



Camp Linden

A Program of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

Summer Views

June 2023

Message from Dr. Dubb

The Children's Summer Program at Camp Linden is the major community service project of the Philadelphia Ethical Society. Its mission is to introduce inner-city children to the wonders of nature. We partner with organizations which run day camps serving school-age children in low-income neighborhoods. Our partners bring the same group of children to Camp Linden on the same weekday for four to six weeks during the summer.

At Camp Linden children from crowded urban settings are exposed to the sights, sounds, and sensations of the great outdoors, and the living creatures inhabiting our wooded campus and creek. Our environmental education curriculum conveys a basic understanding of the processes of nature, as well as an age-appropriate appreciation of the challenges facing Planet Earth. The program also includes character building, swimming instruction, recreational swimming and free play.

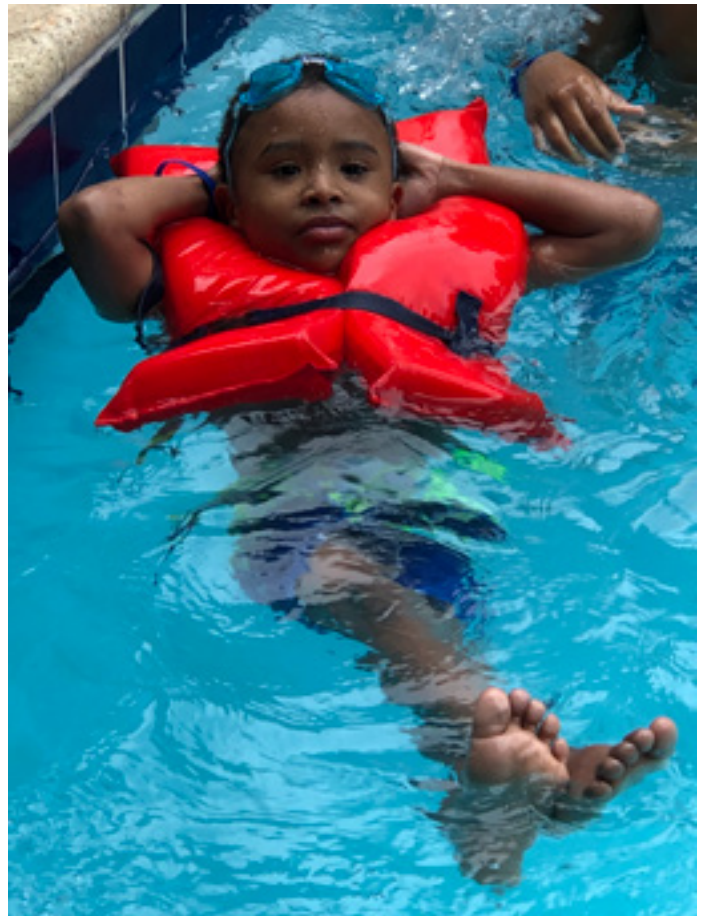
Friends of Camp Linden raises the funds required to finance this project. We do not charge participating organizations. The grants we receive from charitable foundations are significant, but not sufficient to cover the cost. Your generous contributions enable us to continue to operate the Children's Summer Program and maintain the camp property and facilities.

Thank you for your past support. We hope this newsletter will inspire you to contribute once again. A response form and return envelope are enclosed for your convenience.

Jeffrey Dubb, MD.,
Chair, Friends of Camp Linden

Camp Linden Open House

**1521 Camp Linden Rd, West Chester PA
(West Bradford Township near Marshallton)
July 8, 2023, Noon to 5:00 PM
Tour the camp facilities
Games for all ages
Swimming (from 1:00 PM)
Picnic (bring your own food)**



RSVP to camplinden@phillyethics.org to be notified if event is rescheduled due to inclement weather.

Our Program

This summer we expect to serve at least two hundred children from low income Philadelphia neighborhoods. We continue to offer a six week program of environmental education, character building, swimming instruction and recreational swimming.

We start each day with a lesson on Camp Linden Values:

1. Value yourself (keep yourself safe and open to learning);
2. Value other people, especially your fellow campers (keep them safe and help them learn);
3. Value Planet Earth and all living things, especially the creatures you encounter at Camp Linden (learn from observing them and leave everything as you found it.)

Our environmental education program focuses on a different topic each week. It includes a short lesson and related activities. The first week campers plant in the garden and take a nature walk. The second week focuses on plant propagation and the role of insects as pollinators. Campers pollinate a model flower and catch bugs and toads. The third week campers learn about the "cycle of life" - how the remains of plant life enrich the soil and create fossil fuel. This lesson also covers alternatives to fossil fuel. Campers dig for worms for our worm farm, examine fossils, and observe a solar powered flying pig. The fourth week focuses on water, and the creatures which live in and around it. We collect macro-invertebrates in the Brandywine and examine them under a microscope. The fifth week campers compare the Native American method of planting corn, beans and squash together with modern agriculture which relies upon chemical fertilizers and insecticides. Campers also learn about the Lenape People who occupied this land before Europeans arrived. The sixth and last week is a celebration of Planet Earth. Campers harvest in our garden, parade to the field, bounce an inflated globe on a parachute, and then enjoy a "feast" of salad from the garden, popcorn, watermelon and other healthy treats.

We provide our partners with a list of short videos to prepare campers for each weekly lesson. For a summary of our environmental education curriculum with links to the related resources, see phillyethics.org/camp-linden/camp-linden-curriculum.

Meeting Our Neighbors

Camp Linden is located in West Bradford Township. West Bradford Day is an annual event the Township hosts at a local park. This year it was held on May 21 at Broad Run Park. It features family friendly activities such as pony rides, bounce houses, and face painting for children. It is also an opportunity for community service and issue oriented organizations to communicate their message to the public.

