

From Jacob Cytryn, Executive Director



On June 24, 1992, I stepped off a bus, walked up a muddy hill, and my life changed ... I fell in love with a place. In June of 1993 I met my best friend, learned the potential of uniting as a cabin, fell in love with camp musicals, saw the power of my own eidah, and met two role models whose guidance and wisdom would impact me for the next two

decades, and beyond. This was followed by five more summers as a camper, Ramah Israel Seminar, and every summer since on staff.

Every summer we have camp is one where hundreds of campers and staff, at Ramah Day Camp in Chicago and Camp Ramah in Wisconsin, have innumerable experiences and form memories that will shape their lives. Each summer we spend at camp shapes our life, in one way or another.

This summer, none of those memories, and none of those experiences, will happen.

Every summer best friends meet at camp; those who would have met in 2020 may not become the best friends they were destined to be. The same holds for everything else: meeting the counselor who becomes your surrogate big sister, learning to throw a Frisbee, leading minchah for the first time, being on the winning basketball team, meeting an Israeli who inspires a lifelong connection to Israel, and on, and on, and on. All cut off, all prevented, all delayed - at best.

The losses are enormous. Yes, we must remember, these losses pale in comparison to the wreckage of the COVID-19 pandemic that has swept the world: human lives, families, friends, businesses, entire economies, and more. We must contextualize, we must remember the small place we hold in the broader scheme of things. And, having done that, we must mourn the loss.

In this moment of mourning there is silence on the shore of Lake Buckatobon and in the empty pools at Ramah Day Camp. No smell of French toast wafting from the hadar ochel during shacharit, no polar bear swim, no sight of the Himnon Ramah banner at the

end of an eidah musical. It is a real loss and I ask that you join with me and channel that grief in two directions.

First, tell your camp stories, proclaim the power of the place to change your life, to bring you and your children joy and friends, inspiration to be certain types of Jews and human beings. Speak to Ramah's value and the importance of sending children and adolescents to be part of our transformational experiences.

Second, please support our emergency fundraising campaign to respond to \$3.9 million in lost tuition revenue and situate both of our camps in a position of strength for 2021, 2022, and beyond. We aim to raise \$2 million between April 15 and September 30 and, thanks to lead donors, every dollar you contribute will be matched 1:1, doubling all gifts, from \$1 to \$100 to \$10,000 or more. We are incredibly grateful to the parents of our 2020 campers who have generously chosen to transform all or part of paid tuition fees into a donation, and to donors who have already reached out to Ramah in this time of need. Thanks to them and thanks to you we will get through this together.

Though we trace our founding back to our first summer in 1947, the actual creation of Camp Ramah in Wisconsin went back to 1946 or perhaps to 1945 and earlier. If so, this year we begin a years-long celebration of our 75th anniversary. The work to identify a site, begin recruiting communal support, and preparing for that first summer of 1947 must have begun a year or more before the first buses pulled into camp with the first 100 campers that June.

Were they alive today, the founders of our camps would walk through the Northwoods of Wisconsin and the pristine and pastoral acres we own in the northwest suburbs of Chicago with mouths agape. They never could have imagined that the kernel of a vision they planted would someday flower into the camps we know today. With your help we are poised to revitalize their vision and lay a path forward for our next seventy-five years, enabling us to imagine those mythic founders walking our campuses in 2021 and for decades to come witnessing firsthand their spiritual and biological descendants reaping the fruit of their labors. Their labors, and our own.

David Kushnir, Board President



The 2020 calendar year started with incredible promise and excitement for Camp Ramah in Wisconsin and Ramah Day Camp. Early in January, we had an amazing turnout at our Ramah Committee (the Va'ad) meeting. Our professional leaders eagerly shared our strong enrollment numbers, enhanced

recruitment efforts, new program initiatives, staff updates and recent photos of our construction projects. We ended our meeting feeling energized about our future.

The following week, we held a strategic planning retreat at Ramah Day Camp and led by Julia Riseman, from JCamp 180, a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. We brought together a group of 20 lay leaders to join our professional staff in setting the vision for the next 3-5 years. This was a true cross section of our constituents and all were eager to get involved. We left our session excited to tackle the next phase of the planning process and reconvene in a few months with a draft in hand.

At the end of the month, we had our Ramah Day Camp “Summer in January” event, an annual gathering connecting Ramah families to the warmth of camp in the middle of the winter. This year was a special event as we also said Todah Rabbah to Lori Stark for her 19 years as director and welcomed Talia Derman as her successor. There was so much love in the room as we celebrated Lori, along with confidence in what Talia would bring to the role.

In January all of our summer planning was ramping up and our future looked great. And then, we were introduced to a force beyond our control - COVID-19. All of our excitement turned into grave concern, and disruptions to our camp timeline rapidly occurred. Early on, we reached out to an esteemed group of doctors connected to camp to provide insight into what they were seeing on the front lines treating patients with the virus. Shortly thereafter, we convened the Emergency COVID-19 Planning Group made up of lawyers, business owners, insurance specialists and finance experts to lay out the possible scenarios of what we might expect and the immediate steps we needed to consider. All of our regular sub-committee meetings were put on hold to focus on this new challenge. It was unbelievable how quickly and drastically things had changed.

