

CAMP COUNTS

HARLAM'S DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

Harlam.org



December 2016

Marika's Place

By Rabbi Amy Schwartzman

Nearly five years ago, standing by the lake enjoying a beautiful warm summer night and an equally beautiful and warm Havdalah service, Harlam's Director, Aaron Selkow, shared his vision to update and upgrade camp's bunks by inviting individuals, families, congregations and groups of friends to fundraise for and dedicate those cabins. I immediately thought of one of my closest friends whom I met the first day on camp in the summer of 1974.

We were ten and it was Marika's first summer. I had been at camp before and knew to arrive early, get the best bed in the middle of the bunk and a shelf not too high up. When the new camper walked in, a bit teary, my mom encouraged me to invite her to take the bed next to mine. Thus began a long, fun and meaningful friendship.

Marika Winheld spent almost all of her summers between 1974 and 1989 at camp. She was a camper, counselor, water front member, assistant unit head and unit head. She loved everything about camp and no one cried as much as she did every summer on the last day. Marika died just shy of her 26th birthday when she fell in a hiking accident in Israel.

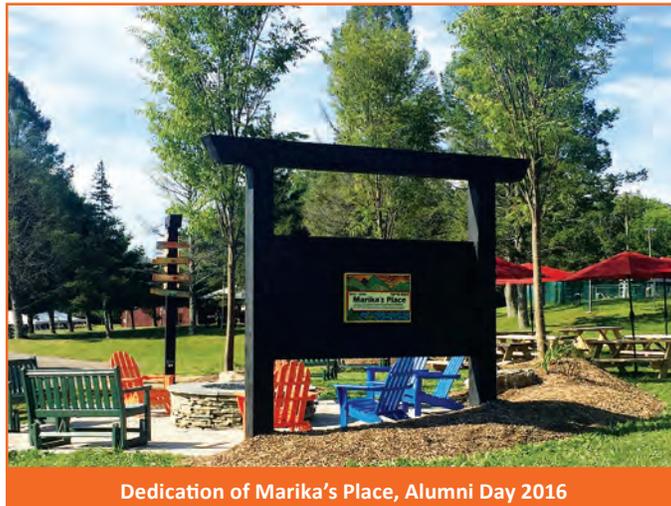
Remembering Marika by dedicating a space in her memory brought a number of her closest friends together. Mimi Prushan and Susan Blum, both long time bunkmates and also Marika's friends outside of camp, joined forces with me to raise money for a special project.

To achieve this goal we reached out to our friends from our Chavurah summer (1978!). While we had seven significant donors, many others made contributions to make the project possible. Equally importantly, the two years Mimi, Susan and I spent gathering donations, provided us with many opportunities to bring our Chavurah friends back together. We have reestablished many relationships. We've made new connections to one another and also to camp.

While we were not able to reach the level of a bunk, we were able to help create a new gathering space in the center of camp. Marika's Place, which was dedicated this past summer, is a patio with a fire pit and chairs surrounded by trees. It is a wonderful meeting place for campers and staff and is already one of the most popular hanging out spots.

Marika would have been thrilled to be remembered in her favorite place and would have enjoyed knowing that many of us restored old friendships while working to honor her memory. Marika's Place is a tribute to an individual as well as to the spirit of friendship that camp fosters.

Amy Schwartzman, born and raised in Philadelphia, began her Camp Harlam career at age 9. Since that time she has been a camper, counselor, assistant unit head, waterfront staffer, supervisor of Jewish Life, and faculty. She now lives in McLean Virginia with her husband Kevin, and Hannah and Ellie (Harlam campers!) where she is the Senior Rabbi of Temple Rodef Shalom.



Dedication of Marika's Place, Alumni Day 2016



Friends of Marika, Alumni Day 2016

DONOR PROFILE

Felton/Neff and Kollender Families

In 2016, two families with long-standing connections to Harlam joined together to make an extraordinary difference in our camp's efforts to create a truly inclusive community. The leadership gifts made by Alicia Felton and Sherrill Neff, and their dear friends, Sharon and Richard Kollender, have helped Harlam meet a challenge set forth by the Legacy Heritage Fund allowing us to invest significant resources in continued efforts to serve children with special needs. Our director, Aaron Selkow, had the chance to speak with Alicia, Sherrill, Sharon and Richard to hear more about why they made such an important commitment to Harlam in this way, and why they're determined to inspire others to join them.



Alicia Felton, Michael and Sherrill Neff



Sharon, Ben, Sarah and Richard Kollender

Why support Harlam at all? What is it about camp that made you decide to invest as a donor?

Sharon & Richard Kollender (K): Our children are third generation Harlamites. Camp Harlam has been a central part of our family's lives for years, and we truly consider it another home. It's a place where campers and staff can consistently be heard saying, "I can be myself here," knowing that they are unconditionally loved and welcomed. When it came to possibly making this home even more inclusive, we felt it was important to help in any way that we could.

