WHAT'S UP GEORGE?

Passover Edition 2014

Select Spots for 2014 are Still Available!

If you know someone who might be interested in joining us this summer, please let them know that select spots are still available. Don't forget also about our Mini Mensch program, especially designed for NEW campers who are just completing Grades 1, 2 and 3. Registration information and availability is available on our website at www.george.urjcamps.org. Don't miss out on another summer to remember.

Message from the Chair - David Abrams

As the Winter of 2013/14 begins to wind down, the promise of another great summer at Camp George begins to take root. Once the snow melts and the ice thaws, our efforts will be in full swing to ensure that every Jewish kid that wants to come to camp...can.

Over the Winter, our second-double cabin has been under construction and will welcome new kids this summer as part of our Jr. Camper Village. Our Annual Winterfest Event took place in early February and was a great place for campers and staff to reunite and connect. Our Alumni have been active and enjoyed an evening of laughter and sharing old stories at the Annual Alumni Reunion. All this, while the camp team have been visiting congregations across the region, actively engaging our community and sharing with others what Camp George is all about.

As you read this newsletter, camper recruitment is in full gear and staff positions are being filled each day. Our camp professional staff and lay-leaders are all working towards making the summer of 2014 the best ever.

As we head into spring, please remember how important our camp community is and the impact that it has had on your family. When you receive our call for support during our Annual Scholarship Telethon, please give generously and to the best of your ability.

When making your vacation plans this summer, please mark in your calendars these very important dates... our 2nd Annual Camp George Community Shabbat Celebration on Friday and Saturday, August 8th and 9th. We will welcome Paul Reichenbach, Director of Camping & Israel Programs for the URJ, as well as our movement's leader, Rabbi Rick Jacobs. This will be an action packed weekend for the whole community to come out and get a taste of camp first hand. It is also the time when we will welcome a new Chair and Vice-Chair to our Steering Committee. Sandi Smith, our current Vice-Chair for the past two years will take over the helm as Chair, and Len Bates will assume the position of Vice-Chair. Sandi and Len have demonstrated a tremendous amount of passion and commitment for the wellbeing of camp over the last many years and together they will continue to achieve great things for camp. It is always a special time... joining lay-leadership with the camp community of campers, counsellors, professional staff, faculty and parents, as well as many guests from our synagogue and other partner agencies. This year will be no exception. More details will follow.

As always, if you are interested in joining members of the Camp George Steering Committee in our sacred work, please feel free to reach out to me directly at david@thecollective.ca.

I wish everyone a Chag Pesach Sameach and I hope to see you at camp this summer!

David Abrams

Chair

Supporting Our Camp George Community

Dear Friends,

As a mom of two small kids, I am a firm believer in the African Proverb "It Takes a Village to Raise a Child". When it comes to my family, I am often dependent on my village (my husband, parents, friends, in-laws, sister, caregivers) to pitch in to make things work. They all bring different skills and experience to the table, and (fingers crossed!) the result will be two amazing kids!

We are often reminded of this proverb when working with the volunteer committees at Camp George. Once again we are dependent on a village (the Development Committee!) to make things work. But we need more members to keep things moving in the right direction! A variety of skills are needed including strategic planning, research and stewardship.

Over the next few months we will be reaching out to our camp family looking for individuals to join our Village. Whatever your background, we are confident that you have skills and experience that we can use and (fingers crossed!) the result will be an amazing camp for our kids!

We look forward to working with you!

Mindy Webber and the Development Committee

Introducing our New Education Director

My name is Josh Dubell and I am the new Education Director at Camp George. I am extremely excited to be joining the George family and the wider Ontario and Canadian communities.

I am 26 years old, and I am joining the Camp George team from sunny London, England, where I have lived all of my life. I have been involved with camp and other Jewish events in the UK since I was 14 years old. I started as an adolescent teenager that cared about Music and Soccer, but camp allowed me to play to my strengths and my passions and begin to care about big issues in the world. I came out, still caring about Music and Soccer, but on top of that, the importance of my Jewish Community, the wider society and the world around me. During my time in UK youth movements, I have taught and coordinated numerous summer, winter and spring camps, Israel tours, Europe tours and been involved in inspiring young people to become leaders in the community.

Our faculty is already busy working with our Education team on developing phenomenal programs for this summer including a focus on Jewish environmental awareness, a new CIT workshop, and an integrated learning program for Kochavim campers. Exciting things are in store!

I am really looking forward to meeting you all in the lead-up to camp and in the summer itself. I am so excited to share the Camp George experience with each and every one of you and look forward to helping make the Reform Jewish education at URJ Camp George an enjoyable and engaging Jewish experience for all. Bring on the summer!

