



Camp Linden Summer Views

July 2015



Carol and Marvin at their wedding reception in March.

Behind the Scenes

Dear Friends of Camp Linden,

For this issue of Summer Views, we want to mention some extraordinary volunteers who make the camp possible and enable us to provide a camping and nature experience for 250 underserved children with a total budget of about \$30,000 (most of it from individual donors like yourselves). Keep in mind that 100% of your donations go to supporting the camp and not to paying any administrators.

Carol Love, MD

Although the Camp Linden property has been owned by the Philadelphia Ethical Society since 1926, for most of its history it was operated as a children's overnight camp by Philadelphia neighborhood organizations. In 1981 United Communities, which had managed Camp Linden since 1946, withdrew from the program because it was unable to find funding for necessary repairs and improvements. At that time the existing cabins were uninhabitable and needed to be replaced. No other organization was willing to operate the camp.

For 10 years, starting in 1985, members of the Society undertook efforts to reconstruct and re-open the camp. Carol Love, M.D. was a moving force among the cadre of dedicated volunteers who committed themselves to this project. She negotiated the sale of eleven acres of the property, so that the proceeds could be used to construct new structures to meet the needs of the camp. Volunteers carried out much of the demolition and construction work. Without funding to support an overnight camp, a new concept was developed -- offering day trips to Camp Linden to youth enrolled in summer day programs sponsored by inner-city churches and neighborhood organizations. At first children from Philadelphia and Camden were transported to Camp Linden in Society members' cars, and Society members served as counselors and swimming instructors. Over the years this concept has evolved into our present structure in which Camp Linden provides a nature-based program to 250 children who visit our campus one day a week for six weeks during the summer.

Several of the originators of this program are still actively involved in supporting Camp Linden. They include Richard Kiniry, a former leader of the Philadelphia Ethical Society; Temma Fishman, a former Board President of the society; Charles Loomis, an architect who designed the long range plan for Camp Linden; and Carol Love. Carol patrols the property every year, eradicating poison ivy. She and her husband Marvin recently landscaped the camp entrance and planted the area in front of the main cabin. Each year Carol uses her annual birthday party as an opportunity to raise money for Camp Linden. This year, when Carol and Marvin got married, they asked guests to the wedding celebration to make a contribution towards a new mower for Camp Linden in lieu of a wedding gift.

Our Custodian, Ny Seniuk

Ny runs a successful roofing business in West Chester. He has lived on the Camp Grounds for the last 5 years, and does literally everything to maintain the 40 acres of Camp Linden. He services the gravel road up to the top of the hill where we have the cabin and garden. He keeps our swimming pool pumps and tiling in good shape. He can fix just about any mechanical problem that goes wrong at the camp. Ny will be moving to a beautiful home that he has remodeled a few miles from the camp, and we are looking for a new custodian.

Learning to float



Henry Pashkow, Chief of the Volunteer Team
Henry Pashkow has been in charge of organizing volunteers for the camp for the last 3 years. During the spring and summer months, we have about 8 volunteer days. About 6 - 8 hardy souls meet in front of the Society on Rittenhouse Square and drive 45 miles out to the camp where they put in a day of strenuous work taking care of the garden, doing tick protection measures on the camp trails, cleaning up overgrown brush, and maintaining the picnic area where the campers have lunch.

Debbie Ferleger, Donation Tracker
For the past five years, Debbie has been in charge of tracking the donations to the camp, recording them in a spreadsheet, and then writing beautiful thank-you notes. We do appreciate every one of your donations on a personal basis and look forward to seeing the same individuals year after year, and Debbie's phenomenal memory makes this possible.

Sharon Wallis, Associate Director
Sharon, together with her husband Leonard Weeks, is the driving energy behind the successful camp. Sharon is a family practice lawyer in Philadelphia. Sharon's great love is the garden and showing the campers how the food is grown and what it's like to harvest it fresh from the soil. With her husband, Leonard, she visits the camp and the West Chester area nearly every week from April until the middle of August. They have developed strong connections with West Chester University and been able to recruit a dedicated staff of counselors for the camp. Sharon was responsible for recruiting Chief Shelly DePaul of the Len'ape Indian Nation to be at the camp for one week each season, giving a course on the history and customs of the original inhabitants of the Delaware Valley.

Leonard Weeks, Director
Leonard comes from a background of direction action in social service, having headed Diversified Community Services for over 10 years. Diversified ran several summer camps in the Philadelphia area. When Leonard retired from Diversified and joined the Ethical Society, he was the natural choice to take over the leadership of the camp. He began by codifying our procedures, obtaining grants from local foundations, and, with Sharon, developing relationships at West Chester University. He has also strengthened our ties with Education Works, the branch of Americorps, that selects and transports the campers from local Philadelphia school to the camp during the season. Sharon and Leonard have worked to have a clearly delineated curriculum for the camp with a program of testing (metrics) to assess the campers' progress in several areas. Finally, Leonard chairs the Camp Linden Committee.

The Camp Linden Committee

The CLC consists of 13 individuals, both members and non-members of the Ethical Society, who meet on a monthly basis to address problems, listen to new proposals for the camp, and chart the future course. Three of the members, Richard Kiniry, Charles Loomis, and Carol Love, have been involved with the camp for over 25 years and were responsible for restarting the camp after its operation was returned to the Ethical Society from Southwark House.

So, Dear Friends of Camp Linden, please consider a donation to keeping our wonderful resource running smoothly for another summer season. The money we raise goes only for counselors' salaries in the summer and for maintenance of the property. The dates of the camp operation are from July 6 to August 14. If you are out in the West Chester area and want to visit the camp, please feel free to give me a call at (215) 327-4579 or email me at jeffrey.dubb@gmail.com.

Thanks for your generous support,

J
Past Chair Camp Linden Committee



Sharon and Marta in the Camp Linden Garden

Newsletter layout and editing by Ruth Dubb

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).