During these uncertain times, it was critically important to stay connected with our community and be transparent about our thinking and our process. I commend Jacob and the professional staff for their regular e-mails to our families and the speed and success in which Kikar from Afar was launched. We established a values-based decision tree on the many questions that needed to be answered. Each day, new information was processed and factored into that assessment. It was inconceivable to me that phrases such as “encourage social distancing” and “adjust activities and procedures to limit sharing” would be part of our discussions on guiding camp operations.

As time went on, the possibility of not opening our camps became more of a reality. Yet we held out hope that good news for the camp community was just around the corner. Many phone calls and Zoom conferences started with optimism as everyone wanted desperately to find a way forward. Inevitably, those calls ended with more questions and concerns than when they started. For every hurdle we thought we could overcome, new obstacles and uncertainties emerged. Sadly, the good news we hoped for never materialized.

It was on Lag B'Omer that the gravity of the situation hit me the hardest. That night my family made a little bonfire in the backyard, made s'mores, and turned on Israeli music. It smelled, tasted and sounded like camp. At that moment, I was overcome with sadness and disappointment. Who knows what the full impact of a cancelled season will have on our campers, our staff and the institution itself? I realized my strong emotions were simply an indication of the remarkable and transformative place camp can be. Our painful decision now will help to ensure wonderful memories will be created next year and well into the future.

I am still heartbroken over this decision, as we all are. At the same time, this is such a clear reminder that we have something truly special in our camp experiences and our broader camp community. These unprecedented times have demonstrated the fragile nature of the world, and our tremendous need to protect our camps for current and future generations. The support from our Ramah friends is overwhelming. I am thankful to all of our Ramah supporters and I feel blessed to be part of this remarkable community.

Summer 2021, God willing, is going to be amazing!

Ramahniks to the Rescue

We are grateful to all who are caring for our communities during the COVID-19 crisis and are proud to feature these alumni and camper parents.

Hundreds of protective masks donated as healthcare workers, first responders face shortages

WGN9 News, Chicago – March 22, 2020

As health care workers face more and more cases of COVID-19 every day, there is an urgent need for personal protective equipment, including gowns, gloves and masks used to protect them from infected patients.

As supplies run out, one area doctor is stepping up and asking the community to donate masks to help guard against the spread of the virus.

“Doctors are being asked to wear just one mask over the course of a day,” cardiologist Dr. Joey Sager said. Sager explained that could be a problem because if they see even just one patient with COVID-19, the mask they are wearing is then potentially infected. “You don’t want to wear it again, so the conservation efforts are causing problems at the front lines and putting health care workers at risk,” Sager said.

As health care workers confront the novel coronavirus, supplies like masks are dwindling. So at least for today, part of the nation’s health care supply chain runs from basements and garages, to back seats, to bins set up in a Barrington forest preserve. From there, Sager said he and his wife will drop them off at hospitals and local firehouses.

“We knew there were people out there with N95 masks that weren’t being used, and we knew there were people who needed them that didn’t have them, so we figured we’d try to figure out a way to connect them and set up a donation spot,” Sager said.



Dr. Joey Sager (Nivonim 1994)

Farmers donate what they can to help those who are struggling

WQAD8ABC – Quad Cities News, March 25, 2020

What started out as one farmer’s idea is now becoming a state wide cause. Truck after truck, load after load. These farmers work tirelessly to feed the nation. Corn and soybean farmer Nik Jakobs says, “As farmers our job is to feed the world.”

Now these everyday heroes are helping put food on the table for families across Northern Illinois. “Our whole purpose was to convert this grain into groceries as quick as we can for families and neighbors that really need it.”

A father of three, Nik Jacobs initiated the movement, and has so far raised \$20,000. He says local food banks will receive the money by the end of the week. “Grain donation is not a new idea. It’s just our fastest mechanism to turn grain into food.”

The last few years have been a real struggle for farmers yet here they are today donating what they can. Today they’ve donated 6,000 bushels. That’s about \$160,000 worth of groceries for those struggling during the COVID 19 pandemic. According to the Illinois food bank, every dollar that we donate is converted into \$8 of groceries.

The grain drive started on Monday. Two days later, more than 30 Illinois grain yards are now accepting grain donations. Nik says, “We just want to do our part to help feed the world because that was what we were put here to do.” Nik hopes grain yards across the country take on similar initiatives.



Nik Jakobs (Nivonim 2001)

Twins work side-by-side as Northwestern nurses fighting coronavirus

WGN News9, Chicago – May 6, 2020

A set of twins are working side-by-side as nurses at Northwestern Medicine. “We have always been so close, but we also wanted to maintain our own independence. We both loved the healthcare field but wanted to do something different,” said Rebecca Silverman. “And then realized, we both really want to be nurses.”

Rebecca and Samantha chose the same profession, but slightly different paths. Rebecca works in the medical ICU and Samantha works in the cardiac ICU. But for right now, both are focused on caring for coronavirus patients at Northwestern Medicine.

“Everyone has their friends and their family to turn to for support, but it’s not the same as talking to someone who is going through pretty much the exact same thing as you,” Samantha said. “Your coworkers you can turn to in that way, too, but having your sister is like a whole other level.”



