

CAMP COUNTS

HARLAM'S DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

URJCampHarlam.org

CAMP HARLAM
A URJ CAMP

June 2015



MAKING AN IMPACT TURNING KIDS INTO CAMPERS

Every child who wants to attend Camp Harlam should. Sounds good, right? The reality, however, is that many families face financial obstacles that can preclude their kids from experiencing the magic of a Harlam summer.

Here is where we all can make an impact. Hundreds of campers rely on assistance from our Scholarship Fund to get to camp. The generosity of camp's many donors literally makes the difference between children spending a summer at Harlam or not. YOU can make a difference in the life of a child. YOU can turn a kid into a Harlam camper and give a gift that lasts a lifetime.

In addition to making a monetary contribution, there are many ways to become involved in Harlam's development efforts, from serving on our Development Committee, to participating in Harlam's events during the year, to talking with members of your congregation or community about the impact Harlam has personally had on you and your family.

It's not too late for your scholarship donation to enable a child to attend camp THIS SUMMER. Every gift is important. Every gift enables a kid to become a camper. For more information or to make a donation, contact Rachel Steinberg at RSteinberg@URJ.org. Thank you for making an impact on our camp community.

Dan Pliskin, Alan Prushan, David Olinsky and Ali Reich
Development Committee Co-Chairs

THE PRAYER AFTER

by Mat Zucker | Camp Harlam alum

Ten years as a Camp Harlam camper and two on staff, I never understood why we said a prayer both before and after the meal. A prayer before made sense to me and seemed like, well, good manners. I was grateful for the pizza, the bug juice, the fried chicken on Shabbat. I also had a lot to pray for in advance — that instructional swim would get cancelled, that I'd get arts and crafts as my chug, that one day I'd be a red team color war general, and that song session would have Im Tirtzu and Stars in the Sky, my favorites. I knew all the words. But the Birkat Hamazon — a prayer after the meal? Why look back? I mean, the meal wasn't that good.

As I got older, a little introspection started to reveal the value of retrospection. I figured out that we were honoring what we've been lucky enough to eat, drink and experience, not only for a moment in time but a kind of nourishment that would keep giving. The weeks became more fun. The music got better. The relationships deepened. Memories from summers decades ago are with me no matter how faded their ink. Several of my camp friends are still friends today, and others I stay in touch with throughout the year. The theme of every service may have been friendship, but it's hard not to see how Camp becomes a part of you, its own kind of invisible tattoo. If I squint on a Friday at sunset, I can see us all walking up the hill, dressed in white.

Even before she came to camp to join us on staff, Jyl Skolnick was already a friend of mine through JFTY. At weekend conclaves, she warmly welcomed my friend Beth and me into a circle of tight-knit friends, the way anyone who knew her knows she would. She was popular and it meant a lot. At Camp, she also immediately became an indelible part of the culture, of SuperStaff, and a favorite counselor of hundreds to boot. Over our high school and college years, Jyl and I built a friendship. We laughed. We sang. We played. We even dated.

When we lost Jyl ten years later, there was a hole in my heart. And of course, I was hardly the only one. So when Camp started its Capital Campaign, a few of us on Alumni Day committed to building a bunk in Girls' Camp in her name. To us, Jyl was the essence and the best of Girls' Camp. I can't visit it to this day without seeing her on a

porch in a v-neck white t-shirt giving advice to a camper or shouting that it's time for an activity. We want Girls' Camp of the future to remember Jyl and to ask about who she was. As Adam Rosenberg put it so beautifully in an email, "Jyl Loved Camp and Camp Loves Jyl." To date, we've done a good job with our Build-A-Bunk campaign, but staring at where we are and what's actually needed to get Jyl's name in neon, we have to face the fact that we need more people giving more to make it come true. We have to do more in the days ahead.

If I am honest with myself, I think my looking back for Jyl is a prayer for what I didn't treasure enough at the time. I didn't hang out with Jyl enough after we left college and I certainly wasn't with her enough in her last year while she was terribly ill. I suppose in many ways, our Build-A-Bunk for Jyl is my Birkat Ha'mazon, my prayer to G-d afterwards for both thanks and recognizing what I value. It's my prayer for a beautiful, spirited friend who I desperately want carried forward into future laughter, future color wars, future song sessions. I can still hear the music. And I can still mouth the words.



