



Camp Linden Summer Views

June, 2018

Come to Our Picnic Sunday, July 15

**Noon to 5:00 PM at Camp Linden
1521 Camp Linden Rd,
West Bradford, PA
\$15 per person (collected at the event)
includes lunch.
Free for children 12 and under.**

On Sunday, July 15 (raindate July 22) the Camp Linden Committee will host an annual picnic for members and friends of the Philadelphia Ethical Society, as well as supporters of Camp Linden. We hope that you will join us.

Carpools will depart from Rittenhouse Square at 11:00 AM. Email to hpashkow@gmail.com if you can take riders (how many?) or if you need a ride.

Activities include swimming and games for adults and children. For environmentalists there will be a presentation by Paul Schubert on the Camp Linden woods, followed by an optional guided walk. See *Taking Care of Camp Linden Woods*, p. 4.

If you have never been to Camp Linden, this is an excellent opportunity to see our bucolic property along the Brandywine in the rolling hills of Chester County. If you have a history with Camp Linden, come and relive happy memories.

Looking Forward to Summer 2018

This summer we expect to operate at capacity, serving approximately 250 children from eight organizations. All of the agencies which participated in our program last summer are planning to return. Netter Center, the community outreach program of the University of Pennsylvania, which sent a group from one West Philadelphia elementary school last summer, plans to send groups from two different schools. The Lenfest Center, which held a one day event at Camp Linden last summer, will be sending a group for the entire six week program. Our other returning partners from Philadelphia are The Cambodian Association, Community Concern 13, Spring Garden Academy and United Communities of Southeastern Philadelphia. Our two partners from Wilmington, Hilltop Lutheran Neighborhood Center and William "Hicks" Anderson Community Center, will also return.

We continue to offer a six week environmental education and swimming instruction program. However, because our partners begin and end their summer camps at different times, we have extended our season to accommodate their schedules. Camp will open on June 26, and the last day will be August 17.

We are all prepared for another amazing summer of learning, sharing and experiencing the wonders of nature.



New This Summer: SEL at Camp Linden

This summer we are integrating Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into our program. Each camp session will open with a discussion of the following statement of values and behavioral expectations, which will also be incorporated in all aspects of our activities.

CAMP LINDEN VALUES

Value yourself - Keep yourself safe and open to experience and learning.

Value other people (especially your fellow campers) - Keep them safe and help them learn.

Value the Earth and all living things - (especially those you encounter at Camp Linden) Learn from observing nature, and leave things as you found them.

BEHAVIORS TO LIVE OUR VALUES

1. Act and speak in a way that puts people up and not down.
2. Recognize and share your feelings.
3. Take responsibility - we can't control what happens to us, but we can control our reaction.
4. Let it go - know when to let something go and move on.

These values are not new. They are drawn from the longstanding mission of the Camp Linden Children's Summer Program, which, in turn, arises out of our Ethical Culture tradition. That mission is to:

Provide a camp experience for inner-city children that promotes appreciation of the natural world, acknowledges the intrinsic worth of all human beings, and encourages campers to develop self-reliance, integrity and ethical relationships.



What is new is our approach to introducing those values into the Camp Linden program. We are implementing an evidence based pedagogical methodology known as Social and Emotional Learning ("SEL"). Proponents of SEL have demonstrated that time spent in enhancing students' personal and social competencies improves academic achievement as well as social adjustment. The Collaboration for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has identified five interrelated sets of critical cognitive, affective and behavior competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. For more information on SEL see <https://casel.org>.

We are grateful to Noah Fickler for arranging an introduction to Thom Stecher of Thom Stecher Associates, an SEL educational consulting and training organization. Thom Stecher generously provided his consulting services to Camp Linden without charge. He stressed the importance of creating clear expectations and personal responsibility by asking each participant, from student to administrator, to agree to a common set of guiding principles. We arrived at our statement of values and related behaviors by starting with Stecker's "Full Value Contract" and modifying it to reflect Camp Linden's mission.

We met with each of our partners individually to explain this new aspect of our program, and secure their agreement that both the staff and the children they bring to Camp Linden would commit to these values and behaviors during their participation in our program. All of our partners embraced this initiative with great enthusiasm.

Thom Stecher also introduced us to Jessica McFarland, who will join our staff this summer as part-time SEL Consultant and Gardening/Biology Instructor.



Thom Stecher

Meet Jessica McFarland



Jessica McFarland will join the Camp Linden staff this summer as part time SEL Consultant and Gardening/Biology Instructor.