Samantha (left) and Rebecca Silverman (Nivonim 2011)

Ramahniks to the Rescue

Hillel student lives Jewish values through volunteerism during outbreak of novel coronavirus

Hillel News May 06, 2020

Ronen Pink, 21, has transformed part of his childhood home into a workstation, where his 3D-printer hums from morning to night to create protective masks. The rising senior at University of Miami has made roughly 50 masks for Minneapolis-based medical professionals since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. He uses a 3D-printer template approved by the National Institute of Health to produce each mask — a four-hour process. “There’s always something you can do to help, and this was a way I could contribute,” he said. “People really need this right now.”



Ronen Pink (Nivonim 2015)

With donations from community members, such as elastic bands and 3D-printing plastic, Pink has been able to aid Shalom Home, a Jewish-affiliated nursing home suffering from a lack of protective gear. The World Health Organization estimated at least 89 million masks will be needed each month to treat coronavirus cases.

For Pink, who is incoming co-president of University of Miami Hillel, upholding Jewish values such as *gemilut chasidim*, acts of lovingkindness, is central to his identity.

“You can even turn an inanimate object into a tool for *mitzvot*,” Pink said. “When I purchased my 3D-printer with my *bar mitzvah* money, I didn’t have any grand idea of helping others. But I am so happy that it ended up enabling me to address a health need and giving me another opportunity to live my Jewish values.”



A Coordinated Effort to Deliver Food to Homeless Shelters

Ramah parent and guest chef, Karen Nochimowski, the creator of the cooking blog MommaChef.com and Momma Chef’s Soup Kitchen in the Chicago neighborhood of West Rogers Park, has been spearheading food deliveries to several homeless shelters her Soup Kitchen normally feeds. Though the soup kitchen is temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Karen and dozens of volunteers (over 20 of these volunteers are Ramah families) are cooking food for those in need. Karen coordinates food drop-offs at her house every Tuesday morning and delivers 7-course homemade meals weekly to feed all of the guests at these shelters.



Jeff Kaminsky (Nivonim 1987)

Illinois Company Makes Medical Beds for Alternate Care Facility

News Channel ABC 20 - April 13, 2020

An Illinois manufacturing company is stepping up to help supply medical beds to the Army Corps of Engineers at the alternate care facility at McCormick Place. Accurate Metal Fabricating (AMF) developed a design for the “Rapid Deployment Emergency Medical Bed” in less than 10 days.

On Friday, AMF’s bid to the USACE to supply the beds was accepted. So far, AMF has assembled and delivered nearly 2,000 beds to the McCormick Place ACF. As of April 10, the first of nearly 2000 beds were assembled and installed at McCormick Place.

As AMF National Sales Manager Jeff Kaminsky described it, “In just 10 days we went from being a custom metal fabricator with basically no experience making medical beds, to fabricating and delivering nearly 20 semi truckloads of beds and mattresses. We even finished the project a full day and a half ahead of schedule. And now we’re getting inquiries from all over the country, not just for medical beds, but also for partitions for hospital rooms and all kinds of other pandemic-related products. It’s really a pretty amazing story.”

Frontline Workers Helping Others during Coronavirus

Condensed from Time Magazine, April 9, 2020

“We’re a program at the Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS) in New York working with adults living with serious mental illness. The goal of our program is to help our clients thrive in the community without hospitalization and to reach their life goals. We bring all the services to the people where they are. We work with their families, address legal issues, go grocery shopping or help them with cleaning, if they’re interested in employment and education—really everything we can to help them reach their goals and maintain wellness in the community.



Ben Davis, Nivonim 2000, program director and a social worker at CUCS

[With COVID-19] our job is different in almost every way. We try to do video conferencing by phone when we can, but it’s so hard to assess what’s going on with people that way. When we think it is critical we go and see them in person because we need to. This particularly includes delivering and administering medication. We take all the precautions we can when we do this.

The folks that we work with are among the most vulnerable in our society. When society is functioning at its best, they face incredible challenges because of their mental illness, because of trauma history, because of structural inequality, you name it. Every challenge they face in society when everything’s functioning well is heightened now.

But our clients are survivors. They have been through everything, have lived through things I can’t imagine. They are still here and they’re persistent. I believe that they have that mindset that they’ve been able to get through things before and they’ll be able to get through this now. I try to be optimistic that they’ll be okay. We are there no matter what to help them.”

Meet the medical students who launched a program to offer childcare to hospital workers fighting the coronavirus pandemic

CNN, March 23, 2020

As the war against the merciless coronavirus rages on, health care workers nationwide are on the frontline of an unpredictable battle. While working tireless hours, those in the field often forgo their own needs. Now, one group of University of Minnesota (UMN) Medical School students has decided to lend a hand—not at the hospitals, but in the homes of health care professionals.



Sara Lederman (Nivonim 2006)

They call themselves the MN CovidSitters. Their main job? To provide health care workers in the state with the some of the things they need most at the moment, ranging from child or pet care to grocery and pharmacy runs. The initiative, which launched in mid-March, pairs students with health care workers, including doctors, nurses, kitchen staff, janitors and hospital administrators, across the entire state.

