



# Beyond Akeela Circular



## A Letter From The Director

Dear Beyond Akeela teens and parents,

The late onset of spring makes it hard to believe, but camp is just around the corner and we could not be more excited to get started! Much of the fall, winter, and spring we spend planning programs, hiring staff, and attending various conferences. This is all in anticipation of the two months in summer we get to share the magic of our camp communities with hundreds of young people. As we say in the camp world, we truly "live 10 for 2."

One thing that has us particularly excited is the partnership we are forging with this year's Beyond Akeela Head Counselor, Aaron Schultz (you'll get to learn more about Aaron later in his newsletter bio). Not only have we found him to be a really engaging person to work with, but also an incredibly thoughtful and bright individual. Aaron has been working with us on building the Beyond Akeela post-secondary life skills curriculum and staff orientation among other bits and pieces, and has impressed us greatly in his work! We're so excited about the experience he'll bring to our community this year. You can learn more about what you can expect from Aaron at camp this summer in the body of this newsletter.

Like every part of camp, Beyond Akeela is at its core about people. Sure, the itinerary is thrilling and the program goals are inspiring. But the experience will be that much more rewarding and unforgettable because of the other campers and staff with whom you share it. Whether you have been part of an Akeela community before or this will be your first time with Akeela, you'll have a chance to tackle new challenges and forge new friendships. We are confident that all of you will come away from this summer with a special bond that can never be broken.

If you have any questions between now and the summer, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at any time. Hopefully, this newsletter will address some of the things you might be curious about.

Best,

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## 2018 DATES

**FIRST SESSION**  
June 25 - July 14

**SECOND SESSION**  
July 17 - August 5

# What to Expect on the First Day of Camp

Summer is so close and we hope you are getting excited about Beyond Akeela. We know that for many of you this is a new experience, and it's only natural to be nervous when entering an unfamiliar situation. Our goal is to help you feel as comfortable as possible at camp. We think that one way to do that is to help you get a better sense of what to expect when you arrive.



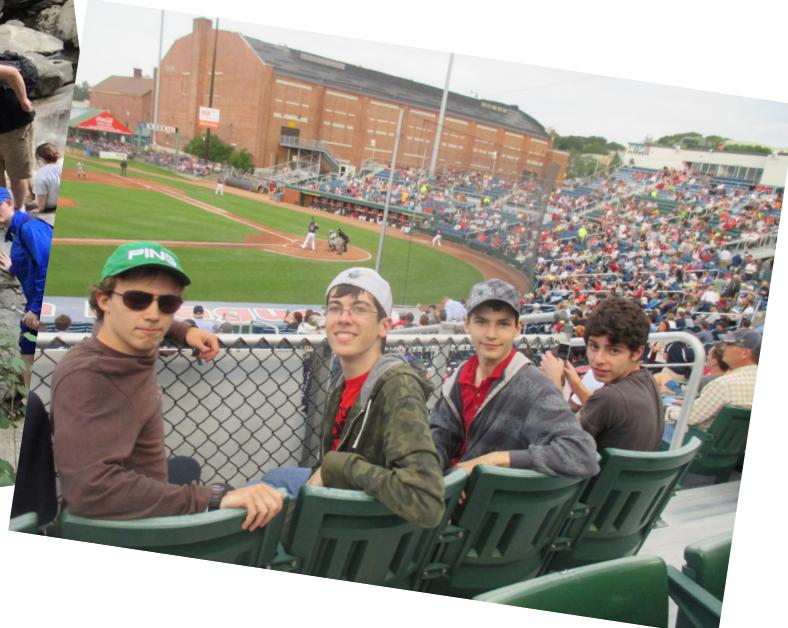
If you are flying into Chicago or meeting us near the airport, Beyond Akeela staff members will be there to greet you and to introduce you to other campers. You and your new friends will be driven by our staff in a camp van directly to camp. It will take approximately 3 hours to get to campus. Depending on your arrival time, we'll have lunch on the way back to camp.

If you are being dropped off directly at camp, there will be Beyond Akeela staff and campers there to welcome you to camp and show you to your new home for the next few weeks.

Regardless of how you get to Beyond Akeela, here's what you can expect to happen the rest of that first day:

- Once you arrive at campus, you'll get a chance to head to your dorm, unpack your bags, and set your room up for the next two weeks. You'll spend some time with your roommate and get to know him/her better, too!
- You'll also meet our nurse so that he can give you a quick "health check" to make sure you're healthy.
- There will be time before dinner for the group to start spending some time together. This is a chance to start getting to know other teens on the program, and we'll talk about expectations for our time together.
- We will all have dinner and Evening Meeting together as a community. You'll eat dinner with the Beyond Akeela group, just like you will for all your meals at camp! Evening Meeting will be in our dorm lounge and you'll get to hear some announcements from Beyond Akeela's leaders.
- We'll have some time after Evening Meeting for fun and low key games to help us all get to know each other even better.
- Before we all head to bed we'll meet quickly as a group to chat about the day ahead and what you can expect from the program. Then it's time for evening snack and off to bed to get some rest before our big first full day of program!

