WHAT'S UP GEORGE?

Message from the Director

Dear Camp George Families,

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and that you were able to enjoy some family time. It was great to see all of the camper families at the congregations we visited. I hope to see many more of you throughout the year as we travel around to different communities – come and visit us during our 'roadshow!' You can follow where we will be on our camp website homepage and blog!

Now that our 14th summer is in the books, our sights are set on ensuring that the 15th is the best summer yet! I am especially excited to share with you that by the time you receive this newsletter, the development of our new Jr. Camper Village will have begun! Words cannot describe how wonderful this new addition will be for our camp community. Not only will our youngest campers be able to live in new, modern facilities , but in time we will also be able to convert the red dorms into an amazing new Mirpa'ah (infirmary). Remember to check our Facebook page and Twitter feeds for constant updates.

Before you know it, we will be back together at Camp, thinking how quickly the time flew by for us to Get Back to George. In the meantime, you can keep the spirit of camp alive by lighting Shabbat candles in your home, singing our camp style Hamotzi before meals, reminiscing with camp friends, following our social media – anything that will make you look forward to spending another summer on Maple Lake together!

I wish you all a great year and look forward to seeing you soon!

Shana Tova!
Jeff Rose, Director

Register NOW with the click of a button

We are thrilled to be launching our NEW Online Registration System for Summer 2013. We have been working hard since last spring to make online registration a reality. We know that this system will make registration easier for our families – allowing them to register with the click of a button, to login to their account from anywhere and anytime, and to make easy deposits and payments through one's secure online account. Once registered, your account will remain active throughout the year(s) your child(ren) attend(s) camp, meaning that all you will have to do is update changes to your account. It doesn't stop there! In the spring, access to the camper forms (such as your travel form) will be completed through the system including eliminating the need for mailing and faxing forms to our office. So start "clicking" away today and don't delay. With this new easier registration method we anticipate sessions to fill faster than ever before!

Message from the Chair... David Abrams

My term as Chair of the Camp George Steering Committee officially began during the Annual Camp Steering Committee weekend up at Camp this past August. It is always a special time... joining lay-leadership with the camp community of campers, counsellors, professional staff, faculty and parents. This year was no exception.

In addition to participating in the joy of a Camp George Shabbat and hosting the Annual Staff Appreciation BBQ, the Steering Committee joined together for a meeting that included a Camp Directors' Report, Leadership Transition and a facilitated visioning session focused on our roles as committee members, faculty and professional staff in the fundraising process and the development of compelling messaging to engage prospective donors.

Harry Levy, the Chair of the NAC (the governing body of the URJ camping system) was able to join us for the Leadership Transition, bringing greetings from the larger camp community and offering his perspective on the role of lay-leadership in working towards our camp's mission. I had the opportunity to personally recognize and extend our appreciation to our outgoing and now Past Chair, Marc Newburgh. Marc's commitment to camp cannot be measured and his contributions to camp are extensive. Some of the highlights include the completion of the camp's strategic plan and governance guidelines under his watchful eye, and his role in strengthening the ties between Camp George and the greater Jewish community in the GTA. Fortunately I don't have to say that we will miss Marc, because he will be continuing to work side-by-side with our new Vice Chair, Sandi Smith, and me.

In the coming months, we will be working as a committee and with the support of our sub-committees, to set goals for the coming year that will work toward achieving our long term objective... to ensure that every Jewish kid that wants to come to camp can... both in terms of financial resources and to have a bed to sleep in.

If you are interested in joining us in this sacred work, please feel free to reach out to me directly at david@thecollective.ca.

Rachel Berman explores France

KK Hikes the mountains of Colorado

Introducing the NEW CG T-shirt Tour!

Hey CG'ers!

We're really excited to introduce you to our NEW CG T-Shirt Tour initiative.

Here's how it works:

If you are travelling, be sure to take a CG t-shirt along, so you can snap a pic of yourself wearing it in front of a significant monument or sign. Going to Paris? Take a photo of yourself in your CG t-shirt at the Eiffel Tower. Going to Israel? Take a photo of yourself in front of a "Welcome to Israel" sign.

And of course, don't forget to submit your photos to us at campgeorge@urj.org and we'll add it to the "CG T-Shirt Tour" Facebook album.

Can't wait to see where you and your CG apparel end up!

The Taste of Camp George Overnight 2012!

We were thrilled to welcome over 100 campers from our Reform Congregations across the GTA, the Leo Baeck Day School, and other members of our community for our fifth annual Grades 3, 4, 5 overnight. The "Taste of George" showcased what Camp is all about and gave campers a chance to participate in sports, the arts, initiative games, and an amazing Shabbat experience complete with a rousing songsession. All of this was led by our fabulous Camp George staff. Looking forward to seeing many "Taste" participants this summer on Maple Lake.