The idea for the program, founded by UMN second year medical students Sruthi Shankar and Sara Lederman, came after their university moved its classes online and canceled clinical rotations. On Friday, Lederman began gathering volunteers, mostly medical, pharmacy, and nursing students, while Shankar worked on compiling a list of health care workers in need of assistance.

Within three days, the group had more than 280 student volunteers and more than 160 health care workers sign up for services. The MN CovidSitters initiative has also inspired many others to start similar initiatives. The Minnesota group has been working with more than 20 other groups across the globe to help launch similar programs.

The group is also directing all monetary contributions donated to MN CovidSitters to organizations, including food banks and homeless shelters that serve Minnesota’s most vulnerable populations.

Ramah Connect!

We recently launched Ramah Connect, a powerful tool to network professionally across the vast Ramah Wisconsin alumni base, reconnect with old friends through the alumni directory, and view vintage camp photos. Check out the 2020 updates below and join Ramah Connect today!

Births

Will Kenneth, son of Kristie and **Brett Kaplan (Nivo 1993)**
Ethan, son of **Rachel Katz (Nivo 1998)** and Geoff Storchan
Yarden, daughter of **Yaela (Garr) (Nivo 1999)** and Moshe Miller
Daughter of Chevi and **Raimy Rubin (Nivo 1999)**
Nadav Lev, son of Tamara Frankel and **Zach Silver (Nivo 1999)**
Gavi Wolff, son of Courtney and **Jeffrey Berman (Nivo 2000)**
Noah Ezekiel, son of **Leehe (Matalon) (Staff 1999-2000s)** and Sam Milligan
Son of **Vered (Ken) and Barak Laness (Both Mishlachat 2000s)**
Elizabeth Shoshana, daughter of **Rebecca (Landis) (Nivo 2001)** and Corey Derdiger
Mara Ruth, daughter of **Sarah Peaceman (Nivo 2001)** and Hal Dworkin
Nathan Isaac, son of **Dana (Fine) (Nivo 2001)** and Steven Blitzstein
Ofir, daughter of Shahr and **Jeff Villano (Nivo 2001)**
Gabriella Grace, daughter of Tihela Feit and **Josh Gleicher (Nivo 2002)**
Son of Jillian and **Gabi Gliksberg (Nivo 2003)**
Abraham Daniel, son of **Ruth Singer (Nivo 2003)** and Ari Zolin
Aviva Raye, daughter of Alexis Braverman and **Charlie Gandelman (Nivo 2003)**
Ruthie and Zev, twins of **Shayna Flink (Nivo 2004)** and Brandon DeShields
Naveh Dov, son of Sivan and **Matt Rudolph (Nivo 2004)**
Son of **Avital (Ostfield) (Nivo 2004)** and Jordan Kadosh
Yogev William, son of **Aitan Melman (Nivo 2006)** and Lee Parti
Cyrus Levi, son of Leah Sarna and **Ethan Schwartz (Nivo 2006)**
Veronica Haylee, daughter of **Hannah (Kreindler) (Nivo 2007)** and Matt Opat
Maya Dorit, daughter of **Katie (Minkus) (Nivo 2007)** and Zach Pellish

iPhone

1. Go to the app store and download the "Graduway Community" app
2. Search for "Camp Ramah in Wisconsin"
3. Sign in/Register

Android

1. Go to the Google Play store and download the "Camp Ramah in Wisconsin" app
2. Sign in/Register

Computer Browser

1. Visit www.ramahconnect.com
2. Sign in/Register

Noah, son of **Alyssa (Berkowitz) (Staff 2008)** and Ben Tischler
Brody Asher, son of **Bekah (Hakimian) (Nivo 2008)** and Stu Almeleh
Maxwell Simon, son of **Rebecca (Nadis) (Staff 2010s)** and Zach Strobehn
Engagements
Gabe Roth (Nivo 1998) and Marina Arutyunyan
Jonathan Zimbler (Nivo 2000) and Lisa Schuman
Kenny Kalman (Tikvah 2000s) and Heidi Wangelin
Alexa Erlich (Nivo 2004) and Jordan Kelman
Jamie Cooper (Nivo 2004) and Mark Schnitzer
Ari Werner (Nivo 2007) and Yaniv Wolf
Jacob Rabinowitz (Nivo 2008) and Molly Rosen
Weddings

Toby Warnick (Nivo 1991) and Jordan
Deanna Neil (Nivo 1997) and Tal Wolfson
Elli Smerling (Nivo 2006) and Andy Sevi
Josh Steinberg (Nivo 2008) and Shani Bocian
Aaron Fineberg (Nivo 2009) and Teri McGuire
Abby Grad (Nivo 2009) and **Yoni Israelson (Nivo 2009)**
Sam Botbol (Nivo 2010) and Ariel Goodman
Aaron Drexler (Nivo 2012) and Carly Rubin
Our Sincere Condolences

To the family of **Madeline Kripke (camper in the 1950's)**, who passed away in April 2020.
To the family of **Deborah Kantor Nagler (Nivo 1969)**, who passed away in April 2020.
To the family of **Robert Less (Ramah Wisconsin Committee member)**, who passed away in June 2020.

