



# 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 2 - Week 2

August 4 - 10 Av, 5766

### Dear 2nd Session and Gesher D Parents,

We've had a great 1st full-week at camp so far. On Sunday, we were proud to welcome more than 30 Israeli children from Friends of the Israel Defense Forces, children who have lost either a parent or a sibling in service to the IDF. After a huge cheer from all of the campers in the chadar ochel (dining room), the camp community finished lunch on Sunday by standing to sing HaTikvah both as a welcome to this special group of campers and in continuing solidarity with the State of Israel in this difficult time. Tuesday was a fun day of special programming called, "Yom Kef Lanu" - "A Day of Fun for Us!" including a huge slip-and-slide on the basketball court and wacky games and activities throughout the camp. Adat Shalom (entering 7th graders) kicked off our overnights this session with a fabulous time at Wheeler Gorge and Lake Casitas that included Orienteering and other outdoor adventure activities. On Wednesday, the entire camp gathered in Kikar Tzion for a Tisha B'Av ceremony put on by our Israel staff, followed by Ma'ariv and the chanting of Eicha by candlelight and flashlight.

### Tzedakah Project for IDF Soldiers

Thank you for saving Yisrael. I love Yisrael.  
From: Talia, age 8

This is just one example of the wonderful letters written by our campers to IDF soldiers. Just two days before the start of second session, we asked our campers to participate in an Emergency Israel Tzedakah Project by bringing supplies, including deodorant, moist towelettes, toothbrush and toothpaste, candy and bubblegum, for Israeli soldiers. We also asked them to include personal notes. The response was truly remarkable. Our campers brought hundreds of ziploc bags containing the requested items. Each one was packed with great care and love. The letters were so touching and heartfelt.





### Supplies Being Readied for El Al Flight to Israel

On Sunday, July 30th, we sent 10 large duffle bags to Israel with the Sinai Temple Solidarity Mission, led by Rabbi David Wolpe. See an article about the Mission in the Jewish Observer: [Jewish Observer Community News](#).

The supplies are already being dispersed to the IDF through an organization called "A Package From Home", founded by Barbara Silverman in Jerusalem ([A Package from Home](#)). Since 2000, they have delivered 100,000 packages containing creature comforts to soldiers. (you can e-mail letters for soldiers to them, they are placed in each package).

We want to thank Naomi Eisenberger and ZIV Tzedakah Fund, Sheila Baran Spiwak and Gloria Baran for coordinating this meaningful project. Most of all, we want to say "yasher kochachem" to our campers and their families. You have made a significant difference in the lives of our IDF soldiers on the front lines. It is a true Mitzvah!



### What's New at Camp - Solar Installation on Gindi Dining Hall

We're pleased to have the opportunity to show you some of the new improvements we've made this year at Camp Ramah. Amongst the first visible to all who come through our gates is a 30-kilowatt solar panel installation on the roof of the chadar ochel - the Gindi Dining Hall. 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.

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.

### Dvar Torah

Amidst many other famous passages including the Ten Commandments and the first line of the Sh'ma, this week's Torah portion, Va'Etchanan, contains the 1st paragraph of the Sh'ma which begins "you shall love Adonai your God with all of your heart, all of your soul, and all of your might." For generations the rabbis have struggled with how the Torah can command any emotion, much less one as individual and sensitive as love. The Sefat Emet writes, "Love is a human emotion. How can a person be commanded to love? And what should a person do if he does not have that emotion?" Any parent or caretaker has desired expressions of love from one's children. As human beings we seek expressions of love from our spouse, our lover, our friends, and yet we know that if we were to command that the people who mean so much to us tell us

know that, if we were to command that the people who mean so much to us tell us that they love us, their words would seem empty, inauthentic. How can God command love? And if we respond, how can we do so in a way that is authentic to how we actually feel rather than just obeying a command? "Rather," continues the Sefat Emet, "it appears that deep within every person there is embedded a love for God, but one must bring this emotion out into the open." That is what this commandment of "You shall love," implies - that you should take such actions as lead to bringing this emotion to the fore.

Act in such a way that our love is brought to the fore. There are so many applications of this simple teaching. At camp, we try to teach our counselors that if they want the kids to love them and to love camp, they must act in such a way that the love kids feel will come out. In our relationships with friends and family, if we want others to love us, we must speak and act in such a way that they will want to bring out the love in their hearts. Finally, at this critical moment in Israel's history, it is almost impossible to write without mentioning our love for Israel. But to love Israel, it is not enough for that love to remain a feeling. What is demanded of us to to act, to act in such a way that makes our love for Israel manifest for the world to see. Send a letter. Go visit. Give money. Attend a rally. Love Israel, not only in our hearts. Act in such a way that our love is brought into the open.

Shabbat Shalom,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Dan' with a stylized flourish. The signature on the right is 'Zach' with a similar flourish. Both signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

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Rabbi Dan and Zach  
Camp Ramah in California

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