Jessica lives with her husband, Bryan, and children Hadley, age 4, and Nash, age 2, in West Chester, not far from Camp Linden. She graduated

from West Chester University majoring in biology, and holds a Masters degree in Science Education from Pennsylvania State University.

She has been a high school biology teacher in local public schools since 2005. At Owen J. Roberts Middle School she spearheaded a school wide organic gardening project in affiliation with the Chester County Food Bank to help establish a sense of stewardship, promote hands-on learning, and educate about organic gardening and farming. Jessica is also a Certified Yoga Instructor, a Certified Mindfulness Educator, a Certified Integrative Nutrition Health Coach, and an experienced public speaker and presenter.

Recently Jessica decided to retire from her teaching position to devote her time to promoting whole child wellness and education. She will also be training teachers in mindfulness, nutrition, and social emotional learning.

Jessica will be leading a full day training in SEL and Environmental Mindfulness to the Camp Linden staff prior to the opening of camp. She will also be leading our campers in experiencing nature with all of their senses, and teaching organic gardening and basic biology as part of our program.

The Seedling Project

It is a tradition at the Philadelphia Ethical Society to celebrate the celestial markers of the changing of the seasons. At our Spring Festival Platform, timed as nearly as possible to coincide with the Spring Solstice, we read passages extolling Spring as a season of rebirth and fecundity. At this Platform the Camp Linden Committee distributes tomato and pepper seedlings for volunteers to take home and tend. The seedlings - now young plants - are collected at the Platform closest to April 22 (Earth Day). After a week of "hardening" (gradual introduction to outdoor conditions) they are transplanted in the Camp Linden garden where they mature and produce their fruits for harvesting by our campers.

The seedling project enables volunteers in Philadelphia to support the Camp Linden garden without traveling to Chester County. All that is required is a sunny window-sill. It also allows them to share in one of the benefits Camp Linden provides to our campers - the experience of fostering a living thing and watching it grow. As Rafi Lev wrote:

How wonderful to be part of this **greening initiative** - I have spent many mornings meditating with, sharing music and speaking softly to my little tomato in training as the day opens up to possibilities. In fact, a few times, I even caught Esperanza Azul (the name it has acquired) nodding knowingly, or slowly swaying/dancing with chimes & breeze towards the sun- even smiling in solidarity once!

Soon our tomatoes will take root in the ground and bring encouragement, joy and nourishment to many !



Seedling foster parents pose with their plants.

Taking Care of Our Camp Linden Woods

In his recent Earth Day address, "Are We Owners, Stewards or Children of the Earth," Society Leader Hugh Taft-Morales implored the membership "As owners, let us be responsible owners who insure our property remains vibrant and valuable for seven generations into the future. Let us be effective stewards who protect the environment for everyone to enjoy...."

This admonition is applicable to the Ethical Society itself as the owner and steward of 51 acres of rural property in Chester County, Pennsylvania affectionately known as Camp Linden.

It may come as somewhat of a surprise to learn that the woods covering over 90% of these 51 acres can't take care of themselves but need active management to regenerate and thrive. In recent weeks, Paul Schubert took it upon himself to make numerous hikes throughout the property to survey the health of the woods.

Paul lives near camp and is a regular volunteer at our Camp Linden work days. He is an avid environmentalist. Employing his extensive botanical knowledge, Paul has led multiple hikes and excursions throughout the region. He also regularly circulates his reviews of articles on environmental issues to a network of advocates.

In May, Dan Barringer, a forest manager for Natural Lands Trust of Eastern Pennsylvania and South Jersey, surveyed the woods with Paul and added his professional judgments. At the Annual Society Picnic, Paul will give a talk on the survey results followed by a guided walk.



Camp Volunteers Receive Award

At the American Ethical Union conference in Albuquerque on June 8 Sharon Wallis and Leonard Weeks were presented the Anna Garlin Spencer Volunteer Award. The husband and wife team were nominated by the Philadelphia Ethical Society for their leadership of the Camp Linden Summer Children's Program.

Leonard is a retired executive director of a Philadelphia social service agency. Sharon is a semi-retired attorney who represents children or parents in dependency cases. Since the summer of 2011 Leonard has volunteered overseeing property maintenance and administration of the Children's Summer Program, and Sharon has volunteered as the program director and been the driving force in creating the current environmental education curriculum.



The award was named in honor of Anna Garlin Spencer (1851-1931), a feminist and social activist who worked for gender and racial equality, and world peace.