



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PR Contact: Alicia Zimbalist
alicia@jewishcamp.org/646.278.4546

GIVING BACK, GOING GREEN, AND GROWING BIGGER
Foundation for Jewish Camp Presents Summer 2011 Trends

August 2011 (New York, NY) – As summer 2011 winds down and record numbers of kids are coming home from Jewish camp, parents all over North America are wondering: *What did my child do this summer at camp?* The Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) is pleased to share that amidst the lip dubs and flash mobs, campfire sing-alongs and Maccabiah competitions, kids of all ages were participating in a variety of amazing and inspiring activities at nonprofit Jewish overnight camps this summer.

More than 70,000 children and 10,000 counselors experienced overnight Jewish summer camp this year. Over 10,000 of these campers did so with a need-blind incentive grant from FJC's One Happy Camper program (OHC). OHC works in partnership with over 67 organizations including Jewish federations, foundations, national camp movements, individual camps, the Jim Joseph Foundation (JWest), and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's PJ Library program (PJ Goes to Camp) to provide \$700-1500 to families for their first, and sometimes second, summer at one of over 150 nonprofit Jewish overnight camps.

FJC's Specialty Camps Incubator camps, funded by the Jim Joseph Foundation, completed their second summer and shattered their expected enrollment numbers for summer 2011 with an increase of 67%. The camps - 92Y Passport NYC, Eden Village Camp, URJ Six Points Sports Academy, Adamah Adventures, and Ramah Outdoor Adventure - offered 1,010 campers, hailing from 34 states and 10 countries, a new kind of Jewish camping.

The Jewish camp community continues to increase opportunities for children with special needs. As many camps and camp movements already have well-established programs for children with emotional and developmental disabilities, many camps are creating new, more specialized programs going forward. B'nai B'rith Camp in Oregon introduced *Kehilah* this summer, catering to children with physical and cognitive disorders and the Union for Reform Judaism recently announced a new initiative for special needs programs in their camps and Israel programs with *Chazak*, a program for children with communication and social delays at Eisner and Crane Lake Camps. Dietary needs have also become a priority at Jewish camp. New Jersey Y Camps partnered with the Celiac Disease Center at Columbia University Medical Center to create the first of its kind a completely kosher, gluten free kitchen.

Greening has been a developing trend in Jewish camping with new innovations introduced each summer. Many camps grow their own organic gardens and use a hands-on approach to teach campers about the environment, integrating Jewish values and lessons. This summer, four camps participated in a gardening project by Amir which designed programs to guide in the creation and cultivation of gardens with Jewish educational components. At Camp Tel Yehudah, Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake, Camp Ramah in California, and Camp Ramah in Canada, Amir representatives helped campers plan, nurture, and harvest new gardens. The campers also decided how much of their crop they would donate to those in need and helped deliver their crops to local charitable organizations. Jewish camps are also beginning to take huge steps to lessen their carbon footprint now that basic changes - like changing light bulbs and forgoing disposables - have been made. Shwayder Camp overhauled their waste water system to an eco-friendly cleaning system. URJ Greene Family Camp is currently creating an Eco-Village, expected be ready for campers in 2012. Camp JRF is also working on an Eco-Village which campers participated in the design of this summer and will help with the construction of next summer.

Caring for community and "repairing the world" - *tikkun olam* - is a key programmatic element of Jewish camp. Throughout the summer, campers across embark on a variety of philanthropic endeavors on a national and local level. Four camps piloted a new philanthropy program this summer with help from the Jewish Teen Funders Network (JTFN). Aimed to provide campers with opportunities to engage in collective philanthropic giving with their peers while guided by Jewish values, camps created programs in which teen campers decided together how and where to donate money provided by JTFN. Habonim Dror Camp Galil, JCC Maccabi Camp Kingswood, URJ Camp George, and URJ Green Family Camp participated this summer, building on the successful teen philanthropy programs already in place at several of the Ramah camps. JTFN, in collaboration with FJC, is hoping to expand the initiative next year.

-more-

Another way camps modeled *tikkun olam* as well as *pikuach nefesh* (saving a life) for campers this summer was through Bone Marrow Donor Drives with the Gift of Life Bone Marrow Foundation. 24 camps held drives for counselors and parents (when held on opening/visiting/closing days) to get cheek swabs which entered them into the worldwide registry for patients in need. Almost 850 new donors were added to the registry from Jewish overnight camps alone between June and August 2011.

“We are so proud of all Jewish camps for what they are doing to create the next generation of strong, committed, compassionate Jews as well as maintaining a healthy planet for them to live on,” says Jeremy J. Fingerman, CEO, FJC. “This summer, my staff and I collectively visited over 80 camps. At every turn, we were overwhelmed with pride at the innovations taking place throughout the Jewish camp community.”

###

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 each summer to further its mission. www.jewishcamp.org