We're so excited for an amazing summer at Beyond Akeela. See you soon!



# WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER DAY ONE

## Camp:

Our time together at camp will be filled with a variety of engaging and fun activities, all working intentionally toward the goals of Beyond Akeela. Some of the activities include meaningful community service, low/high ropes course activities, cooking class, hikes, and activities led by Lawrence University faculty on topics like exercise and the workplace. Some days we'll spend in



camp, and others will be out on the road, including exciting day trips to Green Bay and Lake Michigan. We'll also spend some time together having group chats about topics like nutrition, healthy living/exercise, and social media/technology use. Every camper will also have the chance to cook dinner for themselves with a team a couple times during the session. Of course, you'll have lots of time to have fun and hang out with your best camp friends!



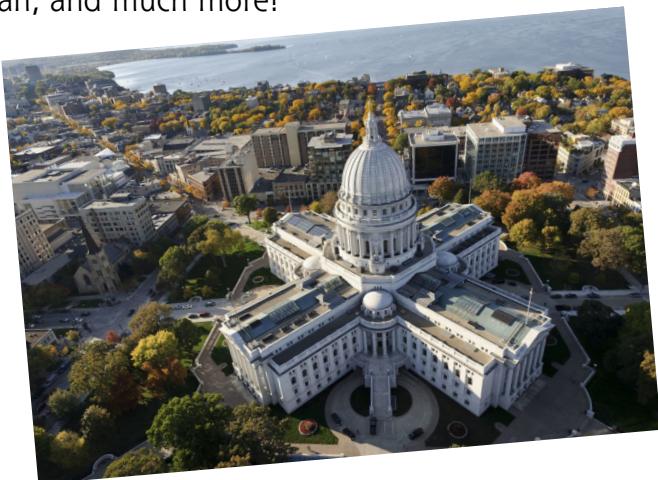
## Overnight Camping:

We'll travel to a beautiful campground in one of the many scenic areas surrounding the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Wisconsin for a couple nights under the stars (and tents!). Short hikes with rewarding views and rafting trips will fill our days. Of course, no camping trip is complete without chances for s'mores and sharing stories around the campfire!



## Travel:

After two weeks at camp, we'll spend our final week together traveling to some must-see attractions! Our first stop will be in the Wisconsin Dells (also known as the Water Park Capital of the World) for some water park fun. We'll then head south to Madison, WI for a chance to visit the University of Wisconsin-Madison and explore the city's best offerings with students from a college support program called Mansfield Hall. Then we're off to Chicago for a few days of museum visits, walking tours, pictures in front of the famous Chicago Bean, and much more!



# Beyond Akeela Feedback Reports

We value partnering with parents to maximize each teen's experience at camp so that they can continue to grow and learn even after the summer ends. This partnership values the expertise of our staff and the parents' unique insights as they work together to establish shared expectations for the camper's social and emotional growth. Our Camper Reports, written by our head counselor and director, serve to provide a written document for parents to review and share with other individuals who support our campers throughout the year. These reports will be emailed to each family shortly after our teens return home. In order to make these reports more meaningful for each individual family, we lean on our partnership with parents before campers arrive so that we can gain insight into parents' goals and expectations.

As you prepare for your teen's arrival at camp, we hope the following information will be helpful to you and look forward to receiving your feedback as we think about welcoming our campers.

## **Before your teen leaves home, talk to your him/her about:**

- Strengths and areas for improvement
- Goals for the summer
- Any concerns your camper would like you to share with our team

## **Talk to the Beyond Akeela Head Counselor or Director about:**

- Your goals for your camper
- Any concerns you and your camper have
- Any dietary or medical concerns (you will also speak to the nurse about this)
- Tools/Skills that have helped your camper at home when he/she is struggling

## **What will your camper's report look like?**

The goal of our report is not to surprise you with NEW information! Your weekly calls from the head counselor will enable us to keep you informed during camp about how your teen is doing. The reports are a review of this information in a format that you will be able to share with your camper (if you feel it will be helpful) and any professionals who work with your camper.

Please keep in mind that we aim to do the majority of our communicating with parents during the summer in an effort to partner with you. Our reports are not a report card. We will do our best to help you understand how your teen fit into our camp community. When appropriate, we will provide you with any insight and suggestions for how to help your teen continue to move forward with the success he/she had at camp.

