



Camps Mogen Avraham, Heller & Sternberg, Inc.

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CONNECTING FRIENDS

A SUMMER PROGRAM FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CAMPERS

Over two decades ago, our camps Mogen Avraham, Heller Sternberg, Inc., pioneered a novel idea; creating a camping experience for special needs children in a mainstream setting. The basic principle of this program was to believe in what these children can achieve, and to provide them with the opportunity to succeed. An unwavering philosophy and a model program was born.

“Keshet”, the Hebrew word for “connection”, and “Chaverim”, the Hebrew word for “friend”, were chosen as the names for the girls and boys programs respectively. Keshet and Chaverim express our programmatic intent to link mainstream campers and special needs campers in joint activities and our broader commitment to finding the deeper connection that link all of us, one to another.

Today, our Keshet program has over sixty girls and our Chaverim program over one hundred boys. Most of the campers have a diagnosis of either Down’s Syndrome, Developmental Delays, PPD, Autism or a related deficit. Each camper’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) is the blueprint for a full range of therapeutic services that include speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy as well as individualized educational instruction.

In a realistic setting with a backdrop of nature, these campers have the opportunity to achieve their educational, social and communication goals. Real friendships are developed and there are many opportunities to enhance communication, social and emotional skills. Daily activities provide reinforcement of gross motor and fine motor skills in a functional manner.



Give a gift
to camp one night of Chanukah

Dear Alumni,

Welcome to the first of, what we hope will be, our quarterly newsletters highlighting the past, present and future of our camps. In this, our inaugural issue we chose to highlight the enormously successful Chaverim and Keshet programs. Everyone associated with camp understands the difference these programs make in the lives of the special needs campers. And we understand, that although they are expensive to operate, these programs mean a great deal to all of us.

So, as we celebrate the great miracle of Chanukah, please consider adding to the light of



Brisk walks, swimming, and sports are a few ways we incorporate exercise and movement in the daily program. Functional life skills, trips and good nutrition habits are infused throughout the program as the campers learn to become independent and responsible. It is no surprise that parents are in awe as the campers return home more independent and confident than they were before the summer started.

The opportunity to celebrate one's Yiddishkeit is inherent in the fabric of each day culminating with Shabbat zemiros, and dancing in the dining room. Most of the campers attend public school special education programs during the school year. Keshet and Chaverim celebrates their unique needs, their Yiddishkeit and opportunities to interact with children from all over the world.

As important as this experience is for the Keshet and Chaverim campers themselves, we would be remiss if we did not note the equally important impact that these programs have on our "regular" campers. Our Keshet and Chaverim programs provide the opportunity for "regular" campers to learn compassion, responsibility and the ability to give for the sake of giving. There is no greater "Nachas" than the knowledge that since 1999 **every single staff member is a camp alumnus**. First they volunteered, as campers, to help out, then they grew old enough to be aides then junior staff, and finally counselors to children who they treat with warmth, compassion and, yes, love the very love that each of us should have for our fellow Jew.



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our world by making a contribution to camp in honor of our Chaverim and Keshet programs.

Sincerely

Rabbi Moshe Wein Rabbi Ronald Greenwald
Executive Director Director of Camping

Give a gift for Chanukah



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