Jyl Skolnick, Summer 1989



Mat Zucker attended Harlam from 1979-1989 and is part of the group raising funds to build a bunk in memory of Jyl Skolnick. Happily, Mat swept Maccabiah second session 1989 as red team "Greaser" color war general.

To learn more and to donate, visit camp's Capital Campaign page at <http://harlam.urjcamps.org/give/capital/>

THE STORY BEHIND THE MITCH PERLMETER SCHOLARSHIP FUND

By Dan Pliskin | Development Committee Co-Chair

Camp Harlam's scholarship fund is named for Mitch Perlmeter, a beloved member of the Harlam community who passed away unexpectedly in 2011 at age 17. Mitch was a thoughtful and passionate leader. He chaired a department of Montclair High's Civics and Govt. Institute, founded the school's Ultimate Frisbee Club, and was a reporter for the school newspaper. He took pride in his volunteer work at Temple Ner Tamid. He loved Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, Twix bars, the Baltimore Ravens, video games and movies, and he also dearly loved his family and seemingly countless friends. Most of all, according to those who knew him well, he absolutely loved life.

Mitch spent almost all of his summers at Harlam, starting as a faculty brat when he was very young, thanks to having two parents who are rabbis and older sisters Jackie and Sarah who were already there (and brother Nate not far behind). His mom, Rabbi Rachel Hertzman, had spent some of her own early years in her native Midwest at Harlam's sister camp, GUCI (including summers as a counselor to Harlam Development Co-Chair Dan Pliskin) and later served as campus rabbi for Hillel of Greater Baltimore. His dad, Rabbi Rex Perlmeter, was a Harlam staff member during rabbinical school and began serving on faculty when he became the senior rabbi of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation and continuing for many years thereafter, including after a move to Montclair, NJ. So perhaps it wasn't such a big surprise for Mitch to find himself in Kunkletown every year.

And in those years (including one summer in Israel), as it always does, Camp Harlam clearly worked its magic on Mitch and many of his peers. Harlam became an essential place for him, a place where, like so many before him, he began to explore his own Jewish identity, and how he wanted to interact with the world in light of Jewish teachings, and of course it became the place where he made his deepest and most meaningful friends. Perhaps Mitch himself said it best in his application to be a CIT:

"[W]hat has had the greatest impact on my Jewish life is my time spent at Camp Harlam itself. As my parents

were rabbis on faculty at the camp from when I was about four years old, I have been at Harlam for every summer that I can remember and then some. No place or event has provided me with more memories, more friends, more character or more love than Camp Harlam has. The caring Jewish community found within the camp is, as far as I know, unique, and each year the leaders of that community find new ways to teach both campers and staff about Judaism, and moreover, do so in a way that makes those students want to keep learning and keep participating."

The Perlmeter/Hertzman family knows well the powerful impact of the URJ camp experience and the NFTY in Israel experience, from being campers, counselors, faculty, rabbis

and parents, and they know just how important and how central the Camp Harlam experience was to Mitch. They concluded that the way that they wanted to honor and remember their son and brother was to give back by striving to make the Camp Harlam experience, and the NFTY in Israel experience, available to as many children as possible. They chose to make Harlam scholarship a key focus of



Mitch, 3rd from left, and fellow CITs, Summer 2010

their philanthropy. Just as multiple generations of their own family have benefitted from the magic of camp, it is very affirming to them, and their great hope, to help more children and families to have the transformational Harlam and NFTY in Israel experiences. The Mitch Perlmeter Scholarship Fund, which helps kids to have an amazing Harlam experience like Mitch did, is one beautiful legacy of this beautiful soul.

The Perlmeter/Hertzman family is a pillar of our Camp Harlam community. With the establishment of this fund, and the wonderful tzedekah shown by their family, friends and supporters in the Harlam community, camp's scholarship resources are off to a great start. Please consider how you can help make the transformational Harlam experience and the NFTY in Israel experience available to all who seek it by making a donation to the Mitch Perlmeter Scholarship Fund. Thank you.

DONOR RECOGNITION

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors to our Scholarship funds between January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014.
On behalf of the entire Camp Harlam community, we thank these leaders sincerely for their generosity and support.

