you need to contact us during the day, you can email a message to dcdaycamp@campramahne.org or call (301) 500-8251. If your call is not answered immediately, please leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible. Sharon Rosenberg Safra will serve again this summer as our primary *yoetzet* (Parent Liaison); we encourage you to contact Sharon directly with any camper concerns at (301) 500-8251 x. 102 or sharons@campramahne.org.

We can't wait for a fantastic summer together!

B'Shalom,



Rabbi Rami Schwartz
Director



Sharon Rosenberg Safra
Assistant Director



Shira Rosenbaum
Program Coordinator

ABOUT RAMAH DAY CAMP

Ramah Day Camp of Greater Washington, DC is an affiliate of Camp Ramah in New England and is associated with the Ramah Camping Movement. Ramah Day Camp offers creative and innovative programming for children entering kindergarten through 5th grade. At Ramah we value quality programming that fosters growth and independence in our campers. Our highly trained staff will create a warm and caring Jewish community and a fun experience for all our participants! Our campers' physical, mental, and emotional well-being is our number one priority.

Located at the Wellspring Conference Center in Germantown, MD, Ramah Day Camp will utilize the diverse indoor and outdoor facility on our 200-acre campground to pack our days with quality programming in sports, arts, and outdoor experience, plus the very best in informal Jewish education as is the legacy of Ramah.

WHAT TO PACK: CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

A suggested clothing and equipment list is enclosed. **It is important to label everything brought to camp** so that misplaced items can be returned. When planning your child's clothing needs, please take into consideration variations in temperature. During hot weather, it is important that your child wear a hat during outdoor activities. Rain is always a possibility, so please plan accordingly each morning.

At camp clothing should be casual and comfortable. We will be playing outside, cooking, exploring our natural wooded environment, and doing art projects. Please do not send your child wearing his/her favorite clothes.

In accordance with our Jewish values, we ask that campers wear modest and appropriate swimwear at camp. Please send campers in one piece swimsuits or tankinis. Bikinis of any kind are not allowed to be worn at camp. Bikinis with a t-shirt on top are also not acceptable swimwear at camp.

Closed toe shoes are required for active camp programs. Please send your child with sneakers and socks for our outside activities.

Your camper should come each day wearing and/or packed with:

- Comfortable clothing
- Bathing suit (campers should come wearing bathing suits every day except on special program days which will be announced via email and social media).
- Towel (on swim days)
- Plastic bag for wet bathing suit
- Sandals or crocs (to wear around the pool)
- Sneakers and socks
- Extra change of clothing
- Sunscreen (please make sure you have filled out the Supplemental Information Form)
- Bug spray
- Water bottle
- Hat
- Kippah – As has been our community's custom, all boys are required to wear a kippah during *tefilah*, and a kippah or hat during *hinuch* (learning) and meals, and we encourage girls to do so as well.
- A dairy lunch (NUT FREE!)
- Specialized program gear (e.g. a softball glove if your child has signed up for softball, goggles for the pool if your child prefers, personal floatation devices if needed, etc.)

Please be sure that ALL items are labeled with the camper's first and last name! Initials may not be sufficient for us to return lost items around camp.

FOOD

Campers should bring their own dairy or pareve lunch to eat each day. Lunches will remain inside, in our air-conditioned facility. Refrigerator space is limited. Please send your child with food that does not need refrigeration. Ice packs are encouraged.

Ramah Day Camp will provide certified kosher, healthy, nut-free snacks twice each day. Parents of campers with specific dietary needs should consult with our staff so that we can store and provide any special items.

NUTS / ALLERGIES

In an effort to make camp a safe space for all, please **do not send your child with peanut or tree-nut based products**, as we have campers who are severely allergic. To this end, sharing and swapping of lunches will not be permitted at camp to make sure all of our children are safe.

HEALTH CARE AT CAMP

The camp nurse is on-site and available throughout the camp day. Our aim at camp is to provide your child with a continuation of the consistent care s/he receives at home. Please be certain to keep us informed of any medications your child is taking, or any special conditions your child may have. Please remember to submit MD Medication Administration Authorization form for each applicable medication. Please see your CampMinder account for details.

If your child requires an epi-pen or has significant food or environmental allergies, we require that you send a copy of your physician's allergy action plan to camp BEFORE your child's arrival (if applicable).

