



April 27, 2022

Shalom Families,

This comprehensive email contains a lot of important updates about our organization as well as programmatic elements for 2022. We hope you will read the entire email, which contains the following information:

- New Partnership with Sacred Spaces - Aleinu: Safeguarding Our Children Campaign
- Statement on LGBTQ+ and Gender Inclusiveness
- 2022 COVID Update
- Kayitz 2022 Program Updates: Chugim Return, Climbing Tower, New Sha'ar Director, Supported Employment
- Parent Handbook & Important Pre-Camp Dates

New Partnership with Sacred Spaces - Aleinu: Safeguarding Our Children Campaign

The number one priority of Ramah camps and Israel programs is—and always will be—the safety and protection of the campers under our care. We are excited to announce National Ramah's new partnership with the [Aleinu: Safeguarding Our Children](#) campaign, a program of [Sacred Spaces](#), which demonstrates our commitment to this priority. The Day Camp is an active participant in this process, alongside our Camp Ramah New England colleagues. This partnership will help us to continue the important work we have already been doing in the area of child safety, providing an additional framework for our ongoing review of standards of practice and how we train our staff. This is not a one-off program but rather a deepening of our continued long-term commitment to camper safety and care.

Statement on LGBTQ+ and Gender Inclusiveness

Over the years, we have done much to create an inclusive environment for everyone, including those who identify as members of the LGBTQ+ communities. Some of our trainings and programs directly address this topic, while others address our overarching responsibility to provide an inclusive environment for everyone.

Prior to last summer, we created a standing staff DEI committee to help set goals and benchmarks for our community. This committee reports to our board on the work it is doing.

We know that not every person fits into a gender binary. Access to programs and facilities will be all-gender wherever possible. In cases where all-gender access is not possible, access will be based on gender and not sex assigned at birth. Gender identity is determined by self-report, and does not require documentation identification.

We honor the privacy of all members of our community. We actively welcome LGBTQ+ participants and staff to all components of our program, and will not disclose anyone's identity as LGBTQ+ without their consent.

Our senior staff and camper care team have been learning and evolving through real life camp experience with the guidance of experts. We know that each person's journey is unique and that there can be different and changing expressions of identity as children and young adults travel their own paths. We believe that if we care for both the health and safety of each person and the Ramah community as a whole, we create a truly sacred space.

2022 COVID Update

As we know, COVID mitigations are ever changing. What we say in April may not be our protocol in June. We are actively engaged in conversation with our Ramah New England medical team about how we will make these decisions during camp. Of course, we are committed to following CDC and Montgomery County COVID-19 guidelines. We are requiring vaccinations and boosters for all age-eligible campers and staff. We do not anticipate outdoor masking at this time and will be in touch as we get closer to camp about indoor masking and procedures for any confirmed COVID-19 cases. We will not be using a screening questionnaire but we will continue to ask that you keep your child(ren) at home if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness and to pick up your child swiftly from camp should that be needed.

Kayitz 2022 Program Updates

Chugim are back!

We are excited to announce that *Chugim* (electives) are returning this summer. Prior to each session, we will send a *chug* selection form where your child can select two *chugim* per week. Options will range from all types of sports, *omanut* (art), *teva* (nature), *mada* (STEM), *bishul* (cooking), archery, and MORE! Our HUGE news is that we are getting a climbing tower this summer which will be offered as both a *chug* and *kvutzah* (group) time option.

New Sha'ar Director

We would like to welcome Aviva Gershman as our new Rosh Sha'ar. Aviva comes to us with 25 years of experience in formal and informal Jewish education. [Click here](#) for her bio and headshot. Aviva will be working with our Sha'ar staff which includes, in part, 8 summer *shlichim* arriving mid-June.

Supported Employment

Inclusion is a major value at Ramah and we are proud to have a Tikvah program each summer. Last year, we informally supported three staff with needs and the benefits to camp were tremendous. We are thrilled to say that we are formalizing our supported employment program this year and will have at least three staff participating in this program. We look forward to reporting back on the growth and blessings of this endeavor.

Parent Handbook and Important Pre-Camp Dates

We hope our 2022 Parent Handbook will be ready before June 1st. This document will contain our Kayitz 2022 camp calendar and important information about our daily program, what to pack, transportation, and more! We will send you an email when it is ready to view.

Please save the dates:

- Wednesday, June 1st at 8:00 p.m. for our Parent Info Session. This will be held via ZOOM and recorded.
- Sunday, June 26th for our "Meet the Staff" day at camp in Germantown from 1:00-2:30 p.m. More details to follow.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of our team. We are looking forward to a fun summer with you!

Sincerely,
Rabbi Jill & Sharon

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