\$1,000,000

Weidhorn Family Foundation

\$20,000 and above

Stanley Perlmeter

\$4,500-\$10,000

Daniel Comer
Rabbis Rex Perlmeter and Rachel Hertzman

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Mat Zucker
Janna Zuckerman
Sharon Zydney

DONOR RECOGNITION

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors who made new gifts and pledges to our Capital Campaign between December 1, 2014 – May 1, 2015. On behalf of the entire Camp Harlam community, we thank you sincerely for your generosity and support.

\$5,000 and above

Miriam Chilton and Joel Dorow
Lee Klein Erlichman
Harold Grinspoon Foundation
Carol Stern McMichael
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\$1,800 to \$4,999

Adam Fein
Connie Kanter and Chuck Broches
P. Sherrill Neff and Alicia Felton
Daniel and Dana Nestel
Jack and Ruth Ringlestein
Ellen S. Soloff

\$500 to \$1,799

Elliot and Bonnie Abrams

Our heartfelt condolences go out to all those mourning the loss of our colleague and friend, Rabbi Vicki Tuckman. Vicki will be dearly missed and her spirit will forever be felt by our camp community.

For those making a contribution in memory of Vicki, gifts will ultimately be directed towards the family's preferred fund. To make a gift:

1. Go to the "Donate Now" page of the camp website: <http://harlam.urjcamps.org/give/>
2. Click on the "Donate Now" box in the Mitch Perlmeter Scholarship Fund box
3. Fill out the donation form as instructed. Be sure to include "Vicki Tuckman" in the tribute section

All gifts will be tracked accordingly to assure that the establishment of a "Vicki Fund" would benefit from the intended support.



For information about how to get involved with our development efforts and/or to discuss your gift to camp, please contact Rachel L. Steinberg, Development Coordinator, at 610-668-0423, Ext. 1040 or RSteinberg@URJ.org.

The Merfish family has made an extraordinary statement of support for the past, present and future of Camp Harlam. Gerald, Sherry, Brett and Beth Merfish established the Merfish Family Fund for Jewish Life to help build and strengthen the foundation of meaningful and enriching Reform Jewish experiences for our campers and staff. This endowment fund will be able to guarantee sustained support of various aspects of Jewish Life programming and initiatives at Camp Harlam.

We'd like to acknowledge and thank the following donors who have made contributions to this fund:

Gerald & Sherry Merfish

Beth Merfish

Brett Merfish

Amy Krauss

Jonathan Lev

Gerald Packman

Donald Selkow

Rachel Steinberg

M. Herkovitz Charitable Foundation

Eugene Vicenzi

Tracy Weinstein

HARLAM: RUNNING FOR GOOD

On a Sunday morning in April, as I was running a half marathon in Central Park with a fellow Harlam alum, world-renowned American (Jewish!) runner Deena Kastor lapped us around the 6-mile mark. What could be more exciting than seeing an Olympic athlete run gracefully past you as fans cheer her along during a big race? To me, what is exponentially more exciting is what I witnessed at camp on Alumni Day 2014: 150 campers, staff, and alumni walking and running past Chapel on the Hill and the Chader Ochel, giving it their all as they completed, some for their first time, a 5K, all while simultaneously raising money for camper scholarship. Our older campers proudly puffed out their chests and pushed their legs hard, rounding the bend near K'far Noar and heading down towards the finish line. During this pivotal moment, campers not only completed the feat of running a 5K, they also competed in a new special event at camp, something that our younger campers will look forward to until they reach participatory age, and will continue to participate in as alumni.

We are excited to host our second annual Camp Harlam Chapel on the Hill Chase 5K and Dotter's Dash Family Fun Walk this summer on Alumni Day, August 9, 2015. Last summer our 150 participants raised nearly \$10,000 for the Mitch Perlmeter Scholarship Fund.

We had an excellent return on investment as we kept costs low, and created great relationships with our vendors. This summer we hope to increase participation as well as surpass our previous fundraising goal. Additionally, we will be offering sponsorship opportunities to local businesses and hope through this venture that we can offset costs and raise even more money towards camper scholarship. We will once again offer professional timing, race bibs, t-shirts, and goody bags for participants.

In anticipation of the Alumni Day 2015 5K, we are excited to be offering several training runs in conjunction with celebratory happy hours. The runs and happy hours will create an opportunity for alumni engagement for both those running and others who would just like to attend the happy hour. We are hopeful that alumni who learn about the 5K but are unable to attend on August 9th will participate in our "virtual race" (completing a 5K near their homes while participating as fundraisers). The training runs and happy hours will be held in multiple cities throughout the country, led by members of our development team as well as a newly formed 5K committee. Be on the lookout for dates and locations soon!

