



Camp Linden Summer Views

April 2013

Show Your Support!

For the past 15 years, EducationWorks has partnered with EHSoP to make Camp Linden a critical feature of our summer programming for Philadelphia children. Last summer we served over 1,600 elementary students throughout the city in a 7-week program. With significant budget constraints it gets more and more challenging each year to provide this summer experience for kids.

Our partnership with Camp Linden has been an incredible benefit on so many levels. The first and most important of course, is the experience our kids get to have through their weekly visits to the camp. It is, quite simply, irreplaceable! There is nothing equivalent that we are able to provide as an ongoing part of the summer. All of our programs are located in Philadelphia public schools- often the same school that students have been attending for the past nine months.

The weekly opportunity for 200 children to get on a bus and immerse themselves in the rejuvenating beauty of the great outdoors is truly a gift. Our children eagerly await their "Camp Linden" day and the chance to swim, hike, learn about growing and preparing food, and play- yes, *play* - in clean, open air. A great number of the kids that we serve very rarely go outside their neighborhood; the boundaries are often fairly tightly drawn. So Camp Linden takes them physically and emotionally to a new place.

One of the most satisfying images I have each summer is when the bus comes back from a day at Camp Linden, and the children make their way back into our centers. They have the unmistakable look of kids who've spent a full day outdoors, exhausted and full of life all at the same time!

I thank those whose generosity has made Camp Linden a reality all these years. Be assured that it has made a difference in a child's life. To all, please consider supporting the Camp and its invaluable programs.

- Craig Heim
Pennsylvania Assistant Director
EducationWorks



Why the Camp Stays Close to My Heart

I see those kids out there, and I see them full of wonder, full of energy. I see them in the garden, wondering how the food they eat springs to life from mere seed. I see them getting some chard or something new, getting the feel and the taste of what they might not normally eat, a new taste, a new experience. To touch it, feel it, digest it knowing they'd cooked it, or knowing caring people cooked it for them.

I see them on walks to the creek, or walks through the woods, looking at live things they normally don't get to see: maybe a differently colored bird, maybe a different kind of a tree, thinking about what else lies out there, in that great big world beyond the narrow confines of the streets they live on. I see them running around in the wide expanse of the Camp grounds, splashing around in the pool, flexing their muscles, muscles that need flexing, in sport, in other activities, thinking about how their young bodies work, what they can do.

I see the broad panorama of life's possibilities spreading out before them, though they may not see it that way at the time.

- Henry Pashkow, Member
Camp Linden Committee

Does Camp Make a Difference?

Can a summer camp experience make a profound difference in a child's life?

Yes it can.

How do I know? Because it made that difference in my life.

But the child may not even realize it has made this difference until years later.

All who give of themselves --- of their time, skills, and finances --- to Camp Linden, give in order to make this difference in a child's life.

And were you to visit camp and watch the children, you would see the promise of this difference:

In the joy they express as they plant a seed in the fresh earth with their very own fingers. In their abandonment and expression as they dance around the Lenape circle, beating their drums to their heart's content. In their questioning wonder as they view the Whirligig beetles gyrating in schools on the surface of the Brandywine, skimming here and there. In the pride of achievement and the comforting self-confidence they feel being



--- at last -- able to enjoy the water without anxiety. In the hugs the children give their counselors at camp's end. And in countless other moments that they never would experience without Camp Linden.

And how do we describe this difference?

It's difficult --- maybe impossible --- because words do not seem up to the task.

We can only feel --- a better human being.

- Leonard Weeks, President
Camp Linden Committee



Inspiration

We are lucky that we have Camp Linden available to us. Our sylvan retreat in the rolling hills of the Brandywine Valley serves as a source of inspiration and strength. For many years Camp Linden has been a source of regeneration for our members and the hundreds of children who attend our summer camp each year. Running, playing, studying and just breathing the fresh air fills many with joy. Without this program, many campers would miss out on the inspiration provided by the natural world.

To enhance such inspiration last summer, the Camp arranged for a week of workshops led by Assistant Chief Shelley DePaul of the Lenape tribe. Tying together the wonders of nature with the wisdom of indigenous people, Shelly offered the children new perspectives on the world around them; perspectives informed by a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of all life - an understanding most of us have lost. I believe that such a loss is one reason why we are perilously close to ecological disaster.

While it may seem grandiose to say, Camp Linden offers possibilities for rebirth. From the volunteers who tend the garden to the young people swimming under a green canopy and a blue sky, the earth generously offers us deep wisdom. It reminds us that the man-made world of steel and glass are, in the big picture, a recent and shallow phenomenon. Environmental enlightenment is possible when we feel under our feet grass, not asphalt.