Some of our favourite memories from Summer 2012

Allan from K5: "The new Family Visitor's Day. I liked reconnecting with my mom and being able to show her the Shabbat service."

Jacquie from B2: "Songleading at Super Spesh Song Sesh!"

Keren from N2: "Meeting lots of new friends and just being at camp and having so much fun!"

Zach a C.I.T: "Going on a canoe trip as a C.I.T, and having responsibilities, it was exciting!"

Gabe from L3: "Passing my swim test!!!"

Ariel a C.I.T.: "Just being at camp!"

Michael from BC: "Going on trip. I really liked the experience of learning how to portage."

Sarah from L2: "Maccabiah. I got to meet new friends and I loved the theme!"

Daniel from K1: "I have a lot...winning Nikayon, I liked that a lot!"

Erika from N2: "Waterskiing for my first time!"

Our Sam Award Winners

There is no question that camp would not be the place that it is without the hard work and dedication of our amazing staff. Throughout the summer we recognize staff achievements through staff programming, our Players of the Week, and daily "Chai Fives". This recognition culminates at the end of each summer with the presentation of our Sam Award recognizing two staff for their ongoing commitment and positive work. Recipients are leaders among the staff community and recognized not only by the senior leadership team but are nominated by their own peers and colleagues. This year's Sam Award winners were Deborah Pearl and Matthew Dicker. Both Deborah and Matthew exemplify Jewish values, dedication and hard work, and the performance of good deeds. Yashr Koach!

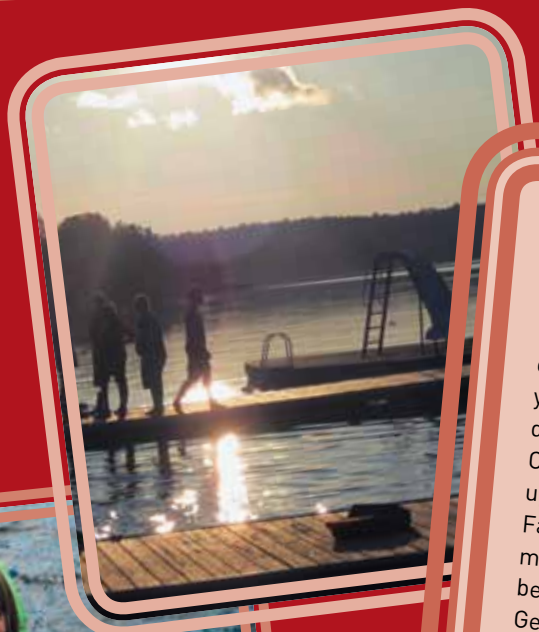
Each year our Sam Award winners choose a not-for-profit organization for the Camp to make a donation to on their behalf. Deborah is donating to Camp Oochigeas and Matthew is donating to KidSport.

I have decided to present my donation to KidSport, a not-for-profit charity that provides kids with opportunities to participate in sport programs. When I was younger, and even now in university, sports have always played a huge role in my life. I understand the expensive nature of playing sports and hope that by making a donation to KidSport, I will provide many kids with the opportunity to play a sport who otherwise would not have been able to.

-Matthew Dicker

Camp Oochigeas is an organization that gives children with cancer the opportunity to experience the adventure and magic of camp. Being a part of the Camp George community is a huge aspect of my life, and the memories, opportunities, and friendships I have made at Camp have truly made up who I am today. It was an easy choice to donate to Camp Oochigeas as I feel every kid should have these same camp experiences and it is especially rewarding sending a kid off to camp knowing it can change their life.

-Deborah Pearl



Events

Missing camp already? Counting down the days till next summer? Don't fret...we have opportunities during the year to connect with your camp friends, see your favourite staff, and dream together about Shabbat on Maple Lake. Our events committee is working hard on planning upcoming programs including a Winter Havdallah Family Event. Watch out for the announcement of more upcoming events. In the meantime we will be visiting a congregation near you on our Camp George Roadshow 2013. Each of our visits are listed on our online calendar. Be sure to come by and say hello when we are in your neighbourhood.

Jane's Corner

Hey Camp George!

During First Session, I was thrilled to be sharing Olivia's story of learning to ride a bike at camp! I was also lucky enough to be able to watch her learn – what a sight! This was Olivia's first summer at camp, and she had a blast! Find out more about Olivia, and hear some of her tips on bike riding – now that she's a pro – all right here!

Way to go Olivia!

-Jane HK

Is this your first time at camp? How are you enjoying it so far?