## **After you receive the report:**

- If appropriate, feel free to share the report with your teen and use it as a springboard to discuss areas that you'd like him/her to continue to work on and celebrate his/her successes
- Share the report with individuals who work with your camper, such as teachers, therapists, social skills leaders, etc.
- Call us at the camp office to discuss any questions or concerns



## Meet your Beyond Akeela Head Counselor!

Aaron Schultz currently resides in Tallahassee, Florida, though he spent most of his life as a resident of the Ohio Valley. There, he worked in and managed residential homes for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities for nearly a decade. He then transitioned to a career in education, assuming roles as admissions and marketing director, teacher, coach and dorm sponsor at a boarding high school in Ohio.

Aaron is a graduate of West Virginia University at Parkersburg, where he earned an interdisciplinary bachelors degree in English, philosophy and psychology. In his spare time, he enjoys hiking, cooking, writing, playing chess, and exploring tiny segments of the world with his dog Weezer.

**Favorite Book:** The Princess Bride by William Goldman

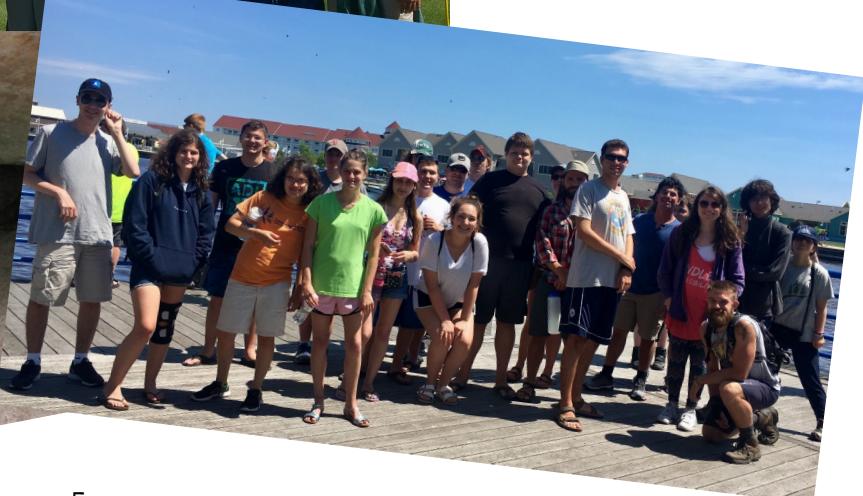
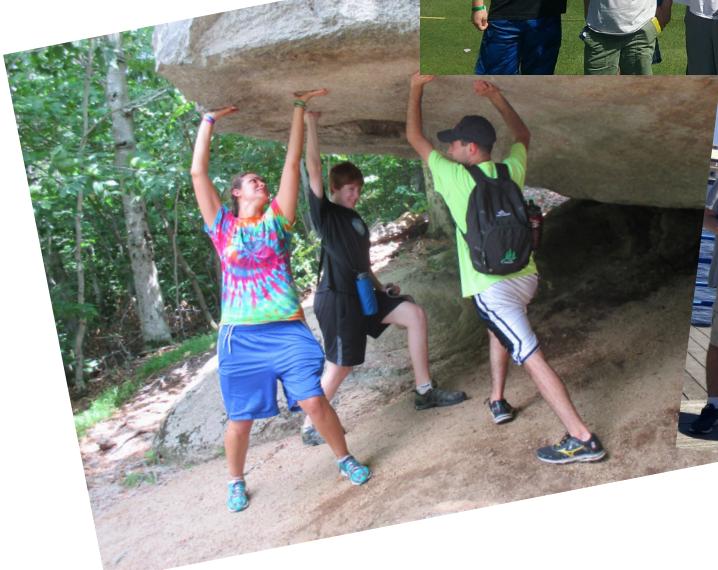
**Place I'd like to Visit:** Japan

**Favorite Camp Food:** Baked Beans

## What to expect from Aaron & Kevin

Aaron will focus most of his attention on the social engagement and success of our teens. In addition to building relationships with Beyond Akeela teens, he will provide support to our team of Beyond Akeela Advisors throughout the summer. While Kevin maintains the "big picture" view of Beyond Akeela, Aaron will hone in specifically on the residential life aspect of each camper's experience. This includes how teens are getting along with one another and how campers are doing socially and emotionally. As a result, Aaron and Kevin will share the role of communicating with you about your teen's success at camp through weekly phone calls, and daily news and photos from camp. Not only will Aaron's presence benefit our campers and staff, but he will also allow us to provide you with even better communication throughout the summer.

We are so lucky and thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Aaron this summer, and look forward to having him in the Beyond Akeela community!



# CAMP FORMS

Most of this year's camp forms are available online only.

