



# Camp Linden

A Program of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

## Winter Views

December 2023

### Message from Dr. Dubb

We wish you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season. Thank you for your past support of Camp Linden.

This issue of Winter Views reports on our 2023 summer program and staff. It provides information about the demographics of our service population, and the community partners that bring children to Camp Linden from low income Philadelphia neighborhoods. It also includes a brief introduction to the history and values of the Philadelphia Ethical Society which motivated the establishment of Camp Linden and continue to inspire its present and future direction. Many of our readers are members of the Philadelphia Ethical Society or an Ethical Society in another part the United States (there are 22) or otherwise knowledgeable about the Ethical Culture movement. For those who are not, this background will help you understand why we consider Camp Linden essential to the identity of the Philadelphia Ethical Society.

At Camp Linden children from congested urban settings experience the sights, sounds, and sensations of the great outdoors, and the living creatures inhabiting our woods and creek. This is beneficial in itself. A growing body of research links the lack of nature in the lives of today's children ("nature-deficit") to disturbing childhood trends, such as the rises in obesity, attention disorders, and depression. See e.g. Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*.

The Camp Linden experience is not just a pleasant day in the country. The goal of our environmental curriculum is to enable campers to achieve an age-appropriate understanding of the processes of nature, as well as the challenges facing our planet. We accomplish this through short lessons and related activities. Camp Linden prepares campers to mature into adults who will care about the environment and advocate for responsible stewardship of natural resources. We also teach swimming and provide character education.



Your contributions make all of this possible. Without your financial support we would not be able to continue operating this valuable program. Please think of Camp Linden when you make your end of the year charitable contributions.

If you contribute by check, it should be made out to "Camp Linden" and mailed to Philadelphia Ethical Society, 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square, Phila. PA 19103. Please include your name and address if it is not printed on the check so that we can acknowledge your gift. For your convenience we are enclosing a response form and return envelope in our mailing. You may also contribute through Pay Pal on the Camp Linden page of the Philadelphia Ethical Society website, [www.phillyethics.org/camp-linden](http://www.phillyethics.org/camp-linden). by clicking on the "DONATE" button under the video.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeffrey Dubb MD  
Chair, Friends of Camp Linden

# Our Ideals

The Philadelphia Ethical Society was established in 1885 as part of the Ethical Culture movement, founded by Felix Adler in 1877. Ethical Culture is a Humanist religion to some, and philosophy to others, centered on ethics, not theology, whose mission is to encourage respect for humanity and nature and to create a better world. Members are committed to personal ethical development in their relationships with others and in activities pursuing social justice, environmental stewardship, and democratic citizenship. These principles are most succinctly expressed in Adler's motto: "Deed before creed."



Samuel and Jenny Fels, 1914

In 1886 the Ethical Culture Society of New York established University Settlement as the first settlement house in America, and the second in the world. This example was followed by the Philadelphia Ethical Society in 1906 when, under the leadership of Jenny Fels, it established Southwark Neighborhood House to address the needs a struggling immigrant population in the Southwark area of South Philadelphia. Camp Linden originated as a summer retreat for the youth of Southwark Neighborhood House.

In 1926 Samuel Fels purchased the current Camp Linden property and donated it to the Ethical Society for use as a children's overnight camp. The camp program was managed by Southwark Neighborhood House and its successors, as it merged with other settlement houses in South Philadelphia, until 1983 when it was unable to finance needed repairs. Volunteers from the Ethical Society, under the leadership of Carol Love, M.D. and Richard Kiniry, who subsequently became Leader of the Society, sold a portion of the property and used the proceeds to rebuild the camp infrastructure. They began bringing groups of children to Camp Linden for the day, and over time developed the partnerships and practices which evolved into our current program.

Adherents of Ethical Culture (we call ourselves "Ethical Humanists") assign the highest value to endeavors that enable individuals to overcome adversity and achieve their innate potential. Education of youth is a priority. These values are derived from Adler's maxim: "So act as to bring out the best in others, and thereby bring out the best in yourself." Early examples of social action initiatives of the Ethical Culture movement include the first free kindergardens in New York and Chicago; a district nursing service that grew into the Visiting Nurse Service; the Tenement-House Building Company, which upgraded housing for the poor; United Relief Works (now United Social Services of New York); the Workingman's School (now the Ethical Culture Schools of New York); the Working Boys Club of the Philadelphia Society; and the Hudson Guild and Hudson Guild Farm.