Olivia: Yes, but I did the Taste of George in the fall and had a great time! Camp is such an amazing place and it has great food. All the activities are SO much fun!

What made you want to try biking?

Olivia: I really wanted to try riding a two wheeler because a lot of my friends in the cabin knew how, and I wanted to learn to ride a bike like them.

Who taught you how to bike?

Olivia: My counselor Leah, and also one of the bikes staff Matt. They were both awesome teachers because they were patient and they cheered me on a lot.

How do you feel about biking now?

Olivia: At first, I was scared to go down big hills, but I tried it and it was really fun! I still need a little help starting off, but now I'm a biking pro! I can't wait to show my Mom!

What advice can you give to any other campers out there, who want to learn how to bike?

Olivia: Always keep your arms straight, but be relaxed. And always keep on trying, because if you do, you'll get it!

CIT Philanthropy Program

For the second year in a row, Camp George was one of only a handful of Jewish summer camps in North America to participate in an exciting teen philanthropy pilot program, under the auspices of the Jewish Teen Funders Network. This program teaches our teens the fundamentals of philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, Tzedakah (charity) and community-based social action.

What sets this experience apart from so many other activities and programs about Tikkun Olam (healing the world) is that it transcends the conversation from the ideal to the real. Our CITs became a team of young philanthropists, who devised a mission statement, engaged several non-profit agencies to apply for a grant, and donated actual funds to an agency of their choosing after much discussion and debate.

Along the summer's journey, the CITs visited the recipient of last year's teen philanthropy gift, the Bob Rumball Camp of the Deaf, located just a few kilometres from Camp George. In addition to watching a memorable song-and-dance performance by the resident campers, our CITs were mesmerized by the facilities and the special accommodations made to provide a fun-filled summer camp experience for the differently-abled campers who attend.

Ultimately, our teen philanthropy group decided to grant their funds to Kids Kicking Cancer, a Detroit-based non-profit that helps children with cancer manage the stress and pain of their disease and treatments through personalized coachings instructed by black belt martial artists. We are so proud of our CITs for making a critical difference in the lives of others, and look forward to continuing this important program for many years to come!

Checking in with our CG Mishlachat!

This past summer, we were lucky to have 10 Mishlachat (Israeli staff), join us up at camp for the summer, where they infused Israeli culture and learning into each and every day! Here's a sneak peak at what our Mishlachat have been up to since departing from Maple Lake:

Rotem: has settled in Boston after travelling around Canada and the U.S. She will be spending the semester in Boston, volunteering at a temple running Israeli programming, and helping students with their Hebrew!

Daniel: is travelling around South America!

Lior: is back in Israel where he is working.

Eyal: is travelling the world, and taking tons of photo's along the way. He is currently in Mexico!

Stav: has been travelling around Canada, and soon will be heading back to Israel to go back to the army.

Mai: is back in Israel after a whole year of meaningful volunteer work in the Jewish community of Toronto. She is spending time volunteering and, getting prepared to begin her service in the IDF. Mai also just published a novel for teenagers in Israel – Mazel Tov!

Gal: is also back in Israel, where she is working.

Ariel: is getting ready to join the IDF soon. In the meantime he is getting his driver's license and working as a teacher in an elementary school.

Niki: has been travelling around Canada and the U.S and will be heading back to Israel in November.

Neri: is back in Israel, and is working in the army.

A Word from Our Interns

This past spring, four of our senior staff participated in our brand new "Community-Wide Internship Program". Through this initiative, Camp George had teamed up with community organizations to offer two month internships for our senior level summer staff. Our interns had an amazing time learning new skills, and were able to top off their internship experiences with a fantastic summer experience up at Maple Lake!

We asked our interns to reflect on their internship experiences, and how they also applied their new skills to their positions at camp, and here's what they had to say:

Darren Laser – Inter/Youth professional at Holy Blossom Temple and Kochavim Unit Head

The biggest thing I gained from the internship program was that it really gave me the opportunity to get some experience in a field that I was relatively new to, yet wanted to pursue a career in. The internship was a great opportunity, as it really helped me decide on the career path that I was taking, while also giving me that experience I needed. Every skill I learned was extremely useful coming back to camp as a Unit Head. I felt more confident in my abilities to think ahead of time and plan effectively, write appropriate and interesting programs for my campers and staff, and really connect with the administration and parents who are so vital to ensuring Camp George is successful. I do believe that the work that I got to do allowed me to develop a stronger sense of myself and the role that I played at camp in the 2012 summer.

Leor Mann – Intern at the Jewish National Fund and Head of Sports

I was put in charge of assisting in the planning of 3 events. First was JNF's Annual Golf Classic, the Scotiabank Pitch for Israel, and a major donor event, An Evening with Preston Manning.

