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New York, NY (June 2010) – While the first day of summer is still a few weeks away, the official start of summer camp began last week– the first day of Jewish nonprofit overnight camp was June 6. In the coming weeks, tens of thousands of Jewish children will be going to one of 160 Jewish camps across North America, many for the first time! The **Foundation for Jewish Camp** (FJC), the only public organization dedicated to nonprofit Jewish summer camp, is looking forward to summer 2010 - first-time campers and first days of camp, the opening of five new Jewish specialty camps, and the first-ever market research study covering Midwest consumer behavior surrounding Jewish summer camp.

Jewish summer camp- a premium product at a great value!

Despite the continuing financial struggles of many families, nonprofit Jewish overnight camps are filling up! As in 2009, camps are projecting a flat or increased enrollment over last year. Camps are doing all they can to ensure that every parent is able to send their child to camp. This includes providing an increased number of scholarships, payment plans, discounts for siblings sent to camp together, and “early bird specials.” These camps continue to present a premium product at a great value.

The Foundation will shortly be releasing some preliminary findings of a major new research initiative which serves to advance the understanding of nonprofit Jewish camp’s impact on adult Jewish identity. This new research analyzes the data from 26 surveys conducted across the U.S. 2000-2008. It compares the Jewish behaviors and attitudes of adults with all measures being equal except for whether the individual attended a Jewish summer camp. Initial findings from the report, due out in fall 2010, indicate that adults who attended Jewish camp as youngsters are more likely to be more Jewishly engaged at home and in the community:

At Home:

- 21% more likely to believe that being Jewish is very important
- 23% more likely to show interest in Jewish subjects by accessing a Jewish website
- 37% more likely to light Shabbat candles

In the Community:

- 25% more likely to donate to Jewish charity, 30% to their local Jewish federation
- 26% to be a synagogue member, and 45% to attend synagogue monthly or more
- 55% more likely to feel very emotionally attached to Israel

“Parents and communities alike are recognizing the value summers at Jewish camp have on the maturation and growth of young Jews,” explains Skip Vichness, Foundation Board Chair. “Parents want their children to have an experience that encourages independence, Jewish literacy and values, and of course, fun. The community understands that camp creates committed and engaged Jewish adults and has responded to the economic struggles of many families with increased budget lines for scholarship and assistance.”

Sports, Farming, and Music, Oh My!

Five brand new innovative nonprofit camps are having their inaugural summers in 2010 as a result of the **Specialty Camps Incubator** run by FJC and funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation. This groundbreaking program, the only one of its kind, was created in response to the growing market and demand for overnight summer camps focused on specific skill development.

As with entrepreneurial incubators in the business world, this program accelerated the development of the five start-up camps by providing a toolkit of targeted services and resources including management guidance, technical assistance, funding, and consulting specifically tailored to new companies, beginning with the planning and launch stages and continuing through the first three years of operation and evaluation.

The camps will be filled with campers from 40 states, plus Canada, Mexico, Israel, Brazil, Poland, Singapore, and Taiwan. They are:

- **Six Points Sports Academy** (*North Carolina*) is a sports camp offering intensive individual and group training in state-of-the-art facilities.
- **Eden Village Camp** (*upstate New York*) is a camp focused on environmentalism and rooted in the Jewish vision of an environmentally sustainable, socially just, and spiritually connected world.
- **Adamah Adventures** (*Georgia*) allows teens to take on some of the country's most thrilling, awe-inspiring outdoor adventures during 18-day treks.
- **92Y Passport NYC** (*New York City*), the only overnight camp located in Manhattan, allows campers to experience New York City like a New Yorker. Kids learn from NYC’s top creative talent in one of four exciting specialties offered: film, fashion, culinary arts, and music.

- **Ramah Outdoor Adventure (Colorado)** takes teens on an array of spectacular activities in the heart of the Rocky Mountains from hiking to horseback riding to climbing.

Free Money?

