



CAMP RAMAH IN CALIFORNIA

At the Max & Pauline Zimmer Conference Center

A Journey for a Lifetime

News from Camp Ramah in California - Summer 2006

Session 1 - Week 1

June 30, 2006 - 4 Tammuz, 5766

Shalom!

What's New on the Camp Site?

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to show you pictures of some of the new improvements we've made this year at Ramah. Amongst the first visible to all who come through our gates is a 30-kilowatt solar panel installation on the roof of the Gindi Dining Room. The system, donated by Ramah alum and parent, Dr. David Braun, is the first of a 3-stage effort to bring solar power to Ramah.



Solar Installation on Gindi Dining Hall

This great new addition will save the camp more than \$30K in annual energy costs, will prevent thousands of pounds of harmful gases from entering the environment and will be a teaching tool for educating thousands of Ramah campers about the Jewish imperative to take care of God's world.



Scott Stone Activity Field

In the late 90's, the play area adjacent to the Whizin Building was dedicated in loving memory of Scott Stone by his devoted friends. This spring, the area was

loving memory of Scott Stone by his devoted friends. This spring, the area was upgraded and enhanced with climbing boulders, picnic tables, and more - thanks to a generous gift from his brother, Ryan Stone (a former camper himself), his wife and children. The Scott Stone Activity Field will be enjoyed by campers this summer and for many years to come.



Newly Resurfaced Robert M. Beren Tennis Center

The tennis courts, originally made possible by a gift from Robert M. Beren (an avid tennis player as well as father of our board chair, Julie B. Platt, and her siblings - all former campers - and grandfather of numerous current campers and staff), were resurfaced this spring through Mr. Beren's continuing generosity. The courts have been in constant use since staff week began!



Salkin Family Tree House

While construction on the Salkin Family Tree House was completed last summer, with a dedication by the Salkin family in August, it is new to many brand-new Gesher campers. They will enjoy their overnights under the stars, in the Tree House up the hill.

More photos and info in coming weeks about all the great new things at Ramah!

This Week's Torah Portion - "What Even Korah Can Teach Us"

In this week's parsha, Korah tells Moshe and Aaron: "You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation" (Numbers 16:3). Rabbinic literature clearly disapproves of Korah's contention. The Etz Hayyim commentary, quoting Pirkei Avot, reads: "Thus the Mishnah describes illegitimate controversy (for personal gain, "not for the sake of Heaven") as being "like the dispute of Korah and his followers (Avot 5:7). . . Like many demagogues, they defined themselves by what they were against, not by a vision of what they stood for (Kalischer)."

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But Korah did have a vision – that all of the community is holy! Furthermore, is not that vision quite similar to what God said to the Jewish people before the revelation at Sinai?

**". . . and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.'
These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."
(Exodus 19: 6)**

Many commentaries have been written about why Korah and his followers were wrong: that they sought power for himself, that they mocked the rituals of the Torah (Numbers Rabbah 18:5). But one thing that characterizes rabbinic literature is the importance of preserving and even learning from the opinions of those that were rejected by rabbinic tradition. What can we learn from Korah and his followers? Quite simply, that all of the community is holy.

Here at camp – what a wonderful message! Every child is holy, has something to contribute, that no member of the community lacks something to contribute to the world. As our session begins, beyond the activities and programs, the most important task of our staff is to find out what it is, to never doubt it is there, and to help it grow and flourish during each child's stay here at Ramah.

Shabbat Shalom,



Rabbi Daniel Greyber, Executive Director
Camp Ramah in California

email: info@ramah.org
phone: (310) 476-8571
web: <http://www.ramah.org>

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