Josh Dubell

Education Director

Camp Events All Year Round

Mark your calendars for these upcoming events. We look forward to seeing you there:

Sunday May 25th – UJA Federation's Walk With Israel

Come "walk" with Camp George as we support this phenomenal community event. Bring your family and friends and join other Jewish Camps and Reform congregations/organizations as we support the work that UJA does in Israel. More information on the Walk can be found at https://walkwithisrael.com/

Sunday June 1st – Camp George New Family Orientation

If you are new to our community, please join us for lunch, games, crafts and a special information session that will help you prepare for the summer. Our event will begin at noon. More information on the event will be sent out in the weeks prior. If you are unable to join, please mark your calendar for a special conference call on Monday, June 2nd.

Completing our Junior Camper Village!!

Our team has been hard at work all winter and we are thrilled to announce that our 2nd double cabin will be ready for Summer 2014!! Our Junior Camper Village is home to four cabins of our youngest campers and features amazing new cabin spaces and a great playground area! We can't wait to get everyone moved in soon!

Creative Planting – Learning to Garden at Gan Matan and at Home!

One of the great things about gardening is that there are so many different options and styles! When planning a garden we have to ask: does the garden have sunshine or shade? Is there a large open space or small square footage? At Camp, we are lucky to have great space for gardening and different tools to teach our campers about planting, harvesting, recycling and Jewish environmental sustainability. Our main space for gardening is at our organic vegetable garden called Gan Matan. Just a quick hike down the Seguin Trail or a canoe ride across the lake, at Gan Matan we have a large space to plant items like:

- Beans
- Peas
- Lettuce
- Basil
- Sunflowers
- Green Peppers
- Tomatoes
- Cucumber
- Zucchini
- Spearmint and Peppermint

We use these homegrown spices and vegetables to make flavourful teas, havdallah spice boxes, toppings for pizza and fajitas over the campfire and delicious healthy snacks! But it doesn't stop there! NEW for this year – we are going to be experimenting with recycled products to make creative planters around our campsite. From recycled bottles to old canoe frames, the possibilities are endless and we are excited to have more opportunities for our campers to learn about gardening around camp!

We would love your help! Do you have a creative planting idea? Want to create a garden at home? Try out some of these ideas in your own house and send us a picture of your success! We would also love to hear your ideas for things you would like to see us plant at camp this summer – send your ideas to **campgeorge@urj.org**

Camp George in Israel!

Hi, I'm Naomi, and this semester I'm a participant on NFTY's E.I.E. (Eisendrath International Exchange) program. So far I've been on E.I.E. for almost two months and this experience has been everything I've expected and more! School is going really well and I've become so close with the other participants, it's almost as if I've known these people forever! Next week we go to Poland and I have no doubt that my relationships with everyone will only get stronger. My experiences growing up at camp have definitely helped me transition into this program!

- Naomi

Hi, I'm Alexandra,

It is coming up to the two-month (halfway) mark of my journey on E.I.E.! I am having the most amazing experience of my life. So far I have had the opportunity to crawl through ancient springs, be a soldier for a week in the IDF Gadna program and visit the Western Wall, float in the Dead Sea, and climb Masada, as well many other amazing adventures!

E.I.E. has not only allowed me to travel around Israel and experience the full culture and history but has also allowed me to create such strong and amazing friends from all over the U.S. This coming weekend, we are embarking on another life changing experience to Poland, where we will spend the week learning more about the Holocaust. I am a bit nervous for this trip but I am excited to learn and take in as much information as I can. I know this trip will definitely strengthen and build all the friendships I have already created over the past two months.

I am looking forward to celebrating Passover in Israel for the first time and to our sea-to-sea trip, which will take place the week of Passover! Overall, I am just having the most amazing adventure of my life. It is so cool to learn about the Jewish culture while physically being in Israel!

-Alexandra

For more information about the NFTY EIE High School in Israel program visit http://www.nftyeie.org/

Why is this night different from all other nights?

What does an orange, a potato and a cocoa bean have in common? They are all unique items that you might find on a seder plate! That's right...some people add these things (and others) right beside their matzah, charoset, and maror. Do you know why?

Try to Match each item below with the appropriate meaning. For fun at your Seder, why not talk about what other items you could add to make your own family Seder special and personal.

Items:

Orange

Cocoa Bean

Beet

Potato

Meanings:

- We put this on our seder plate as a reminder that not all workers have free and equal rights even today
- We put this on our seder plate to support the idea of women's equality in Judaism
- This item honours the arrival of Ethiopian Jews in Israel, a modern day Exodus
- For those that do not eat meat as part of their diet, this item represents the shankbone that would be found on a traditional Seder plate

To read more visit http://www.reformjudaism.org/modern-additions-seder-plate

What Camp items can you think of that might be appropriate for your Seder plate?

