



November 10, 2020

Shalom Ramah Families,

We hope and trust that you and your families are doing well. This letter with its referenced website links is the second in a series of communications we are sending about our plans for *kayitz* (summer) 2021.

At Camp Ramah we want to make sure that financial need will not prevent any child from attending. If you are applying for financial aid for our overnight camp, please see the information at the end of this email. Additionally, here is the [link](#) to the instructions and application, which is due Tuesday, January 19, 2021. The application for financial aid for the day camp will be available soon and all day camp families will be notified.

As we stated in our first COVID update, we intend to safely open our day and overnight camps this coming summer (assuming MD and MA will allow it), while understanding that we will have to be flexible and that our camps may look a little different to accommodate health and state regulations. Our top priority is keeping our community healthy. We will always consistently communicate in an open and transparent way about all camp matters.

We will regularly update our COVID FAQ pages to provide timely and in-depth information. (Click [here](#) for Camp Ramah New England and [here](#) for Ramah Day Camp Greater DC.)

### **Opening our Camps Safely**

We have started planning on many different fronts for this summer. We have gathered much information from camps that ran last summer to learn which practices worked well for them. Additionally, our National Ramah Medical Committee has formed working subcommittees to prepare guidelines for this summer. [Click here](#) for the bios of our Ramah New England medical chairs on our COVID FAQ page.

The Massachusetts Camping Association is working with the state to formulate guidelines that it hopes will be available in late winter. The Chesapeake (MD) Camping Association is proceeding similarly. We are making our health and safety plans for 2021 based upon what we

know now – with the expectation that we will have to modify and adjust our plans as the year progresses.

For our DC Day Camp, we are closely monitoring school guidelines to better understand what we may expect for summer. We believe there may still be significant changes between now and June and will communicate more about our planning in subsequent letters. Please note that these plans are still in early phases and will change.

Here are a few examples of things we are working on for our overnight camp. Please note that these plans are also still in early phases and will change.

**Culture of Compliance** – Working in close partnership with our families and staff has always been a hallmark of our camps. We have begun our hiring process for this summer, which includes discussions with our staff on the importance of vigilantly following all safety protocols. Additionally, we will rely upon our families to take whatever pre-camp precautions our medical team deems prudent prior to traveling to camp. This may include testing and some quarantining as well as temperature checking prior to departure. If we work together, we will limit our risks.

**COVID Testing** – In addition to planning for individual testing, we have been in contact with companies that do waste testing to monitor for the Coronavirus. Several colleges have used this method to quickly identify if there is any Coronavirus present in their dorms or communities. We are hopeful that we will be able to employ this method. If Coronavirus is detected in our sewage system, then individual testing can quickly find and isolate any problems. The National Ramah Commission and the American Camping Association are working to secure ample testing for camps so we can quickly test as many people as we need to.

**Health Center** – We are working on putting together our medical staff. We also are thinking about how our Marp (what we call our health center) will run and how we will separate people with possible illness from our normal camp bumps and bruises. For those campers and staff with pre-existing health conditions which could be significantly affected by COVID, we will work individually with families and their health care providers to plan for the summer.

**Transportation** – We have begun to think about how our families will get to and from camp this summer. We are seriously considering busing the vast majority of campers to camp. We would establish departure centers throughout our catchment area in locations that are as convenient as possible. At the departure centers, we would assemble, do health assessments, and safely control who our campers are exposed to on the way to camp. We are also considering requiring everyone to use our luggage delivery service for safety and to ease the opening day crush. We hope to have more concrete plans by January to ensure that families who usually fly from places like the Greater DC area will know prior to having to buy plane tickets.

**Program** – We are operating under the assumption that camp will be a closed community during the summer. This means we will not be doing trips or allowing people to come in and out

of camp. We are bolstering our programming staff to ensure that all our camp programs are fun and engaging!

**Counselor Staffing** – We have met with our potential counselors – both returning and incoming junior counselors – and have outlined our hiring practices. We have begun interviewing staff and are thrilled that many people want to return to camp and help camp reopen this summer. We are way ahead of where we usually are and expect to have an energetic, fun and talented staff.

**Communication Plan** – We will continue to update our camp community monthly via email to keep you up to date as we learn more and additional information becomes available. We will send our next update in December.

### **Overnight Camp Financial Aid**

If applicable to you, our *kayitz* 2021 financial aid application for the overnight camp is now open through the FACTS Management website. Here is the [link](#) to the instructions and application, which is due Tuesday, January 19, 2021. To be considered for financial aid, please make sure to first submit a general camp application and then submit a 2021-2022 school year application to FACTS, even if you have submitted one in previous years. Please make sure to answer all sections and submit your most recent completed 1040 tax form and upload your 2020 W2 and 2020 form 1040 when completed. We anticipate finalized awards by mid-April. For questions or additional information after you have read the application [instructions](#), please contact Ken Milgram at [kmilgram@campramahne.org](mailto:kmilgram@campramahne.org).

Please reach out to us with any other questions and concerns.

Once again, thank you for being a part of our Ramah family. We are excited to be planning for *kayitz* 2021!

*Kol tuv,*

Rabbi Ed Gelb (He/His/Him)

CEO, Ramah New England

Camp Ramah New England & Ramah Day Camp Greater DC