



THE SEARCH FOR SUMMER

AN INTERFAITH FAMILY'S GUIDE TO FINDING THE RIGHT
JEWISH SUMMER CAMP FOR YOUR CHILD (AND YOUR FAMILY)



FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CAMP
one happy camper
JEWISH FEDERATION OF
GREATER METROWEST NJ

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Jewish Federation of
Greater MetroWest NJ
Jewish Community Foundation



WHY JEWISH CAMP?

Camp is about so much more than campfires and color war. It's a chance for kids to explore who they are and who they want to become. At Jewish camp, ruach—spirit—is part of every activity. From dancing, sailing to hitting a home run—camp gives campers an opportunity to explore their connection to Jewish culture while improving their skills and most importantly, having the summer of their lives. Campers are bunkmates and team players, artists and athletes, creative problem-solvers and blossoming leaders, developing 21st century skills – like independence, confidence, and creativity - they will use their entire lives. And the best part? With 190+ overnight camps and summer experiences to choose from, there is a perfect one for your child. Foundation for Jewish Camp works to ensure that there are diverse and welcoming experiences for all children. We are here to help you find yours!

JEWISH CAMP IS MORE THAN JUST CAMP.

For your child, Jewish camp is just plain fun. But we know it's much more than that—it's camp with a soul.

- **Camp is exciting!** Your kids will have the summer of their lives while exploring independence, friendship, community, diversity, giving back, inclusion, integrity, and collaboration.
- **Jewish camp is packed with action:** boating, basketball, biking, ceramics, filmmaking, rock climbing, cooking, archery, ziplining, softball, horseback riding, painting, drama, dance—you name it!
- **Camp promotes your child's individual growth** in an enriching Jewish environment. At camp, kids have cool, Jewish role models that inspire confidence and independence, guiding your child to think creatively, build self-esteem, communicate more effectively, and discover interests and talents.
- **Campers become leaders.** Camp activities emphasize independence, communication, problem solving, collaboration, and leadership – skills that have become necessary in our 21st century world.
- **Jewish values** such as *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), *kehillah* (community) and *simcha* (joy), that parents agree are important for children to learn and practice, are infused into the program. These values make it easy for interfaith families to connect with and feel comfortable with a Jewish camp.
- **There's a Jewish camp for everyone**—no matter what your background is, there's a Jewish camp where your child will have fun, be comfortable, learn about themselves, and explore their identity.
- **Every camp does “Jewish” differently** – in this guide, we'll help you ask the right questions.

With over 190 camps to choose from, our Find a Camp tool makes it easy to discover camps you and your kids will love based on your criteria. Visit OneHappyCamperNJ.org/camps to get started.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

Take a few minutes and think about the type of environment in which your child thrives. What kind of program will benefit them the most? What kind of experience are you and your child expecting from the summer? The right camp for your child becomes an extension of your home and your family's values.

START WITH YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS.

For Finding the right camp is often about finding a community your child -and your family- can be part of for summers to come. There are no right or wrong answers. Here are some questions to help in your family's camp search.

- Do I want a traditional camp that gives my child a wide variety of experiences, or do I want to select a specialty camp that focuses on a particular activity or set of skills?
- Does my child need lots of instruction and structure? Or would they prefer to have more choices?
- Does my child have any special dietary or physical needs that the camp will need to accommodate?
- What size camp will make my child feel comfortable?
- Do I want the camp to be affiliated with a particular movement or organization?
- What session length will appeal to my child and to our family plans for the summer?
- What type of location are we looking for? Consider options like mountains and lakefront, but also distance from home.
- What is my budget for camp tuition?
- How does Jewish at camp sync with Judaism in our home?

Once you have thought a bit about what you are looking for, talk to your One Happy Camper representative or visit OneHappyCamperNJ.org/camps to find a camp you are interested in.

About tuition.

First-time campers may be eligible for a One Happy Camper grant of up to \$1000. Campers may be eligible for a need-based scholarship through the Greater MetroWest Jewish Overnight Camp Scholarship Program. Visit OneHappyCamperNJ.org/financial-incentives or contact your Federation to learn more.

In addition, many camps offer early registration incentives or sibling discounts. Scholarships may be available from your camp or synagogue. Contact your camp or local synagogue for additional information.

GET DOWN TO DETAILS.

Every camp is different. From philosophy to facilities to food, there are as many unique approaches as there are camps. Asking questions, talking to staff, and getting familiar with what several different camps have to offer is the best way to narrow down which one is right for your child.

EXPLORE SEVERAL CAMPS.

The best way to get started is to visit each camp's website, where you can find photos, maps or virtual tours of the camp facilities, and sample daily schedules. Websites will also inform you of key information about the directors and senior staff members, important dates, and registration information. From there, we suggest speaking to the director, schedule a visit with a camp staffer when they are in your area, set up a time to meet the parent of a current camper, or visit the camp if that is an option.

Below, you'll find information on regional camps and a list of questions to guide you as you gather information. However, each family's search is different, so focus on what is relevant and important to you. You can discover more Jewish camp options at OneHappyCamperNJ.org/camps.

AREA CAMPS THAT WELCOME CAMPERS FROM INTERFAITH FAMILIES.