South Philadelphia alley circa 1905

# Our Program

Our community partners bring the same group of children to Camp Linden on the same day each week. We offer a six week program of environmental education with a different theme and major activity each week, and a five week modified version of the same program for community partners who are unable to attend all six weeks.

## Environmental Education Curriculum

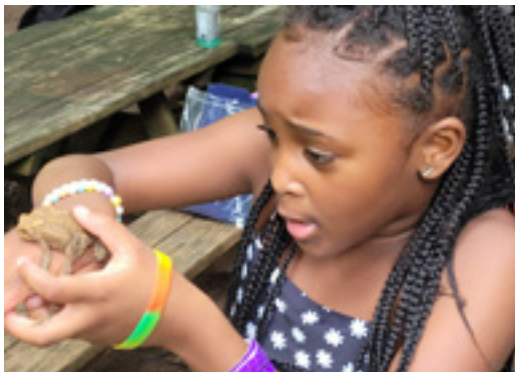
### Week 1: Gardening and Nature Walk

Campers learn about the parts of a plant and their functions, photosynthesis, what plants need to grow, and why plants are important to us. In the garden campers harvest and sample produce and plant vegetables and flowers. They go on a nature walk and observe the environment with all their senses. Campers also examine a leaf under the digital microscope and see the pores which take in air and release oxygen.



### Week 2: Pollination and Bugs

Campers dress up as insects or butterflies. After a brief lesson covering plant propagation, and insects, campers imitate pollinators by reaching into a model flower to retrieve candy representing nectar. They catch bugs and toads and examine their catch before releasing them back to nature.



### Week 3: Earth and Energy

This lesson focuses on decomposers and the “cycle of life” (decomposed plants and animals return nutrients to the soil to support new life). Campers dig for worms to add to our worm farm. This lesson also covers climate change and alternative sources of energy. Campers examine fossils and coal and observe how sunlight energizes a solar-powered flying pig.



### Week 4: Water Quality and Watersheds

Campers view a model of the Camp Linden portion of the Brandywine Creek watershed and see how pollutants run into the Brandywine. They wade in the Brandywine and collect macroinvertebrates, fish, mollusks and plants in its waters and along its banks to view in a digital microscope.



## Week 5: Native American Culture and Organic Gardening

Campers learn about the Lenape who inhabited this area before Europeans arrived, and the place of corn in Native American culture. They compare our “Three Sisters” garden bed, planted in corn, beans and squash in the Native American manner with the modern method of monoculture, which relies upon chemicals. They roll tortillas out of dough made from corn flour.



## Week 6: Closing Celebration

Campers help prepare for our closing celebration by harvesting in the garden, making kale chips, and observing popcorn popping. After lunch campers celebrate Planet Earth by donning animal hats or insect wings and following a leader carrying an inflatable globe in a parade to the field, where they bounce the globe on a colored parachute and play Native American games. They enjoy a feast featuring produce from the garden and other healthy treats.



## Camp Linden Resources

We provide our partners with a list of videos and other resources which are available for free on the internet to prepare their campers for each weekly lesson. Links to the resources associated with each weekly lesson are found at [phillyethics.org/camp-linden/camp-linden-curriculum](http://phillyethics.org/camp-linden/camp-linden-curriculum).

## Swimming

Camp Linden can accommodate two groups of up to thirty children each day. One group goes to the pool and the other goes to environmental education in the morning, and they switch after lunch. We provide group swimming instruction consisting of goals and games. Campers receive colored wrist bands to document and reward their accomplishment of each goal in a series which leads up to performing a crawl stroke with alternate breathing. A free swim follows the lesson.



## Values Education

Each day includes a discussion of Camp Linden Values, which are:

- (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 them and leave things as you found them.

# Our Community Partners

**Community Concern 13 (“CC13”)** (website: [communityconcern13.com](http://communityconcern13.com)) is a child care center established in 1969. It provides quality care for infants and pre-school children as well as out-of-school-time (“OSTC”) care for school age children, including a full day program when public school is not in session. CC13 has been bringing its school age children to Camp Linden for at least 25 years. Its executive director Ann Nicholas is a member of the PES Camp Linden Committee. Its service population and staff are primarily African American.

**The Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia (“CAGP”)** (website: [cagp.org](http://cagp.org)), established in 1979, provides programs and services for the Cambodian, refugee, and immigrant community. Its South Philadelphia Center at 2416 S.7th Street, Philadelphia, PA 18148, operates an OSTC program and summer camp staffed by Cambodian Americans, which serves mostly Asian children, and some Hispanics. CAGP has been bringing children to Camp Linden since 2016.