Please do not suspend medication for the camp session, including medication for ADD/ADHD. Should the state of your child's health change or should s/he be exposed to any communicable disease during the three weeks prior to camp, please inform the camp office by calling (301) 500-8251.

If your child needs to take medication during the day, or has an emergency inhaler or epi-pen, please bring these items with you to our Welcome Event on Sunday, June 26 to hand over to our medical staff.

ILLNESSES

We are concerned about the health of every camper. We implement good hygiene practices including hand washing procedures for our staff and students. We do our best to prevent or contain the spread of a contagious disease. A sick or overly tired child has a hard time participating in camp. Remember that our days are full and active.

Please keep a sick child home. This protects the health of your child and other campers and staff. In the event that your child becomes sick during the day, our camp nurse will call you to come and pick up your child. If you are unreachable, we will use the emergency contacts listed in your Campminder account.

A child may return to camp when:

- No fever has been present for at least 24 hours
- Diarrhea and vomiting has cleared for at least 24 hours
- Antibiotics, if prescribed, have been used for at least 24 hours
- Frequent coughing and nasal discharge are resolved
- Pain (earache, cramps, headache, etc.) are resolved
- Mood, appetite, behavior and activity are normal again

Please notify the camp office of any communicable disease (such as strep throat, head lice, conjunctivitis, ringworm, chicken pox, fifth disease, flu, etc.) so we can protect other children as well as their family members. We may require a physician's signature before welcoming your child back to camp.

SECURITY

Our campers' safety and security are our top priority. Ramah Day Camp is protected by on-site uniformed security personnel for the duration of the camp day. All visitors must be announced and must check in with security at the front gate. Please call ahead if you need to pick up your child early or come to camp for any reason. Unidentified personnel will be escorted off site immediately. Ramah Day Camp has a close relationship with the Montgomery County Police Department and is in constant contact with emergency first responders.

TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

For those picking up/dropping off at camp:

Families that plan to drive their campers to and from camp will receive a carpool tag to display in their windshield upon entering camp each morning and afternoon. These will be available for pick-up at the Welcome Event on Sunday, June 26 or on the first day of each session. If you are unable to pick up your tag at our Welcome Event, please email us and we will be happy to send you a printable version. Please let us know if you will need multiple tags to keep in multiple vehicles.

Campers should be dropped off at 9:00 a.m. at Wellspring Conference Center in Germantown, MD. There will be staff located outside the Mercaz (central building) within the camp facility ready to welcome your child(ren) each morning. If your child will be late on any given morning, please let us know so that we may have a staff member ready to welcome your child when they arrive.

Please plan to pick your child up promptly at 4:00 p.m. We will have your child ready at the Mercaz building, so that we can facilitate smooth pick-up. If your child will be picked up by someone other than a previously authorized adult (indicated in the Supplemental Information Form), written permission is required in order to guarantee your child's safety. Please send notification with your child in the morning; call us at (301) 500-8251, or email dcdaycamp@campramahne.org.

For those traveling to camp by bus:

Many campers will be traveling to camp by bus. Please plan to arrive with your child at your chosen bus stop a few minutes early so that we can get them settled on the bus before heading off to camp. Staff members will be located at each bus stop 15 minutes prior to departure, ready to greet your child.

By now you should have filled out the Ramah Day Camp Travel and Aftercare Selection form on Campminder, indicating which bus stop your child will be taking to and from camp. We know that plans change and that campers sometimes have play-dates in the afternoon. If you need to notify us of a change in travel plans during the camp day, please email our Camp Office at dcdaycamp@campramahne.org by **1:00 p.m.** For security, these notices must be received in writing.

Campers will be released only to authorized adults each afternoon at the bus stop or after care. During the first days of camp, you will be asked to show photo identification before leaving with your camper. We do this for the safety and security of each camper. At any point during the summer, if another adult will be picking your child up from camp, the bus stop, or aftercare, please email our Camp Office at dcdaycamp@campramahne.org by 1:00pm so that we may add this individual's name to our records.

If you will be late picking up your child from the bus, please call us at (301) 500-8251 so that we may alert the proper bus captain. We want to be able to let your child know that you are running late, so they do not get worried or upset!