Camp Harlam A URJ Camp Kunkletown, PA www.CampHarlam.org	Camp Havaya South Sterling, PA www.camphavaya.org	Camp Kinder Ring Hopewell Junction, NY www.campkr.com
Camp Ramah in the Berkshires Wingdale, NY www.ramahberkshires.org	Camp Young Judaea Sprout Lake Verbank, NY www.cyjsproutlake.org	Camp Zeke Lakewood, PA www.campzeke.org
Eden Village Camp Putnam Valley, NY www.edenvillagecamp.org	NJY Camps – Camp Nah-Jee-Wah, Cedar Lake Camp, Round Lake Milford, PA www.njycamps.org	Sababa Beachaway Virginia Beach, VA www.sabababeachaway.org
Surprise Lake Camp Cold Spring, NY www.surpriselake.org	6 Points Creative Arts Academy A URJ Camp West Chester, PA 6pointscreativearts.org	6 Points Sci-Tech Academy A URJ Camp Byfield, MA www.6pointsscitech.org

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

About the Camp

- What are the camp's values and philosophies? What makes the camp special?
- Is the camp co-ed? What is the interaction like between different ages and different genders?
- What is the size of the camp? How are the campers grouped? How many kids are in each bunk?
- What percent of campers return each year?
- What is the total cost of the camp? Are there specialty programs or trips that cost extra?
- How does the camp ensure campers' safety and security?
- How are behavioral and disciplinary problems handled?
- What is the camp's technology policy?
- Does the camp offer transportation to and/or from camp?
- What is the camper to staff ratio?
- Tell me about your campers. Are there other families that look like mine?

Judaism

- Is the camp affiliated with any movement?
- How does camp celebrate Shabbat? What if my child doesn't know the words or songs – how will you make them feel comfortable?
- What other Jewish experiences are incorporated into the camp program?
- How are Jewish values woven into your program?
- How will the camp relate to us and our child if they are from an interfaith/multi-faith family?

Facilities and Programming

- What facilities are there, such as a lake or pool?
- What are the sleeping arrangements?
- What is the schedule like? Is the program structured or does it emphasize elective and individual choices? In what areas does the camp focus on skill-building?
- What instructional or specialty programs are offered?
- How does the camp program meet individual needs and differences?

Food and Medical

- Can food allergies or other dietary needs be accommodated? What if my child has a very limited diet?
- Is the kitchen kosher?
- How does the camp handle individual medical needs? What medical facilities are nearby?

Communication with Parents

- What contact will I be able to have with my camper while they are at camp?
- Will I be able to speak to a staff member while my child is at camp?
- What information (newsletters, emails, photos, calls) do you share with parents during the summer?



WHAT IS ONE HAPPY CAMPER?

One Happy Camper provides grants of up to \$1,000 to families with children attending nonprofit Jewish overnight camp for the first time.

ABOUT ONE HAPPY CAMPER

One Happy Camper is a program of the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC), in partnership with local Jewish federations and other organizations, providing support to families like yours.

How do I apply for a One Happy Camper grant?

1. **Register your child.** Once you've found the right camp for your child, register directly with the camp.
2. **Apply online for a One Happy Camper grant.** Once your child's registration at camp has been confirmed, visit OneHappyCamper.org and complete our simple online application form.
3. **Check back in two to four weeks.** Your local One Happy Camper administrator will contact you once your application has been approved, or you can check your status online by logging in and selecting "Track My Grant." Once your application has been approved, funds will be paid directly to the camp and will be credited towards your balance. Funds are paid to the camp each spring.

Is my child eligible?

To be eligible for a One Happy Camper grant, typically your child must be:

- Registered for an overnight camp listed on the Foundation for Jewish Camp's website.
- Attending an approved overnight camp for the first time for at least 12 consecutive days.
- Not currently participating in a daily immersive Jewish experience, such as a Jewish day school or immersion program. (Check with your local One Happy Camper administrator to learn about additional opportunities in your community.)
- The most current information for families of the Greater MetroWest NJ area (Essex, Morris, Sussex, Union and parts of Northern Somerset counties) may be found at www.OneHappyCamperNJ.org/financial-incentives

Note: needs-based scholarships may also be available – additional information at the link above.



CAN'T AFFORD JEWISH SLEEPAWAY CAMP? ...NOW YOU CAN!



**WE'RE EXCITED TO PROVIDE NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS
FOR GREATER METROWEST YOUTH!**

Eligibility includes:

- Children under 16 years old
- Select from 14 participating Jewish camps
- Family must be a part of the Greater MetroWest community

Offered through the generosity of the Rocker Family Foundation and other donors.



For guidelines and
eligibility information visit
OneHappyCamperNJ.org/scholarship

For a confidential conversation
contact Gerri Russo at
grusso@jfedgmw.org
or (973) 929-2972

Call us at (973) 929.2970

THINK SUMMER... THINK JEWISH CAMP!







UP
TO **\$1,000**

One Happy Camper grants
and need-based camp scholarships

**Friendship, Sports, Creativity...
We'll guide you to the perfect camp!**

Let's Talk Camp!



-  onehappycamperNJ.org
-  camp@onehappycamperNJ.org
-  **Tracy Levine** (973) 929-2970
-  **Gerri Russo** (973) 929-2972



With over 18 years of collective camp experience, we'll guide you on every step of your camp search to find your child's perfect place. Begin your search early to secure space and benefit from early-bird pricing. Our services are completely free!