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**CAMPFIRES, CABINS AND COOKOUTS**  
*The Foundation for Jewish Camp Presents Summer 2009 Trends*

**New York, NY (July 2009)** – Summer is here! That means warm weather, BBQs and ... camp! There is no doubt that camp is a unique and wonderful place for children, and nonprofit Jewish camp is those things plus an enriching and educational experience. The **Foundation for Jewish Camp** (FJC) has been working hard all year to ensure that camps are the best they can be and that as many children as possible can attend and benefit from Jewish overnight camp. Summer 2009 has been exciting and challenging so far– here are some highlights...

**These Unusual Times: Where Camp Fits In**

Despite the struggling economy, nonprofit Jewish overnight camps are forecasting a flat enrollment overall for this summer versus last. Camps have also done all they can to ensure that every parent is able to send their child to camp including payment plans, discounts for siblings and “early bird specials.” In addition, all nonprofit camps provide direct scholarships, as do federations, congregations and local organizations.

The achievement can also be attributed to many other factors including the thousands of incentive grants disseminated. In partnership with camps and communities across the country, FJC runs two programs which offer need-blind financial incentives for children attending Jewish overnight camp for the first, and sometimes second, time. The national Campership Incentive Program (CIP) funded by a gift from an anonymous donor, partners with organizations, federations, camp and religious movements, individual camps, synagogues and foundations across the US. Over 6,500 kids will attend camp in 2009 thanks to a projected \$3 million in grants allocated this year. The JWest Program, funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation, works like CIP for campers in 13 western states. Over 1,600 children in the region will attend camp this summer due to approximately \$900,000 issued in grants.

“Although numerous families are struggling financially this year, many have made certain that funds are allotted to send their kids to nonprofit Jewish camp because they understand the underlying value of the camp experience in their children’s lives now and in the future. In addition, camp directors understand the importance of camp and are dedicated to helping make it feasible whenever possible.” - Jerry Silverman, CEO, Foundation for Jewish Camp

**Sniffles & Sneezes: Wellness Programs**

Many camps have been affected by concerns of the H1N1 virus since even before camp opened this summer. They have taken extensive precautions to limit the amount of exposure to the illness including taking campers’ temperature before arrival and making sure everyone sanitizes their hands several times a day. Despite their efforts, several camps have had campers and staff members displaying flu-like symptoms. Erring on the side of caution and advice of the health officials, these individuals are being separated from those without symptoms for seven days. In addition, several camps have taken extra safety measures in order to manage the situations, from delaying openings to cancelling visiting days. But camp is going on as usual, with pillow fights in the bunks, sportsmanship on the fields, new friendships forming daily, with the spirit and mission of Jewish camps remaining unaffected.

All camps with sick youngsters have made the best of the situation and many have instated unique programs as a result. For example, Camp Ramah Darom in Clayton, GA and B’nai B’rith Beber Camp in Mukwonago, WI created “Camp Wellness” for the separated campers so that they would not miss out on camp. Team building activities, crafts projects and other special programs, projects, games and activities were created and brought in for them. Beber Camp was also fortunate enough to have built a new infirmary for this summer with the help of an FJC Excellence Grant.

Camp Ramah in California located in Ojai, CA created a substitute for their cancelled visiting day. The camp held a carnival, an Israeli music and dance festival as well as put wacky and creative twists on all the day’s regular activities.

**Kids Creating the Future: Going Green**

In line with other organizations, many camps are doing their part to become environmentally conscious. They have created programs to not only “go green,” but also to teach their campers how to make changes, apply them to their lives, why it is important and how it applies to Judaism. For example, Camp Ramah in the Berkshires, located in Wingdale, NY, instituted the Green Camp Initiative which includes tangible methods of energy saving and waste reduction based on reducing the camp’s ecological footprint. Camp Judea in Hendersonville, SC is planting a vegetable garden and providing each camper and staff member with reusable water bottles.

*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](http://www.jewishcamp.org)*

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