AFTER-CARE

For those families requiring extended day care, we have after-care available at Ohr Kodesh Congregation in Chevy Chase, Shaare Torah in Gaithersburg, and Agudas Achim in Alexandria (sufficient camper enrollment permitting) until 6:00 pm daily (including Fridays). Please call our office or complete the form in your Campminder account to arrange for aftercare for an additional fee.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

Ramah Day Camp of Greater Washington, DC observes *kashrut* within the framework of Conservative Judaism and all food provided by Camp Ramah is certified kosher. The kitchen at the Wellspring Conference Center is kashered annually by our camp rabbi prior to the start of camp. We are respectful of the pluralistic nature of the Conservative Movement. *Tefilah* and educational programs at camp are fully egalitarian.

GRATUITIES

We do not accept tipping for our staff. Counselors at Ramah Day Camp are engaged in an important educational enterprise and are dedicated to this task. If you appreciate the service your child receives at Ramah Day Camp, we encourage you to make a contribution to our Ramah Day Camp Scholarship Fund in honor of a staff member. Contributions can be made online by [clicking here](#), or by visiting <https://46767.thankyou4caring.org/pages/ramah-new-england/donate> and select "DC Area Day Camp" under the field entitled "designation." All staff members will be notified of such contributions.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Camp Ramah's discipline policy is designed to help children develop self-control and assume responsibility for their actions. Clear and consistent age-appropriate rules and limitations are established at camp. Inappropriate behavior by one or two children can spoil an experience for the entire group. Staff will deal with normal day-to-day behavior issues using acceptable techniques and approaches including the following:

- redirecting campers
- rewarding acceptable behavior
- encouraging campers to talk about their feelings
- modeling how to speak and interact with campers in a positive manner
- utilizing time-outs when appropriate

When a child's behavior seriously disrupts group interaction, could result in harm to themselves or others, or involves any physical interaction with campers and/or staff, it may be necessary to separate the child until he/she is able to regain control and rejoin the group.

If a child's behavior is chronically disruptive, even after reasonable measures have been made in order to assist the child in adjusting to the camp setting, parents will be contacted by camp staff to strategize ways to help their child re-integrate into the community and determine if the child is able to continue at camp. Staff will always work toward developing a cooperative plan of action to maximize a camper's chance of success at summer camp.

WEBSITE, BLOG, AND FACEBOOK

We will be posting regular updates, including photos, on our Facebook page and on our website. We encourage parents to “Like” our Facebook page, which can be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/ramahdaycampofgreaterwashington>, to be part of this on-line community.

We will also be sending out a weekly email with photos and reflections from our campers and staff. Please be sure that your Campminder account reflects accurate email information.

DAILY SCHEDULE AND WHAT TO EXPECT

Each day campers can expect to arrive to an exciting *rikud* (dancing) and *shira* (singing) session. Campers can put their belongings down in their *moadon* (designated unit area) and then join in the fun! Our campers will continue their day with an exciting *tefilah* program and activity led by our music specialist, educators, and counselors. Then, campers will have instructional swim three mornings a week as well as a recreational swim period each Friday. (Please see details about swimming in the next session.) After lunch, campers will rotate through a series of *chuggim* (elective activities) that they have selected prior to arrival at camp: sports, *omanut* (arts and crafts), *bishul* (cooking), *teva* (outdoor exploration), drama and more! On extra hot days, we will also set-up water activities at the Wellspring site. Our campers will also participate in a Jewish learning project relating to our summer theme of *Haveirut* (Friendship). Each camper will also have the opportunity to participate in an *edah* (age group) special activity multiple times during a week. Our day concludes all together just before 4:00 p.m.

SWIMMING AT CAMP

Four times during the week, campers will take a short ride (3 minutes) by bus to a nearby community pool which will open exclusively for our use each day. Instructional swim will take place three times a week and, on Fridays, we will have an extended recreational swim period. There will be trained lifeguards at the pool at all times, as well as instructors when instructional swim is taking place. We recognize that campers come with different swim abilities, and we will be monitoring them very closely during this time. Campers will only be allowed into deeper areas of the pool if they have demonstrated swim independence and skill to the pool staff.

FIELD TRIPS

Once each session, we will take a field trip. Our camp buses will transport our campers and staff to each location. On field trip days, we ask that all campers wear their camp T-shirt. Specific details, including any special items to bring, will be shared with you about each outing closer to the field trip date. Campers should continue to bring a dairy, nut-free lunch on field trip days.