**North10 Philadelphia** is a foundation established by Chase Lenfest which operates the Lenfest Center, a community center in North Philadelphia. North10 Philadelphia works to improve the life outcomes for community members in Hunting Park and East Tioga. Residents of this neighborhood are primarily Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and African Americans. The Lenfest Center engages outside agencies to offer a range of programs for neighborhood children. Children enrolled in its summer camp have been attending Camp Linden since 2017.

**The Greater Philadelphia Community Alliance (“GPCA”)** (website: [gpca-phila.org](http://gpca-phila.org)) is a multi-service organization established in January, 2022, by the merger of Diversified Community Services (“DCS”) and United Communities of Southeast Philadelphia. GPCA’s goals with regard to its child and youth development programs are to improve educational and developmental outcomes in distressed communities, ensure that children have access to a continuum of cradle-through-college-to-career solutions, and enhance school, home and neighborhood conditions so they are more nurturing and supportive. Children enrolled in summer day camps operated DCS prior to the merger have been attending Camp Linden each summer since 2021. GPCA serves low income families residing in primarily African American neighborhoods of South Philadelphia.

**The Netter Center for Community Partnerships of the University of Pennsylvania** (website: [nettercenter.upenn.edu](http://nettercenter.upenn.edu)) is the community outreach program of the University of Pennsylvania. A major component of the Netter Center’s work is mobilizing the vast resources of the University to help traditional public schools become innovative University-Assisted Community Schools (UACS) that educate, engage, empower, and serve public school students, families, and community members. The Netter Center has been bringing children enrolled in its summer camps to Camp Linden since 2017. Netter employs a diverse staff, including graduate students, and serves primarily African American children.



## Contact Us

If you are interested in volunteering at Camp Linden, want to receive this and/or future newsletters by email, or have any other comments or suggestions, you can reach us by email at [camplinden@phillyethics.org](mailto:camplinden@phillyethics.org).

# Our Staff

**Leonard Weeks** has volunteered as Camp Linden Manager since 2012, overseeing maintenance of the property. He also conducts a nature walk and assists in the camp program as needed. Leonard has a BA degree and an MA degree in sociology from North Texas State College and a MDiv degree from Union Theological Seminary. He served as Executive Director of Diversified Community Services (“DCS”) for 26 years before his retirement in 2003. At DCS Leonard was responsible for the operation of a community center, 4 child care centers, 2 overnight summer camps, and a variety of social service programs, with a budget of over two million dollars a year.

**Sharon Wallis** has volunteered as Camp Linden Program Director since 2012. She is a graduate of St. John’s College in Annapolis, Maryland and the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Leonard and Sharon, who are married, reside in Philadelphia and share a cabin at Camp Linden when the Summer Program is in session.

**Amy Johnston** was Assistant Program Director for the 2022 camp season and then promoted to Co-Program Director, a full time position while camp is in session and part time the remainder of the year. Amy continues to work as an Environmental Educator at Brandywine Red Clay Alliance (“BRCA”), a position she has held since 2011. At BRCA Amy teaches lessons related to the environment to school groups. Amy has a Bachelor of Science degree from Mansfield University and has completed various workshops on environmental issues. Her hobbies include studying Lenape culture (she is enrolled in a Lenape language course) and raising and releasing Monarch butterflies. A long-time resident of Chester County, Amy is active in scouting and local environmental organizations and she is an avid gardener.

Amy conducted the Camp Linden environmental education program with support from two summer employees, **Sean Dougherty-Neider** and **Alden Ritchey**. Sean, a 2023 graduate of West Chester University, has had experience as a counselor and director of a youth summer camp. Alden is an undergraduate at West Chester University who is majoring in environmental science. Additional support was provided by part time volunteers **Paul Lucot**, **Alexa Manning**, **Morisa Goldman** and **Ali Hall**.



Sharon supervised the swimming program. Our two lifeguards were **Brianna Rossi** and **Denali Lucot**. Brianna worked as a lifeguard at Camp Linden in 2022. Denali volunteered in our environmental education program in 2022. **Alex Hall** volunteered at the pool this summer, leading aquatic games during free swim for three weeks in July. Alex came with his younger sister Ali, who volunteered in the environmental education program.