Alicia Felton & Sherrill Neff (F/N): We were introduced to Camp Harlam when our son, Jonathan, was eight. He was hooked immediately and attended camp from Carmel through his CIT year, then working one summer as staff. He felt as though Camp Harlam was "more home than home." His love of Judaism and Israel was deeply reinforced by his camping experience, resulting in him serving as a NFTY leader, traveling with Harlam to Israel, returning for the NFTY EIE (Heller) High School in Israel program, and now studying at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) in Herzliya.

Why was this specific effort to support Harlam's work around inclusion and special needs appealing and important to you?

K: Upon learning about Harlam's intentional vision to create a space that would support campers with special needs, we realized immediately how important this next step would be

for the campers that could be better accommodated as well as for the more typical campers as well. This would further fulfill the desire of generations of Harlamites to continue creating a truly sacred space.

We have also been tied to the special needs community in many meaningful ways. We cherish the invaluable relationships we have established with our friends who have special needs, and we understand that often it is very simple adjustments and accommodations, along with tolerance and understanding, that make inclusivity possible. We also understand the importance of modeling for our own children that it's okay to have different needs and it's okay to require and/or offer assistance, both important values already embedded in the Harlam community.

F/N: Jonathan's older brother, Michael, is a non-verbal individual with autism and he requires a high level of assistance with his activities of daily living. Michael's disabilities and special needs were never a problem as a child and teenager at our synagogue (Main Line Reform Temple,) but it was our perennial disappointment that Harlam was not equipped or staffed at the time to try to welcome Michael and support his needs as an overnight camper. Although we ultimately found a wonderful secular special needs overnight camp (Camp Horizons) for Michael – where he is the "mayor" of camp! – it was not until later in his life and he was unable to enjoy a Reform Jewish experience. We knew that this initiative might

Holding our Community to an Inclusive Standard

By Emily Kessler

Often people at camp refer to the “magic” that appears in passing moments or the joy that accompanies the arrival of *Shabbat*. While *Shabbat* is a wonderful time at camp to relax and take a deep breath in the midst of the craziness that is Camp Harlam, *Shabbat* is not as peaceful an experience for some as it may be for others. *Shabbat* services require patience, an intense amount of quiet time with one’s inner thoughts, and a lot of sitting in one place.

Shabbat was not easy for some of my campers. One camper used a fidget toy or could ask for someone to take a break with during services. When our unit led services, he did best if we created a special role for him; he decided that handing out prayer books would be best, so we teamed up together. No one had ever seen a Saturday morning *Shabbat* greeting quite like it, and I am sure there will never be one quite like it again. The song we created to pass the time made every person who grabbed a book smile. While the song he and I created was weird, it was embraced.

to the beat of the batman theme song

NA-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA
– SHABBAT – SHALOM

NA-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA-NA
– K’FAR – NOAR

Welcoming in the weird is not a new concept at camp. Camp is, by design, intentionally loaded with opportunities for “being weird.” Tan-lines are cool, crying on the last night isn’t wimpy– it’s competitive, and there is a song or a dance for pretty much anything you can dream of. Camp is weird. But



there’s a distinction that needs to be made: despite weirdness being accepted, being neurologically different, having physical or emotional special needs, has not always had a place at camp. That’s changing. Welcoming people who live with physical and emotional challenges to camp has become a priority; it mirrors a significant trend that is taking place in schools and communities as well. Camp’s recent efforts towards inclusion are working to change that with the creation of the RUACH (Raising Understanding and Awareness of Campers at Harlam) team, which I participated in this past summer. The RUACH program provides training for selected staff members to care for, solve problems and help create that camp magic more successfully for children who may have physical or emotional special needs, as well as to become certified in Mental Health First Aid.

While camp is making an effort to provide the camp experience to a wider audience than we were previously capable of, campers with physical and/or emotional special needs provide the bunk and larger Camp Harlam community with an opportunity for deeper

understanding and acceptance of people with different learning styles, routines, and habits. This summer, the work RUACH staff members (and all staff for that matter) did was hard, but moments like the ones I shared with this incredible camper exhibit how important it is to hold our community to an inclusive standard. I was not this specific camper’s only counselor and he was not my only camper. He had magical moments with each one of his counselors this summer and hopefully taught the rest of his unit a bit about accepting others who are different than themselves (an important lesson

to learn before entering their freshmen year of high school). On top of that, he learned to manage his needs better and understand that there are times where the group’s needs come first. Camp’s relationship with campers in need of extra care is not single-sided — it is mutually beneficial. It is an opportunity for us to say, “Yes, and...” instead of shutting people out of our community, as Inclusion Advocate and Comedian Pamela Schuller explains in this video.