How does our time at Camp represent being free today?

What's up Rebekah

Our URJ Service Corps Fellow Rebekah Houpt has been doing some amazing work in Hamilton, ON. In her role, Rebekah brings a taste of camp to the Temple Anshe Shalom community. So far she's run a Drama games night and a family Shabbat dinner and there's still a few more events in store!

Most recently Rebekah held an awesome rock climbing event for campers in Hamilton. Click here to see a message from the group!

Alumni Spotlight

Our alumni have had a busy year. All throughout North America, Camp George alumni chapters are busy bringing people together on University and College campuses. Active cohorts at the University of Western Ontario, Dalhousie University, Queens University, and even in Michigan have gathered for Shabbat dinners and holiday celebrations. It's amazing how camp continues to bring people together. Our winter alumni reunion was a great success this year, with over 75 people joining to reminisce about their camp days and celebrate George's Sweet 16!!
Here's what a few of our alumni friends have been up to since their camp days:

Rachel Rochwerg (Loewith)

Rachel attended Camp George from 1999-2002—and they were the best 4 summers of her life! Since leaving camp, Rachel completed her undergraduate at University of Western Ontario and then set off for Medical School in Ottawa. She came back to her hometown of Hamilton for her Residency at McMaster University and now works as a family doctor in Hamilton. Rachel is married and spends the majority of her time with her two little boys – Nate, who is 2½ and Leo, who is 4 months old. Rachel is currently on maternity leave with Leo. She can't wait for the boys to be old enough to attend Camp George (and maybe herself even be a camp doctor!).

Rachel shared with us that "Camp George definitely was influential in shaping who I am today - both my Jewish identity as well as my ability to always look for the best in people"

Zach Paul

Long time staff member Zach Paul has been busy since leaving Camp in 2012.
Soon after camp ended in 2012, Zach was engaged to Rabbi Daniel Mikelberg and they married in June of 2013. Rabbi Mikelberg, who serves as one of the Rabbis at Temple Sinai in Toronto, is also a beloved camp faculty member – so camp is never far from Zach's thoughts.

A teacher at CHAT, Zach spends a great deal of his time coaching the Jr. and Sr. Boy's Volleyball team. He is very excited to be representing CHAT as a chaperone on this year's March of the Living program. Zach continues to love music, great TV series, and deep-frying anything he can get his hands on!

Zach shared with us that "I've been helping run the CHAT Shabbaton programs which helps me stay connected not only to my friends from camp, but also the amazing environment. I love watching my students love their Camp George experience as much as I did!"

Stay Connected to Our Alumni Community!

Camp friendships really do last a lifetime! We are lucky to have hundreds of amazing camp alumni who have passed through the gates of Camp George. There are many great opportunities to stay connected to camp and to each other including annual pub nights, alumni reunions, university campus chapter events, and volunteering opportunities. Wanna get involved? Give us a call at the camp office or email campgeorgealumni@urj.org and find out how you can stay connected!

Introducing our 2014 Head Songleader Ron Miller!

Jane HK: How long have you been Songleading for?

Ron: "I've been atonally singing to children for about 6 years, Jane."

Jane HK: What do you do outside of camp?

Ron: "Music. Lots and lots of music."

Jane HK: What instruments do you play?

Ron: "Officially? Piano, Guitar, Bass and Drums. Unofficially? Harmonica, Sitar, accordion, "Jew's Harp" (it's a real instrument), and banjo."

Jane HK: Who are some of your musical influences?

Ron: "That would really be a long list. I started off most years of my life with Zeppelin, Rush, The Who, Floyd, Beatles, and other various classic rock bands. As I became more of a bass player, Victor Wooten, Marcus Miller and James Jameson stood out to me. Stevie Wonder is great, Bela Fleck and the Flecktones are wonderful."

Jane HK: Have you ever been to overnight camp before?

Ron: "Yes. I was actually at George for one session many summers ago."

Jane HK: What are you most looking forward to about your role?

Ron: "The ability to walk around with an instrument all day, and for that to be considered normal! Also, I've heard that the campers are supposed to be pretty cool."

Jane HK: Favourite Hebrew song?

Ron: "Any Hora ever performed."

Jane HK: Best advice for song leaders in training?
Ron: "Have fun. Honestly, you are songleading because you have a love of music and it's ability to connect to people in unreal ways. If you put passion and fun and excitement into your music, you will be able to grip anyone you are in contact with. You don't have to be a great player to be a great songleader, you just have to have great emotion. It will speak for itself."

Our Sweet 16 Summer is almost here!

We can't wait to see you this summer. Until then, take a look back at our last 15 summers!!
Click here to view video.