This year Camp Linden set up a table at West Bradford Day. We displayed photographs of campers engaged in our program, handed out literature, and offered an opportunity to join our mailing list. We met neighbors who were interested in learning more about what we do at Camp Linden. Children who visited our table were disappointed to find out that we do not enroll individual campers - we only offer our program to children enrolled in inner-city day camps. We offered them an opportunity to visit Camp Linden for a day. We received such an enthusiastic response we decided to hold an open house at Camp Linden Saturday, July 8, the day before the Ethical Society picnic on July 9. For more information about the open house see page 1 of this newsletter.



Newsletter layout and design by Ruth Dubb

Camp Linden at Rittenhouse Square

On April 23 the Philadelphia Ethical Society celebrated Earth Sunday (the Sunday after Earth Day) by devoting its regular weekly meeting to Camp Linden. The Camp Linden Committee presented the program, which was held at the Ethical Society Building on the South side of Rittenhouse Square. Committee Chair Jeffrey Dubb, M.D. welcomed the audience and introduced the co-program directors of the Children's Summer Program, Amy Johnston, who wore a butterfly costume, and Sharon Wallis, who was dressed as a honey bee.



We showed a short video featuring campers talking about what they liked about Camp Linden. Ann Nicholas, Executive Director of our partner agency Community Concern 13, a child care center in North Philadelphia, and a former staff member of CC13, shared their observations about how the camp experience benefitted the children in their program. Then we gave the audience an opportunity to participate in several of the learning activities included in the environmental education curriculum. Audience members were invited to "pollinate" a model flower, by reaching through its reproductive parts to retrieve candy representing nectar. They examined real fossils, energized our solar powered flying pig, viewed a leaf through our digital microscope, and observed and/or captured worms in our worm farm. The audience then returned to their seats to hear Leonard Weeks read a reflection about Corina Newsome, a young Black ornithologist active in encouraging Black students to consider careers in natural science.

Our program concluded, as every seasons at Camp Linden concludes, with a celebration of Planet Earth. Participants donned animal hats or insect wings and lined up behind Amy, who held an inflated globe. We sang the Camp Linden song, and marched across the street to Rittenhouse Square, where a multicolored parachute was spread out on the lawn. The entire group took up handles on the parachute, bounced the globe, and then maneuvered it around the perimeter of the parachute - an exercise requiring considerable coordination and cooperation.

A good time was had by all, and we hope to make this an annual event.

Planting a Pollinator Garden

Brianna Rossi is planting a pollinator garden in the far end of the Camp Linden pool enclosure as her Eagle Scout project. Last fall Brianna started seeds for milkweed and other pollinator friendly plants which require overwintering. In May her fellow scouts helped her clear the ground beyond the deep end of the pool and do the transplanting. The far end of the pool enclosure will be an attractive haven for butterflies and other pollinators, starting this summer. Brianna is a member of Marshallton Troup 19, Scouts BSA. She worked at Camp Linden last summer as a life-guard/swim instructor and she is returning this summer in the same capacity. Amy Johnston, our Co-Program Director and a butterfly enthusiast, is guiding Brianna in the project.

Brianna with her mother in the pool enclosure



Preserving Our Woods

For several years we have been aware that Camp Linden's beautiful hardwood forest was not regenerating. We did not know how to go about addressing this problem until Amy Johnston arranged for an inspection of the Camp Linden woods by John Nissen, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Forestry, Service Forester for Chester County. On March 6th, Camp Linden leadership accompanied Forester Nissen on a walk through our woodland. As we hiked the trails he pointed out the ubiquitous invasive species covering the forest floor. He told us that the only effective way to address an infestation of that magnitude on an area as large as the Camp Linden woodland would require herbicides applied by a professional, although we could physically remove some of the invasives.



Forester Nissen informed us that funding is available through state and private sources to restore the health of woodlands on private properties, such as Camp Linden. To be eligible for this funding, the landowner must have a Forest Stewardship Plan. He suggested that our first step should be to interview private foresters who are qualified to write a Forest Stewardship Plan. Once we have selected a private forester and identified their charges, we could apply to the state for a grant to cover the cost, or pay for it ourselves to avoid delay. Once the Stewardship Plan is completed, we will have a path forward, which will probably require applying for funding.

On March 14th Forester Nissen sent Amy a written report noting the massive infestation of invasive species on our land. He stated that "these invasives will block out the regeneration of hardwood trees that is occurring within the woodland. At the present time there is no regeneration of hardwood trees." In other words, without corrective action, in time we will have no hardwood trees in the woodland, only invasive species. He concluded: "I would strongly encourage Camp Linden to start managing this property for the future health of the forest and for the future generations of visitors so they can see the benefits of a healthy and sustainable forest."

The Camp Linden Committee forwarded Forester Nissen's report to the Philadelphia Ethical Society's Board of Trustees with the recommendation that the Board establish a task force to assume responsibility for this project. The Board followed that recommendation and established the Camp Linden Woodland Restoration Task Force. The Task Force is not limited to members of the Philadelphia Ethical Society. Leonard Weeks will serve as temporary chair until the Task Force holds its organizing meeting. If you are interested in participating, please email Leonard at lcweeks1306@gmail.com.

Recognition from the Brandywine Conservancy

This time last year we reported to you that the Philadelphia Ethical Society was in the process of entering into a Conservation Easement which would protect the Camp Linden property from excessive future development. Our easement happened to be the five hundredth easement concluded by the Brandywine Conservancy, a milestone it celebrated in a two page article in its publication *Brandywine Catalyst*, Spring-Summer 2023. Here is the link to the electronic version of that publication: <https://issuu.com/thebrandywine/docs/catalyst-spring2023>. The article about Camp Linden appears on pages 5-6.