Ramah: where fun and friendship build Jewish lives and Jewish leaders



Ramah Wisconsin staff members were inspired by sessions at the **Weinstein National Ramah Leadership Institute** held in January in Ojai, California



The Ramah Wisconsin delegation joined educators, songleaders and clergy for the energizing **Songleader Boot Camp 2020** in St. Louis in February



As part of National Ramah's Maslul Fellowship, senior counselor and songleader Alan Imar served as a member of an 'American Mishlachat' at two Jewish summer camps in Argentina in December.



Todah Rabbah to camper Lorelei Lindon (right), who raised over \$1,000 in honor of her Bat Mitzvah using the give.ramahwisconsin.com/diy platform. She wrote, "I am raising money for kids that are not able to go to camp. I chose to do this because camp is an amazing place for me where I have made so many memories. I want all kids to have a chance to have an amazing experience at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin!"



Ramah Wisconsin participants and staff members Ralph Schwartz (Special Needs Program Director) and Sam Weiner (Rosh Atzmayim) had an amazing time on the December **Birthright Israel trip** designed for individuals with autism and related disorders.



This year Ramah Wisconsin alumni Jesse Steinman (shown here at Emory) and Ethan Weiner (Washington University) coordinated programs on their campuses as part of the **Ramah College Network**. For more info visit ReshetRamah.org

Kol HaKavod to Nivonim 1994-2011 volunteers in Chicago and the Twin Cities who created fundraising pages and made calls to their friends last December as part of the inaugural **Alumni Impact Campaign**. Nearly 400 donors contributed \$90,000 to support camper scholarships.

Kikar from Afar + Remote with Ramah – Bringing Camp Home

As we received shutdown orders in March our year-round staff began brainstorming. Can we bring some camp fun directly into the homes of our campers, staff and alumni?

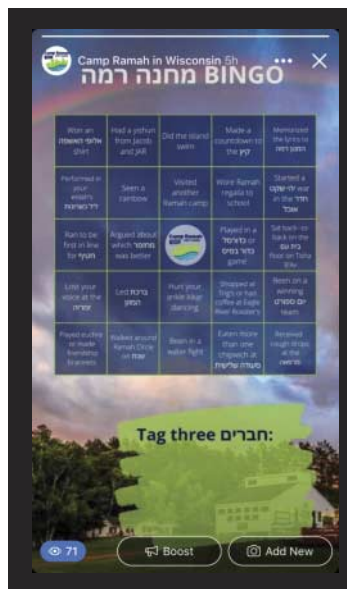
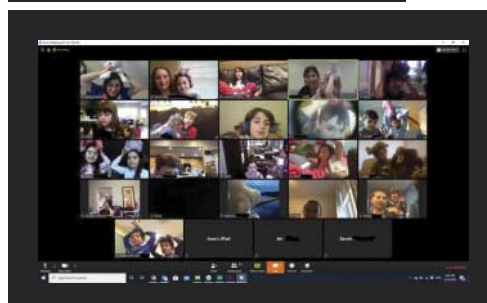
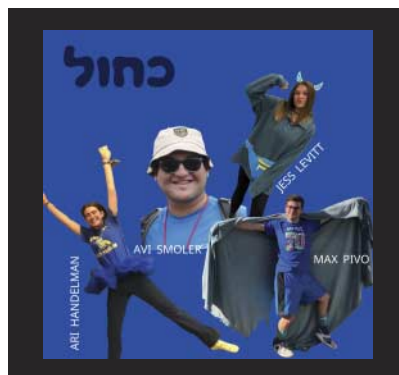
The answers are yes, yes and yes. Our year-round and summer staff presented over 50 Kikar from Afar online programs in March and April, with thousands of views!

Ramahniks enjoyed Kikar dancing broadcast from Israel, a Ramah Day Camp pajama party, a pre-Pesach study session with Jacob Cytryn, arts, music, concerts, Kabbalat Shabbat, tae kwon do, circus arts – even an alumni sports talk show!

In mid-June we launched Remote with Ramah, a taste of the Ramah magic for current Ramah Day Camp and Camp Ramah in Wisconsin campers. With *peulot tzrif* (cabin activities), *peulot eidah* (age division activities), art, music, cooking, sports, Hebrew, tefillah, and performing arts, there is something for everyone.

This summer we have six Nivonim campers in our Amitei Ramah Teen Fellows cohort, a leadership training program of National Ramah. They are adding

their enthusiasm and energy to the virtual programming this summer, working with our staff to design fun and memorable online events for campers of all ages.