We have an opportunity to offer this wisdom to the next generation. What a gift it is to be able to serve simultaneously the natural world, ourselves, and the young who will soon be asked to solve ecological problems they inherit from us. Camp Linden offers us a small opportunity to follow the advice of Chief Seattle who said, "Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the Earth, befalls the children of the Earth. This we know. The Earth does not belong to us; we belong to the Earth."

Is it too much of a stretch to say then that Camp Linden does not belong to us, we belong to Camp Linden?

- Hugh Taft-Morales, Leader,
Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia

Three Cheers for Volunteers

Camp Linden is a project of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia. We have a wonderful paid staff of counselors and lifeguards - and we could not possibly run the summer children's program at its present level without them. We have an extraordinary caretaker, and we could not maintain the property as it is without him. But virtually every other aspect of Camp Linden depends upon volunteers.

Volunteers do the fund-raising, hire staff, and plan and oversee the Summer Program. We organize workdays at Camp Linden when volunteers do chores such as cleaning, moving and setting up furniture, painting, trail work, and preparing and planting the garden. Even our plants are started from seed and nurtured by volunteers in their own homes until they are ready to be replanted in the Camp Linden garden.

Volunteering at Camp Linden has its rewards. We enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that our efforts are helping to enrich the lives of inner city children by exposing them to the natural world. We also experience the joy of contact with nature on a personal level when we visit Camp Linden, and even when we dabble with gardening on our own windowsills for the benefit of the Camp Linden garden.

- Sharon Wallis, Director
Summer Program



A Counselor's Experience

I have been a camp counselor at the camp for two summers. Through my experience, I have seen firsthand how the camp opens up children's eyes to a world that they have never experienced before. It is a great way for these children to learn in an environment outside of the city. I feel that the camp provides children with valuable experiences that they need to broaden their understanding of our world. It gives children the chance to interact with nature, and understand its beauty. I have had the joy of seeing these children learn from the environment.

Working at the camp has given me, an Early Grades and Special Education major, an opportunity to gain greater insight into children. The little things that these children get to do are significant, from picking tomatoes in the garden, to seeing a

bird in a tree. These are the things we want them to experience. We want them to be part of nature, in the moment, experiencing it as it happens. This past summer, I recall stopping and observing a bird in its nest with some of the children. They were amazed that they were able to see a bird that close. We watched it as it made its birdcalls and hopped from tree to tree. I used this event to explain to them that birds do this to mark their territory. A natural experience is one of the most beneficial ways for children to learn.

There is no greater joy than seeing a smile on a child's face. Seeing one from a child from Camp Linden is even more special. What children need is a little love and attention to develop, and that is what they get from our staff at Camp Linden.

- Hannah Reczek

A Day at Camp Linden

The Garden

In the garden the children had the opportunity to plant carrots and lettuce, observe other types of plants, learn how to take care of a garden, and harvest the vegetables. Most of the children really enjoyed taking care of their own garden.

The Nature Center

We did things such as tasting the vegetables, looking at seeds, and reading about flowers and pollination. This part of the program was a good wrap up to the garden and the children really enjoyed it. They were especially excited to eat what they found in their garden.

The Nature Walk

We took the children on trails through the woods to really get them in nature and experience all its beauty. They were given the opportunity to walk down and play in the Brandywine, which was a huge hit. In order to keep the children focused and provide meaning during our walks we had them take "minds eye view" pictures. This is a snapshot of a part of nature that they can keep in their mind to take home with them.

Olympics

At the request of Education Works, whose theme was the Olympics, we planned a program of Olympic games such as relay races, soccer, volleyball, and frisbee discus. At the end of the camp season we held a big Olympic event, beginning

with ceremony (parachute toss) followed by each Olympic game the children had practiced throughout the first five weeks. Overall, a great experience.

Lenape Week

During week four we had Lenape Native American week where we had guest Shelley DePaul come and do a Lenape Program with the children. This consisted of Lenape games and crafts with the counselors, while Shelley played music with the children and did a lesson on the Lenape culture.

Conclusion

Overall the children were able to have plenty of opportunities that they had never experienced before, and they always looked forward to coming back each week. I feel that by continuing to work on the program and by making improvements we can continue to provide these children with an exciting and fun way to get them out in nature and experiencing the natural world.

- Tara Walton
Head Counselor

Camp Linden is located at 1521 Camp Linden Rd., West Chester, PA 19382. It is administered by the Camp Linden Committee of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia (www.phillyethics.org).