Not only were we good for this specific camper, he was good for us. Thank you Camp Harlam and the Foundation for Jewish Camp-Ruderman/Alexander Inclusion Initiative for giving me the training to help him be successful at camp, but more importantly: thank you to my incredibly spirited, thoughtful, and loving camper for being you.

Emily Kessler was a second-year counselor in the summer of 2016 and a member of the RUACH team. She is currently a sophomore at Brandeis University. This article was originally posted on the Harlam Blog on November 14, 2016.

allow other families to stay together, and other children like Michael to enjoy a Harlam experience.

Was the matching gift challenge from Legacy Heritage important in considering your support? If so, how?

K: When we heard that our donation could lead to matching gifts to springboard this project, we knew it was important to show our support sooner rather than later. This past summer, we had the chance to see the progress that has already been made thanks to the initiative and the vision of our wonderful camp staff, and we feel assured that our investment in camp was an important one, both for our family and for the Harlam community.

F/N: When Harlam contacted us with the opportunity to

provide a significant seed donation for a large multi-year grant, we immediately decided to enlist the advice of Jonathan. After writing his own business plan many years ago for Harlam to expand its service to children with special needs, his enthusiastic response back to us was that this was a “no brainer” to make the donation!

K: We’re honored to be a part of this and hope that others who love Harlam like we do will join us in support. It’s through efforts like this that Harlam will remain strong and vibrant for generations to come.

To learn more about supporting camp’s Special Needs/Inclusion Program or to make a gift towards this effort, please contact Rachel Steinberg, Development Director, at 610-668-0423, ext. 1040 or RSteinberg@URJ.org. Gifts of \$1,000+ are eligible for matching funds. Multi-year gifts are welcome.

Announcing



By Rosanne Selfon, Harlam@60 Chair

As Camp Harlam embarks on its 60th Anniversary in 2018, we can think about some of the drastic changes in the world since 1958 – computers, cell phones, space exploration, electric cars and more! However, there has been an awe-inspiring constant in our lives since 1958: Camp Harlam! And now, as we reflect on this magical place, the time has come to plan an exciting 60th anniversary celebration.

Over 60 members of our community responded with a resounding “Yes!” to become a part of the Harlam@60 Planning Committee. And, in October 30+ people came together to brainstorm ideas for events, programs and fundraising initiatives to commemorate this special anniversary. This group of committed Harlamites are bringing many of these ideas to fruition over an 18-month period, which will begin in May 2017 and culminate in the summer of 2018.

We are excited to kick-off the celebration on May 15th for our First Annual Golf & Tennis Outing at Philmont Country Club in Huntingdon Valley, PA. The event will include golf and tennis tournaments during the day and a barbeque and entertainment in the

Monday, May 15, 2016



evening for families and friends. Sponsorship opportunities, registration, and more details will be available soon. Please save the date.

There are many more events and projects planned, including the creation of a digital archive as well as an onsite “museum” space, a *Shabbat* celebration for couples who met at camp, an Iguana Ball Tournament, an art-inspired project at camp, a Harlam night at the Phillies, a *Shabbat* Across the World program with a virtual song session, and the creation of a Camp Harlam coloring book to be launched at a Tot *Shabbat*.

We will conclude our celebration with a fun-filled weekend at camp in August 2018. It will include a themed Banquet as well as a concert, a mini-Color War, family activities and lots of surprises, so stay tuned for more details and ways to get involved.

In 1958, Joe and Betty Harlam saw the importance of buying camp’s Kunkletown property as an investment in future generations of young Jews to learn how to embody Jewish values and develop a strong Jewish identity. So, in the spirit of their commitment and to honor the legacy of Arie Gluck, we ask that you join us – participate in our anniversary events, share your camp stories, and make your own investment in camp’s future by becoming a member of the 1958 Club.

I look forward to celebrating Harlam@60 with you. Visit campharlam.org/sixty/ to learn more.

Please Note: We are so appreciative of the many donors who support Harlam in a meaningful way. To keep our donor listings as accurate and up-to-date as possible, donor recognition can now be found on our website at campharlam.org/give. This list will be maintained regularly to provide more timely acknowledgement. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rachel Steinberg at RSteinberg@URJ.org. Thank you!



In 1951, the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) opened the doors of its first camp with an eye to creating memorable experiences for Jewish children each summer. Now with seventeen camps across North America, the URJ operates the largest, most successful Jewish camping program in the world.

The URJ’s youth programs instill a sense of joy, compassion, and pride in being Jewish while nurturing a young person’s innate desire to make a difference in the world. The URJ Youth programs – NFTY Youth Group Programs, Camps, Israel Programs and Mitzvah Corps Social Justice Travel Programs – inspire thousands of youth and young adults each year.

To learn more about the URJ and the impact of its youth programs, visit: <http://www.urj.org/what-we-do/youth>



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