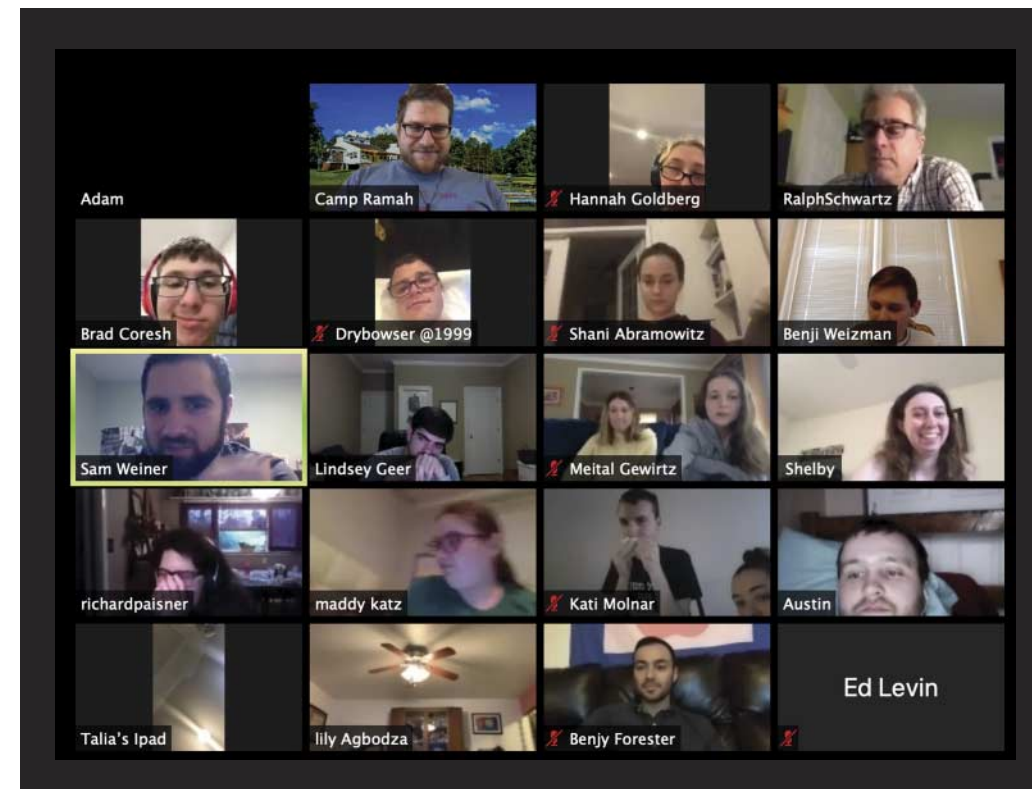


Amitei Ramah from left: Yael Smith, Ellior Rose, Noa Maeir.
Not pictured: Sophie Dekoven, Ari Graupe, Talia Dolin

How can we strengthen camp connections during this period of isolation? Can camp friendships transcend the barriers of a pandemic quarantine?

2019 and 2020 campers enthusiastically joined online eidah reunions in April. Rosh Eidah Jared Skoff and Special Needs Program Director Ralph Schwartz described the reunion of Tikvah and Atzmayim participants and alumni in this way, “Over the past few weeks, Tikvah, Atzmayim, and alumni of both programs have had the opportunity to get together through Zoom reunions. Upwards of 30 call participants have joined to share and listen to one another. In addition to weekly check-ins, participants have found it meaningful to process the emotions, challenges, and successes that have come out of their social distancing experiences. This week we recreated two of our favorite weekly moments that help us bring in Shabbat at camp: kikar dancing and Shabbat zemirot. Dancing to Israeli music and singing our favorite Shabbat songs have been great opportunities to do our favorite camp activities together and virtually recreate some of the magic of being part of an eidah.

We also listened as alumnus Austin Reynolds shared what it is like now to work in food service at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis, where he delivers meals to patients. We then celebrated him as a true hero!”



“We have been so impressed and appreciative of the Kikar From Afar programming. Thank you for the creativity and for keeping us connected to Ramah during this difficult time.”

Bringing the Ramah Magic to Berlin

by Avidan Halivni

In the summer of 2018, as I was wrapping up the first half of my summer as Rosh Garinim/Chalutzim, I met a young German eighteen-year-old, who had just graduated high school in Berlin and traveled halfway around the world to join my staff for the last four weeks of the summer. His name was David Ederberg, and he was a fantastic addition to the team for Chalutzim, energetic and earnest, and beloved by Americans and Israelis alike. He told me about his home community in Berlin, and about his parents, both rabbis, and the work they had done to cultivate a Conservative (Masorti) community in Berlin and around Germany. His mother, Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, had gotten to know the Ramah movement through her colleagues, and at National Ramah Commission Director Rabbi Mitch Cohen’s encouragement had chosen Ramah Wisconsin to send her own child and other children from her congregation — and to later come herself as a staff member.

After the summer, David connected me to Rabbi Gesa, and over the course of my senior year of college we designed a volunteer fellowship for me to spend a year with her community, bringing a little bit of Ramah magic to the different parts of the Jewish infrastructure here in Berlin. I left for Berlin right around the time Rabbi Gesa arrived in Conover last summer, with enough overlap to feel like she was passing me the baton to join her community just as she was adjusting to life in mine.

As my year got under way, I quickly discovered there were more connections between Conover and Berlin than I had thought. There are American members of Nivonim 2010 and 2012 here, in addition to the German members of Nivonim 2011 and 2013, who welcomed me in and showed me around the city. One Shabbat dinner at the Ederbergs in the fall featured five current and former German Ramah campers at the same table -- it is a strange and wonderful experience to hear explanations of the Chadar Ochel or Yom Sport in German, the soundtrack of a growing international contingent of children who love Ramah just as much as anyone else. Their parents pressed us with questions, eager to learn more about the world into which their children had been inducted, and it was clear how proud they were to see their kids brimming with excitement about their Jewish friends and community on the other side of the ocean.