Early projections indicate that more than 9,000 of the children attending Jewish camp this summer for the first time, and in some cases second time, will do so with a need-blind cash grant received through an FJC incentive program. The Foundation's Campership Incentive Program (CIP) and JWest Program provide grants of up to \$2500 to families who send their children to nonprofit Jewish summer camps for the first, and in some communities, second time. CIP, funded by an anonymous donor, is a national program that works in conjunction with 55 partner organizations including synagogues, Jewish federations, camps and other Jewish organizations. JWest is funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation and targets those in 13 Western states. The grants are awarded no matter what the family's financial situation is as they are intended to expose children – regardless of their affiliation or religious engagement – to the experience that Jewish camps offer. Families are invited to visit and apply at www.onehappycamper.org.

By the end of summer 2010, FJC estimates that approximately 20,000 children will have attended camp with one of these grants since these programs started in 2006 and 2008. Reports indicate that approximately 50% of these youngsters may not otherwise have attended Jewish camp if not for these pioneering recruitment initiatives.

Training Leaders

Three FJC professional development programs just concluded equipping dedicated year-round and summer staff members with skills to be the best at their jobs they can be as well as empowering Fellows to be leaders and create inspiring Jewish learning environments for campers. Total, they graduated 335 camping personnel in Spring 2010.

Generously supported by the AVI CHAI Foundation, the *Yitro Leadership Program* is a year-long fellowship for assistant and associate camp directors. The program's goal is to ensure that the next generation of senior nonprofit Jewish camp professionals has the knowledge and skills necessary to maximize the impact that camp experiences have on Jewish learning, Jewish community, and Jewish identity among campers, counselors, and staff. In this, its inaugural year, the program graduated 19 assistant and associate camp directors.

Launch Pad: The Fellowship for Jewish Camp and Community Leaders was created to prepare first time camp supervisors for the transition from being bunk counselors. Funded by FJC in partnership with the Morningstar Foundation, the program teaches supervision and management skills and opens Fellows to channeling these skills into a professional career. It has been accredited by the Jewish Communal Service Association of North America.

The Cornerstone Fellowship, now in its eighth year, is for third-year returning bunk counselors and is based on the principle that these "cornerstones" of camp are Jewish teachers and role models to campers and younger counselors. The program imparts counselor skills, best practices, Jewish programming ideas, and team building. Like Yitro, Cornerstone is made possible through the generosity of the AVI CHAI Foundation.

Intermarried Families Relationship with Jewish Camp

The Foundation unveiled findings from a new market research study examining parental attitudes toward Jewish summer camp in the Midwestern market. This type of research, common in the private sector, is the third in a series conducted by FJC. The report provides the field of Jewish camp with a deeper understanding of Jewish families and their connection to the Jewish community, particularly exploring intermarried families, families in which one parent is Jewish and the other is not.

The research identified a new lens through which Jewish families—those who marry within the faith and those who are intermarried—should be viewed: a family's Jewish engagement. While children raised solely Jewish are more likely to attend camp than those who are raised Jewish "and something else," those families who belong to a synagogue are even more likely to attend camp than those who are not engaged in Jewish life, indicating that congregational affiliation is a critical path to reaching unmarried and intermarried families alike.

While many of the conclusions from this study solidified findings from previous surveys of the field, they also offered new insights about reaching unaffiliated or intermarried families in the future.

"Nonprofit Jewish camp truly offers children the full package," explains Jeremy J Fingerman, CEO of FJC. "Camp is the perfect environment for kids to explore their Jewish roots and discover what it means to them to be Jewish while feeling safe, making lifelong friends, and having fun experiencing an innumerable number of activities."

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The Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) is the only public organization dedicated solely to nonprofit Jewish overnight camps. FJC employs a variety of strategies toward a single goal: to increase the number of children in Jewish summer camps. To this end, the Foundation creates inspiring camp leaders, expands access to and intensifies demand for camp, and develops programs to strengthen camps across the Jewish spectrum in North America. Through strategic partnerships on local and national levels, FJC raises the profile of Jewish camp and serves as a central resource for parents and organizations alike. FJC works with more than 150 camps, 70,000 campers, and 10,000 counselors across North America to further its mission. www.jewishcamp.org