By Ali Petok | Harlam Alum and Development Committee Member

HELP BUILD A BUNK

New Living Areas, Bathrooms,
Outdoor Decks, Increased Storage,
On-Demand Hot Water, Energy
Efficiency, ADA Accessibility



80 Gifts of \$1,800

Gifts of all Sizes Valued
Matching Program Available

\$150,000

Naming Opportunities and Donor Recognition
Gifts and Pledge Agreements for 3-5 Years

"Build a Bunk" projects that are underway:

- Remembering Marika Winheld
- In Honor of Jyl Skolnick
- Build a Bunk 4 Goobie (Jon Goldberg)
- Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel (Elkins Park, PA)
- M'Kor Shalom (Cherry Hill, NJ)
- Fendrick Leadership Cabins

MAKING AN IMPACT

CAMP HARLAM

Campers & Families

In 2015, families from 16 US states and 3 countries will have campers at Harlam

More than \$775,000 in scholarships have helped make camp possible for hundreds of kids since 2012

4,700 Kids

Have attended Harlam since 2000

Congregations & Staff

105 Synagogues

Affiliated with the URJ will have kids at Harlam in 2015

We'll have 105 teens/staff in Israel in 2015

Staff will travel more than 820,500 miles to work at Harlam this summer

Development



\$2.45M

Spent since 2012 on facility projects

2,306



Donations made to Harlam since 2011



8,025 sq ft

Living space added through renovations in Girls Camp

Cool Facts



Harlam's Facebook posts received 23,173 likes in the last year



Because of Harlam's "Screen-Free" policies, we estimate replacing 2,250,000 text messages with live conversations this summer!

118 Rabbis, Cantors, educators and NFTY/Hillel youth professionals have been on Harlam's faculty since 2000

We posted 25,192 photos to our secure CampinTouch site for families to enjoy during the summer of 2014

Leading the Field of Jewish Camp



Fulfilling our mission to enrich the lives of Reform Jewish kids isn't just about the numbers. Instead, Harlam is exploring and experimenting through various initiatives to expand its reach and enhance its impact:

- ✓ Opened URJ's first community-based day camp in 2014 (Harlam Day Camp)
- ✓ Currently sharing 8 talented year-round professionals with synagogues or other Jewish organizations
- ✓ Awarded \$50,000 Ruderman Foundation grant to expand inclusion of camp
- ✓ Received \$1M gift from Weidorn Family Foundation for scholarship endowment

Dear Friends,

"Camp Harlam's impact is not so much about the place as it is the feeling; it's not only about bunks and pools and what happens in the summer, but it's about the people and how the experience changes them."

This quote is from one of our newest alumni. He's a young man who has grown up at camp and spent two summers on staff. And now, because he's had an opportunity to explore his chosen field in an exciting way this summer that will take him away from camp, he's joined the alumni community with so many former Harlamites. His words – which resonate for me as a long-time camp person – caused me to think about the eternal question of "What is camp's impact?" It's something we are trying to describe every day to families who may be looking to Harlam as a place to send their child, a place to work, or even a place to invest in as a donor. We will continue to explore the question and will share more with our community as we deliberate, but in the meantime, we've designed the infographic you see to give voice to some of the ways camp is making an impact.

As we approach the summer of 2015, we're feverishly planning for an extraordinary season. In addition to changes to our program, the hiring of amazing leaders and the normal growth we expect to influence our campers and staff this year, we're also continuing with renovations to the facility to provide a better and better camp product to our Harlamites. More improvements in Girls cabins are underway, work inside our kitchen to streamline food service has started (where there are also 50 brand-new tables...stay tuned for info on how people can get a piece of one of the old ones for themselves!), and there are other projects that are in the permitting and funding process that will be finalized soon. It's been another banner year for us at Harlam as we approach our 58th year (and the second for Harlam Day Camp, too.)

I hope that you will come and visit us this summer to have the chance to more personally reconnect with camp, and while there, we can talk about the impact that camp has made on you and others to whom you are connected. We are so thankful that your voice is part of our story.

Think Camp!

Aaron Selkow | Director

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