Most of my time here has been spent on the Jewish Life team at the new Conservative elementary school, working with a dynamic and multi-layered student body that comprises Germans, many of whom are Hebrew-German bilingual from one or two Israeli parents, Israelis brand-new to Berlin and to the German language, Russian speakers, and more. My responsibilities include coordinating the celebration of Shabbat and holidays and providing additional support for Hebrew and Jewish Studies classrooms. I also work with the youth groups at the Oranienburgerstraße Synagogue, Rabbi Gesa’s congregation, housed in a renowned

pre-war sanctuary that once hosted thousands and now is home to a vibrant and growing group of families. I teach bar/bat mitzvah lessons, conduct children’s services on Shabbat, and work with NOAM, the international analog to USY -- all in a mix of English, Hebrew, and as much German as I can muster.



One highlight of the year so far was the arrival of eight veteran staff members from seven different Ramah camps to Berlin as part of the new Maslul fellowship. These staff members volunteered for three days with our school community, met German and other European rabbinical students, toured the German Parliament and a former concentration camp, and participated in davening over Shabbat with the synagogue community. The school is still resonating with the joy of kikar dancing on Friday afternoon led by the staff, an experience which the teachers and students were thrilled to recount for Jacob Cytryn when he visited in February!

I also had the opportunity to attend a conference of European Masorti youth movement workers in London, with representatives from Conservative communities from France, Spain, Sweden, Hungary, Ukraine, and more. I loved getting to know the various faces of Masorti Judaism around the world and hearing about the strengths, successes, and challenges faced in each country.

Overall, it truly feels like the Berlin Jewish community is on the rise. The unflagging efforts of Rabbi Gesa and her team, coupled with exciting grassroots Jewish initiatives around the city, have cultivated a feeling of unlimited potential here, tapping into the legacy of a historic community suffused with the vitality of a full array of modern practices and programs. I have enjoyed my time here a great deal and I am grateful to have been one part of a growing connection between the Jewish community of Berlin and Machaneh Ramah.

Donor Recognition

October 1, 2019 – June 5, 2020

* indicates Camp Ramah in Wisconsin Va'ad committee member
** indicates my.ramahwisconsin.com peer-to-peer fundraising campaign
♦ indicates Legacy Society member

Shomrei Ramah \$150,000 and above

Rebecca and Richard Warner
Matthew Zell Family Foundation

Director's Circle \$100,000 and above

Harold Grinspoon Foundation
Susan and Marc* Sacks*

President's Circle \$50,000 and above

Anonymous (1)
Alumni Impact Campaign 2019**
Crown Family
Nina and Arnie* Harris*
Minneapolis Jewish Federation
Lisa and Adam Vales

Rosh Aidah \$25,000 and above

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We are grateful for the generous support of over 1,000 donors since our fiscal year began on October 1, 2019, including current camper parents who donated all or a portion of 2020 camp tuition. View a complete list of donors in the online edition of *Machanenu Ramah* at ramahwisconsin.com

Every effort was made to correctly list donor names. If you gift was omitted or listed incorrectly, please contact Linda Hoffenberg (info on page 16).

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Camp Ramah in Wisconsin relies on the partnership and generosity of corporate donors each and every year. Corporate donations are recognized on multiple platforms throughout the year. Please consider whether your workplace or business can join the community partners supporting Ramah's mission. For more information contact Sam Caplan at scaplan@ramahwisconsin.com or 312-690-8332.



The problem is this: you find your spiritual home while growing up.

You find the best place and time there – it’s Friday night, down by the lake, with everyone you love. All the cares of the week fall away as you watch the sun set and feel the song rise.

Maybe it’s on Yom Yisrael, when your amazing Israeli counselors create programs, games, opportunities to learn, and of course, fire-writing, tying you to a place you’ve never been but to which you feel such a connection.

Perhaps it’s just being with other Jews, something you can’t get at home. Or the communal bond you feel when the whole camp is in the Bet Am singing at the Zimriya or dancing on the Kikar. Or when you’ve created a piece of Judaica for your family to use at home. Or when you dip your paddle quietly into a silvery lake and feel the awesome presence of the Divine.

So that’s the “problem.” You spend pretty much the rest of your life trying to replicate the incredible Jewish experiences of your youth. Ramah creates that kind of seeking. Its alumni are leaders who are driven to bring that same sense of Jewish identity and connection and spirituality to their communities.

I feel so fortunate that my parents chose to send me to Ramah. I was then on staff for five years and got to observe close-up how impactful those summers can be. Later, I was privileged to watch my children Nava, Eitan, and Noam blossom into passionate, informed, active young Jews as campers and staff leaders. Today, wherever they live, they are each using skills, knowledge, and networks from camp to develop creative, soulful Jewish experiences in their communities.

In gratitude for all of this, I have chosen to make a provision for Ramah in my will to help provide an outstanding camp experience for the future leaders of our Jewish world.

Thank you, Camp Ramah!

