



Camp Linden Winter Views

December 2020

Seasons Greetings from Friends of Camp Linden

We hope that you and your loved ones are well and in good spirits. Thank you for your support. Your generosity has made it possible for thousands of inner-city children to participate in the Camp Linden Children's Summer Program. Although we were unable to operate a program last summer, your unrestricted contributions enabled us to cover our overhead. Your contributions to the Richard Kiniry Fund provide needed resources to sustain and improve the camp facilities.

Happily, it now appears likely that a vaccine will be generally available in time for the next camp season. Our summer program should be even more meaningful than usual to children traumatized by COVID-19 restrictions. We hope that we can count on your continued financial support.

In Summer Views 2020, we announced the establishment of a fund honoring Richard Kiniry, who was a moving force behind the revitalization of Camp Linden and the establishment of the current Children's Summer Program. We are now reporting to you on the response to the Kiniry Fund solicitation, and the projects which have been approved for use of these funds.

We pay tribute to Ny and Ed Seniuk, our former and current resident caretaker. Over the last decade their expertise and commitment have made it possible for Camp Linden to accomplish so much with a limited budget. They have also enriched our campers' experience through exposure to the animals they have raised at camp.



We also report on our new policy of requiring registration for horseback riding on the Camp Linden trails. See Registration of Horseback Riders, p. 4 The photograph above shows Priscilla Millard and her horse Allie, who are registered to ride on our trails.

Keep safe.
Jeffrey Dubb, M.D.
Chair, Friends of Camp Linden

Our Program

Camp Linden is owned and operated by the Philadelphia Ethical Society. It is located on the Brandywine Creek near West Chester. Our mission is to provide an experience for inner-city children that promotes appreciation of nature, teaches the intrinsic worth of all human beings, and encourages campers to develop self-reliance, integrity and ethical relationships. We partner with organizations with day camps serving low income inner-city families. Our partners bring the same group of children to Camp Linden on the same weekday for five or six weeks for a program of environmental education, swimming lessons and recreational swimming.

The Richard Kiniry Fund

Richard Kiniry, Leader Emeritus of the Philadelphia Ethical Society, passed away December 18, 2019. Our June 2020 newsletter includes a profile of Richard and an account of the reconstruction of the camp infrastructure and establishment of the current Children's Summer Program under his leadership.

We have established the Richard Kiniry Fund, to finance improvements to the camp facilities. The response form provided in this mailing offers the opportunity to direct all or part of your contribution to the Richard Kiniry Fund.

To date we have received \$17,900 in contributions to the Richard Kiniry Fund. The Camp committee has approved the following major projects and purchases, which will be completed over time, for expenditure of these funds:

Improvements to the Camp Office

Add Insulation and Drywall: The Kiniry Cabin includes the caretaker's residence and a large room with a storage loft which is used by the Summer Children's Program as an office and meeting room. The office walls are not insulated or covered. Insulating the walls and covering them with dry-wall will improve the appearance of the room and extend its useful season by making it practical to heat.

Install Kitchen: Adding a kitchen in the camp office will facilitate food preparation by camp staff. It will also make this room more usable for meetings. This project is currently under way.

Improvements to the Bath House

The bath house includes a boys' wing, a girls' wing, and a utility room. We plan to renovate the entire facility, including installation of new energy saving lighting, replacing toilets, and repainting the interior and exterior of the building.

Improvements to the Pool Systems

Replacement of the existing pool pump, with a two pump system: The existing pump is old and so noisy it is difficult to communicate during swimming lessons. The new system will be more reliable, energy efficient and quiet.

Installing a new automatic chlorination system: Our current system requires application of chemicals by hand. Installing a new automatic system will make chlorinating the pool easier and more accurate.

Installation of a demand hot water system: Health regulations require that swimmers shower before entering the pool. Our current hot water system runs cold before everybody can shower. Replacing the tank with a demand hot water system will provide water at a comfortable temperature to all of our campers, and save energy.

Replace Changing Tent: We set up two 10' X 10" tents at the far end of the swimming pool for the girls and boys to change in and out of their swim suits. One of the tents was destroyed in a storm at the end of the 2019 season and needs to be replaced.

Tribute to the Seniuk Family

For the last decade the camp has depended upon members of the Seniuk family to maintain our property and facilities, operate the pool, and execute or manage special projects. Nyland ("Ny") Seniuk served as resident caretaker from Spring 2011 to November 2015, when our current resident caretaker, Ny's son Ed, succeeded him. Now that we are undertaking improvement projects with the Kiniry Fund we are relying upon Ed and Ny to bring these plans to fruition. Based upon past experience we are confident we can expect excellent results at minimal cost.

We wish to take this opportunity to recognize the Seniuks for their invaluable contribution to Camp Linden.

Ny Seniuk

Ny is a local contractor specializing in roofing. He has a wide range of construction and maintenance skills. His history with the camp goes back to the days when it was an overnight camp operated by a social service agency. Ny and his ex-wife were married in the barn which then served as the camp's dining hall.