## TO ACCESS THEM:

1. Go to the camp home page, [www.beyondakeela.com](http://www.beyondakeela.com)
2. Near the top right corner, click on "Parent Log In"
3. If you don't know your password, click on "Retrieve/Set Password" and enter your email address; it will be sent to you.
4. Log in and click on "Forms and Documents"

Forms with a computer icon are to be completed and submitted online. Those with a downward facing arrow are to be printed, completed and mailed back to the camp office. Before June 1, please mail to our Pennsylvania address [314 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004]. After June 1, forms should be mailed to our Vermont address [One Thoreau Way, Thetford Center, VT 05075]. **Please note that the Physician's Examination Form requires a physician's signature. If you haven't already made a doctor's appointment, please do so right away.** (These forms don't necessarily require an additional physical if your teen has had one within 12 months of their arrival at camp; however some physicians won't sign the form based on a previous physical.)

In addition to these online forms, you should have received in the mail: a Parent Handbook (with packing list), the Land's End flyer, and a flyer from our preferred label retailer. Please be sure to look carefully at these items.

We know you understand that all of this information is collected to ensure that your teen has a safe and rewarding summer at camp. Thanks for your cooperation and let us know if you need any help!

## CLOTHING ORDERS

Camp Outfitter's by Land's End is ready for your orders! Land's End tells us that it takes 5-7 days to process orders. Please allow enough time to receive and label your items before camp begins. Our "store" can be found at: <http://business.landsend.com/store/campakeela/> click on "show packing list" to see the camp items available.

We also want to clarify that campers are only required to have ONE t-shirt (grey or white) with a Beyond Akeela logo ordered from Land's End. Everything else on the Land's End website – while wonderful products – is optional.



## ROOMMATE SURVEY

During our time at camp, you'll have a roommate to share your dorm room with. We think you'll find it really helpful to know who you'll be living with before you arrive at a new place. In the new few weeks, we'll send you a roommate survey to ask you some questions about your sleeping habits as well as hobbies and interests.

The goal is to match you with the best roommate for you!

Once we know who your roommate will be, we will send you the best email address and phone number to get in contact with them. (It will get sent to an adult in your house and he/she will share that information with you.) We ask that you get in touch with your roommate before camp starts so you can both start to make a connection with someone before arriving!

### NOTE TO PARENTS & GUARDIANS:

If you would NOT like us to share your contact information with other camp families, please call or email us right away to let us know.

# IMPORTANT REMINDERS

PARENTS PLEASE READ

## ELECTRONICS POLICY

**Any item that accesses the internet, or has screen content of any kind (games, videos, etc.) is not permitted at camp.** This includes cell phones, iPods or other Mp3 players with WiFi connection/video content, tablets, etc. Please refer to the Parent Handbook for a full list of what is allowed at camp. We have this policy in place to encourage teens to socialize through Beyond Akeela adventures and structured activities. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and support with these policies.

## PARENT HANDBOOK

Please read through our Parent Handbook carefully. It contains important information about everything from first-day transportation to our phone call policy.

## SPENDING MONEY

Teens will manage their own spending money during with the support of Beyond Akeela staff. Campers will not need money for any regular meals, snacks, or scheduled program activities. Spending money will solely be used for purchasing souvenirs and gifts for home. We recommend up to but no more than \$200. Campers are welcome to bring preloaded debit cards in lieu of cash, as a means to make purchases.

## CAMPER PHONE CALLS

Please note our camper phone call procedures, outlined in the Parent Handbook. Parents who choose to do so may coordinate with the Beyond Akeela Director to schedule a brief phone call with their teen. We ask that you wait approximately 5 days after the start of the camp session. This time allows teens to acclimate to Beyond Akeela before calling home, which we find makes calls easier for everyone involved! Of course, Kevin and Aaron are always available to speak with you about how your teen is doing at camp. Call any time and leave a message for them and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

## \*\*\* REQUIRING YOUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION: CAMPMEDS \*\*\*

Our medication policies require that ALL daily medicine -- including supplements and vitamins -- be dispensed by CampMeds. We want to be clear that we do expect 100% participation in CampMeds from families with campers who will take daily medication at camp. If your camper does not take daily medication, you do not need to register with CampMeds.

You will find details about how to enroll in CampMeds, along with an FAQ, on your family's online Forms Dashboard (accessible through the Parent Log In on Akeela's website). If you have any questions about CampMeds, you can reach them at 954-577-0025 or [www.campmeds.com](http://www.campmeds.com). Any other medication (i.e. items administered on an "as needed" basis) must be mailed to camp in its original packaging at least three days prior to your camper's arrival. Please call the office to notify us if medications will be arriving by mail. It is camp policy not to accept any medication (including vitamins, supplements, etc.) on Opening Day.