Lynnsie Balk Kantor, Nivonim 1977



from left: Eitan, Nava, Noam and Lynnsie

We gratefully recognize these new members of the Ramah Wisconsin Legacy Society:

Janet and Allen Agron	Lynnsie Balk Kantor	Leslie Schwartzman z”l
Efrat Dallal	Judy and Harvey Medress	Adina Allen and Rabbi Josh Warshawsky
Talia and Ari Derman	Robin and Jon Parritz	Karen B. Weiss
Jessica and Rabbi Jeremy Fine	Andrew Pass	
Charles Kahalnik	Mary and Joel Rich	



I was not a Ramahnik at first, but like any of Rabbi Samuel Frait’s z”l congregants at Moriah Congregation in Deerfield, Illinois, his passion for Ramah made it almost inevitable. Ramah became a central part of my Judaism. It was where a shy child grew out of his shell and most importantly it sparked my desire to pursue the rabbinate. Upon meeting my then girlfriend, she knew that if our relationship were to grow that Ramah would be essential for my family and children. Jessica and I began going every summer to visit and explore Eagle River and beyond. The first time we went to Family Camp, Jessica turned to me and said: “I am so happy here.” Now Ramah is not just my camp, it is OUR camp and our children’s camp. We are so proud to help Ramah as best we can and ensure its future for campers, staff, and families like ours.

Rabbi Jeremy Fine, Nivonim 1998

What will your legacy be?

By including Camp Ramah in Wisconsin in your will, trust, retirement account, life insurance policy, or estate plan you will forever be remembered as a devoted supporter of Ramah. Please join over 150 Legacy Society members who have completed a Declaration of Intent and help ensure Ramah’s vibrancy well into the future!

Declaration of Intent

In the Jewish tradition of sharing our blessings, I/we take deep satisfaction in declaring my/our intent to help Camp Ramah in Wisconsin provide for the needs of future generations of Jewish children.

- ☐ I/We have made provision, or
- ☐ I/We will make provision to include Camp Ramah as beneficiary in:

☐ a bequest in my/our will

☐ a deferred lifetime gift

☐ life insurance gift

☐ through a trust fund and/or foundation

☐ through a retirement fund
- ☐ Please add my/our name(s) to the Ramah Wisconsin Legacy Society.

Print your name as you would like to be listed in the Ramah Wisconsin Legacy Society _____

☐ I/We do not want to be listed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please mail to Camp Ramah in Wisconsin Legacy Society, 67 E. Madison Street, Suite 1905, Chicago, IL 60603 or email to LHoffenberg@ramahwisconsin.com.

Please consult your attorney or tax advisor for professional guidance in this area.



From Talia Derman, Director



Summer 2020 was supposed to be the start of a new chapter for both Ramah Day Camp and me as I began my first season as director. Program preparations were underway, an amazing staff was hired, and the wheels were in motion for what we hoped would be an incredible summer. However, on May 20 everything came to a halt as we announced that, due to COVID-19, for the health and safety of the campers,

staff, and larger Ramah community, we would not be operating camp this summer.

I experienced feelings of sadness and frustration as we finalized the decision, but in truth it's more complicated than that. As the director, I am sad that I won't get to see the smiling faces of hundreds of campers enjoying all that Ramah Day Camp offers. At the same time, I am also relieved that we will not be risking their health and the health of their families. As the director, I am frustrated that COVID-19 is keeping us away from our happy place. And I am also grateful to our medical committee, the National Ramah Commission, and senior leadership for providing us with the insight and guidance to do the right thing. As a camper parent, I am heartbroken that my daughter can't return to her beloved Ramah Day Camp. I am also comforted that I don't have to worry about exposing her to illness. As a camper parent, I am feeling desperate that I won't have enough for her to do this summer in our backyard, and I am excited about the time we will spend together just us. As the director and a camper parent, I am grieving summer 2020. As the director and a camper parent, I am already looking towards summer 2021 with excitement and newfound energy.

The announcements of the closing of summer camps across North America have been painful experiences of loss for campers,

parents, and alumni. It's always a challenge to make difficult decisions for yourself and even more so when you are making decisions for others. *Pikuach nefesh* is the Talmudic principle that the preservation of human life takes precedence over nearly all other commandments in Judaism. I believe we made the right decision as Jewish leaders to ensure we are putting health and safety above all else.

When I am feeling down, my beloved grandmother says to me "*Gam Zeh Ya'avur*" - this too shall pass. I have been thinking of her words often these days, almost like a mantra I repeat to myself. And now I am sharing it with you.

Gam Ze Ya'avur. We can get through this. We will get through this.

And your Ramah community is here to support you in whatever way we can.

Camp Ramah in Wisconsin

67 E. Madison Street, Suite 1905, Chicago IL 60603

Jacob Cytryn, Executive Director

Adina Allen, Assistant Director

Talia Derman, Director, Ramah Day Camp

Scott Topal, Director of Operations

Sam Caplan, Chief Development Officer

Rabbi David Soloff, Director Emeritus

David Kushnir, Board President

For additional information contact:

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www.ramahwisconsin.com www.ramahday.com



The warmth of a summer day filled the room at our Summer in January event as over 400 parents, children, staff, and friends celebrated Lori Stark's 19 years of leadership as Ramah Day Camp Director!