In 2011 the bathhouse needed a new roof, estimated to cost \$12,000. Ny did the job for \$4,000, with lighter materials. The roof he constructed is attractive, includes sky-lighting, and has held up over the years with no problems.

Shortly after Ny joined us, Sharon suggested an outdoor sink for the side of the bathhouse, Ny followed up on that suggestion, installing a sink he found discarded on one of his jobs, at no charge to us. When we decided to add stairs to the loft in the main cabin, Ny installed a staircase and crafted a banister to match the existing loft railing, charging us only for materials. When power failed while camp was in session, Ny set up his own generator to run the pump. Ny saved us thousands of dollars on major purchases, such as mowers. These are just a few examples of Ny's contributions beyond his duties as resident caretaker.

While Ny was caretaker his son Ed, who worked in his contracting business, did the mowing at camp. In November 2015 Ny moved to a home of his own and Ed took over as resident caretaker, with Ny continuing to assist as needed.

Last year, when muddy water came out of our faucets, Ny concluded that the expansion tank in the well needed to be replaced. Ny, Ed and Ed's friend Dan worked for two days to solve the problem. The old metal expansion tank had to be cut in pieces before it could be removed which, in itself, took a whole day.

Ed Seniuk

We count on Ed to make informed decisions about what needs to be done at camp, and to get it done in a timely fashion.

Ed maintains the water quality in the pool. During the camp season, he dispenses chlorine and tests the water two times a day. When state regulations required a pesticide applicator license to dispense chlorine, Ed took the training and test to secure a license, and renews it as required.

One rainy day a partner agency's van got stuck in the mud in the picnic area. We called Ed, who left work and arrived at camp within minutes. He located a set of snow chains, jacked up the van and climbed under it to install the chains. Then he guided the van driver out of the area, and returned to work.

When the pool was in need of major repairs, Ed coordinated with a pool contractor to replace leaking skimmers. Ed and Dan repaired damaged tiles, removed old paint and repainted the pool, for far less than we would have had to pay a contractor.

Ed decided to restore the raised bed garden, and did so at his own expense, refusing our offer to pay for his labor or that of his helper. He reinforced all of the beds, and rebuilt the shelter on the side of the garden.

Ed and his girlfriend Danielle have been cultivating several of the garden beds each season, planting a wide variety of vegetables and herbs.



Ed and Danielle with pumpkins they raised in the garden.

Danielle works as a waitress. She is taking courses to become a Veterinary Technician. When Ed and Danielle were both unemployed for several months last spring as a result of COVID-19, they spent much of their time organizing the cabin, and improving the appearance of the camp property.

Emma Seniuk

Ny's daughter Emma is a professional horticulturalist, trained at Longwood Gardens and Great Dixter in England. Emma has generously shared her expertise. In 2016 Emma and her friends from Longwood Gardens landscaped the area around our pool with exotic plants and flowers.

Seniuk Animals

Ny and Ed have enriched the camp environment with personal pets and farm animals.

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Ny constructed a chicken coop and run for chickens he raised from chicks and a male and female turkey who produced chicks.

Ed continued Ny's practice of raising chickens. In 2016 he kept two young goats for a year. Campers enjoyed feeding the chickens, turkeys, and goats.

When predators took his first batch of chickens, Ed tried raising pheasants. He spread a bag of sunflower bird seed along the edge of one of the fields, which sprouted and grew into a mass of young sunflower plants. Ed envisioned a flock of pheasants flying over the field and feasting on seeds from the sunflowers. Sadly, predators soon consumed the pheasants, and deer ate the tops off the sunflowers.

Ed next ordered a variety pack of chicks, of different breeds, both males and females. The males matured into roosters. Eventually all of the chickens were lost to predators, leaving three roosters who crowed all day long. Recently the last of the roosters succumbed to predators. Ed is preparing to order a new batch of chicks, all females.



Ny had come with two dogs and two cats. The cats stayed after he left. Tuna, the black and white cat, avoids people, but Orangie, named after his coat color, craves attention, and is always brushing against people, or jumping into their laps.

Ed's dog Chief is exceptionally friendly. He greets everyone enthusiastically. Chief is kept in the caretaker's residence when Ed isn't around because he has a penchant for running off when the opportunity arises.



Chief with Camp Staff in 2016

Registration of Horseback Riders

We've always encouraged respectful public use of the trails through the Camp Linden woods and our Brandywine Creek waterfront. For many years our trails were open to all horseback riders and hikers. However, last year issues arose which caused us to rethink that policy. We recognized the need for reasonable restrictions, such as the requirement that dogs be leashed and horses remain on the established trails. We initiated a registration system as a condition of horseback riding on the Camp Linden property. To enforce this system, we require registered riders to text our caretaker when they intend to ride on our trails.

We now have ten registered riders and two applications pending. This system enables us to keep riders informed about the status of the trails, and notify them when the trails are closed to horseback riding. It has also enabled us to get to know our equestrian neighbors.