Trip Dates:

- Wednesday, July 6
- Wednesday, July 20*
- Wednesday, August 3

*Please note that we may adjust bus stop times to accommodate our travel plans, and we will inform you of these changes with plenty of advanced notice.

CAMP RAMAH T-SHIRTS

Ramah Day Camp T-shirts will be given to each camper at the Welcome Event on June 26 or on their first day of camp. We ask that all campers wear their Camp T-shirts on the first day of each session (Mondays, June 27, July 11, and July 25), and on trip days. Reminders will be sent before each of these days.

Our *tzevet* (staff) will all be dressed in camp T-shirts daily. We do this so that both our campers and you, our parents, can easily recognize staff, whether at a bus stop or at camp.

JOIN THE FUN!

At Ramah we seek to bring the whole family into the fun together. That's why we have designated a few opportunities for parents and families to join us at camp for celebration, learning, prayer, and more.

CAMP EVENTS

- *Welcome Event (Sunday, June 26, 2-4 pm)* — Bring the whole family to check out our campsite, meet our dynamic staff, and sample the programs your children will experience during the summer. This is a great time to pick up your child's camp T-shirt and drop off any medications we will keep on sight for daytime administration. Come for the whole two hours or drop by for a few minutes. No RSVP required. Open to campers coming for any session dates.
- *Family Nights (Thursdays, July 7 and July 21, 5-7 p.m.)* — Be our guest for a light family-friendly dinner and taste of Ramah programming. The camp day will be extended until our family event begins and adjusted bus service will be provided for those not joining us. More information to follow. RSVP required. Please mark your calendars.
 - Thursday, July 7 — Family Program
 - Thursday, July 21 — *Zimkudiyah* (Song and Dance Festival)

BIRTHDAYS AT CAMP

A normal day at camp is fun, but celebrating a birthday at camp makes it even more fun! On the day of a camper's birthday (or the closest day of camp, if it occurs over the weekend), we will have a special "shout-out" during our *shira* (singing) period. In addition, during a week when a birthday(s) occur, we will provide a special birthday treat for the entire camp community. If your child has a birthday taking place during our camp season and you have a specific question, please contact Sharon Rosenberg Safra, Assistant Director, at (301) 500-8251.

DRESS UP DAYS

Throughout the summer, we will have themed dress-up days. We encourage all campers to join the fun!

- Thursday, June 30 — Tie Dye Day
- Tuesday, July 5 — Red, White & Blue Day
- Tuesday, July 12 — Sports Day
- Tuesday, July 19 — Hawaiian Luau Day
- Wednesday, July 27 — Wacky Wednesday
- Tuesday, August 2 — Pajama Day

CONTACT US

Need to speak to us about your camper? (no problem!) Did your camper forget his/her lunch on the kitchen table? (don't worry, happens to us all the time) Do you miss your children already? (we don't blame you, they're awesome!) Want to ask the meaning of the Hebrew words your child uses after camp? (we love when that happens...) Have a concern about our program? (we are always improving) Or anything else you want to talk to us about, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Important phone numbers, addresses, and emails:

Camp Office: (301) 500-8251, dcdaycamp@campramahne.org

Wellspring Conference Center
11411 Neelsville Church Road
Germantown, MD 20876

Camp Director, Rabbi Rami Schwartz: ramis@campramahne.org or ext. 101

Assistant Director & Yoetzet (Parent Liaison), Sharon Rosenberg Safra: sharons@campramahne.org or ext. 102

Program Coordinator, Shira Rosenbaum: shirar@campramahne.org or ext. 103

Recruitment Coordinator, Lori Fish Bard: lorib@campramahne.org or ext. 105

Thank you for choosing Ramah Day Camp of Greater Washington, DC! We can't wait to see you at camp!!

SOME HEBREW WORDS YOU'LL HEAR AT CAMP:

Machanei Ramah – Camp Ramah

Madrich(a) – counselor

Tzevet – staff

Hanichim – campers

Mishlahat – Israeli staff delegation

Mercaz – central building

Moadon – edah meeting space

B'reichah - pool

Chadar Ochel – dining hall

Aruchat Tzoharayim – lunch

Hinuch – Jewish learning

Chatif – snack

Chugim – elective activities

Omanut – art

Teva – nature

Bishul – cooking

Shirah – singing

Rikud – dancing

Rosh Edah – division leader

Yom Meyuchad – special program day

N'siyah – field trip