The responsibilities that were laid upon me during the internship have helped me immensely. It has improved my communication, delegation, and teamwork skills. I learnt how to effectively communicate with supervisors and coworkers. These professional skills are invaluable for my future endeavors. The great thing about the internship program is that I could take the gap months between the school year and camp and improve and learn new skills. I was able to transfer these skills of delegation and communication to being the head of sports at camp. I transferred the positive relationship with my supervisors at JNF to my relationship with my co-staff. The internship program was really an incredible experience, and I appreciate the opportunity that camp gave me.

Becca Cazes – Intern at One Family Fund and a Senior Counselor

One Family Fund is a non-profit organization that helps by providing short term and long term assistance to injured and bereaved families – men, women, and children in Israel who have been affected by terror attacks. Interning there, I had the opportunity to work with some of the most incredible and inspirational people I have ever met. Working at this organization has given me excellent experience in working in an office environment, expanded my team building and problem solving skills, and increased my communication skills. Having this internship has opened my eyes to a new way of looking at how the skills learned at 'real' jobs are closely related to the skills we need at camp. Having this internship and going to camp was the best of both worlds for my summer.

David Harris-Koblin – Intern at The Collective and Senior Camp Craft Specialist

My experience as a Social Media intern affirmed my professional ambitions as well as greatly influenced my role as a senior specialist at Camp George. Throughout the duration of my internship, I developed my communication skills greatly; despite being disconnected from the internet while at George, my new ability to present information effectively allowed my co-staff and myself to facilitate programs more efficiently and with greater value.

If you or someone you know may be able to offer a staff internship in the spring of 2013, please let us know!

Where Are They Now?

In this alumni update we're hearing from Jerry Kosoff, former Lehavot Unit Head, and Sharon Dudek a former Ropes Specialist.

Hello to the Camp George family!

While I missed spending this summer by the shores of Maple Lake, I have been engaging in tremendously difficult but very rewarding work as a high school math teacher in inner-city Atlanta, Georgia. Back in May, I graduated with a degree in Math and Economics from the University of Pittsburgh, and chose to join a program called Teach for America. I've made at least a two-year commitment to teaching at a "high-needs" school in Atlanta, Georgia, and I'm now about two months into the school year. I teach seniors (that's what we in the States call our Grade 12s!) a course in pre-calculus. Over the summer, while everyone was enjoying water skiing, baseball games, and relaxing Shabbat programming, I was teaching at a summer school and participating in teacher training to hone my skills. While I certainly missed camp and all of the people that I've come to know and love over the years, I was also thankful for the experiences and memories that I've taken with me down to Atlanta. Without camp, I may not have considered a career in education - it was as a counselor and a unit head that I first experienced the power that a positive mentoring relationship can have on our young people. All of those programs I planned helped get me ready for the lesson planning process - though I will admit that sometimes I wish I were planning a Maccabiah activity or Island Adventure instead of a lesson on trigonometry! All in all, though, I'm in a good place, and hoping that I'll be able to spend some time up in Parry Sound this coming summer.

Missing camp but loving life,

-Jerry Kosoff

Mudi Ng'ahi Camp George!

(That is a Lunda greeting, a local language spoken in Northwestern Zambia.)

My name is Sharon Dudek, and I was both a camper and a Ropes course staff member at URJ Camp George. Since my time at camp, a lot has happened. I attended Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, where I graduated with a degree in biology and psychology. After graduating in May of 2011, I joined the United States Peace Corps. I am currently a Rural Education Development volunteer in Northwestern Zambia. I live in a very rural village. My house is made of mud bricks and a thatched grass roof. I wash my clothes in a river nearby. I bathe outside, and my washroom is a pit latrine! I work at a school that goes from grade 1 to grade 9. I teach grade 8 English and Science. I also bike 30 kilometers North once a week to a school for children who are deaf. Luckily I learned American Sign Language in college, so I can put what I learned to good use. I also have a girl's empowerment club; to teach girls what their rights are as women in Zambia. I use a lot of the facilitation skills that I learned on the Camp George ropes course with these girls. They absolutely love all of the trust games! It is a great way to have the girls and I bond, and to open up the conversation into something a little more serious. Celebrating the high holidays in Zambia has been quite different! My Rosh Hashanah was celebrated with locally grown pineapples and fresh honey from the local bee keeping group. I figured that was close enough! If you find yourself in Zambia, or anywhere close by, please feel free to be in touch.

-Sharon Dudek

Word Scramble

VDLHAAHA

CBAAAHCMI

ISINMWMG

MUESMR

OEPSR

Answers: Havdalah, Maccabiah, Swimming, Summer, Ropes