



# Camp Linden

A Program of the Philadelphia Ethical Society

## Summer Views

June 2026

### Message from Dr. Dubb

If you have never visited the Camp Linden property, the weekend of July 11 is the time to do so. Camp Linden has been serving low-income urban children at our current location since 1926. We invite you to celebrate our centennial with fun and fanfare.

The celebration on Saturday, July 11 from 11AM to 4PM will feature tabling by environmental organizations, tours of the property, demonstrations from our environmental education curriculum, and children's activities. The pool will be open from 1 to 4 PM. A brief formal program, commencing at noon, will include remarks by local dignitaries and dedication of the Nature Center cabin in honor Dr. Carol Love. Bring a picnic lunch or purchase food from BSA Scout Troop 52.

Friends of Camp Linden and members of Ethical Societies are also invited to the Philadelphia Ethical Society annual picnic on Sunday, July 12. A \$15 contribution is recommended, and participants are requested to bring a side dish or dessert. The pool will be open from 1 to 5 PM on Sunday. Guests are invited to camp on the Camp Linden grounds on Friday, Saturday and/or Sunday nights. We will host a pot-luck dinner, fireworks and a campfire on Saturday night, and a blueberry pancake breakfast on Sunday morning. RSVP by email to [camplinden@phillyethics.org](mailto:camplinden@phillyethics.org) if you plan to attend any or all of these events. Let us know if you want to borrow camping equipment. We look forward to celebrating with you.

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

Centennial Celebration  
Saturday July 11,  
11AM - 4PM

Ethical Society Picnic  
Sunday July 12,  
Noon - 5PM

**1521 Camp Linden Road  
West Chester, PA**

Overnight camping on the Camp Linden grounds will be available from 3PM on Friday, July 10 through Monday, 10AM, July 13.

RSVP to [camplinden@phillyethics.org](mailto:camplinden@phillyethics.org).



# *The Mission of Camp Linden is to introduce inner-city children to the wonders of nature.*

## **OUR PROGRAM**

We partner with agencies that run summer camps for 6 through 12 years old children in low-income urban neighborhoods. Our community partners bring the same group of children to Camp Linden on the same weekday for a six week program of environmental education, swimming and character building. Campers are separated into two groups. One group goes to the pool and the other to environmental education and they switch after lunch.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CURRICULUM**

### **Week 1: Gardening and Nature Walk**

Campers plant and harvest in the garden and take a nature walk. They learn about the parts of a plant and their functions, photosynthesis, what plants need to grow, and why plants are important to us. They feed goats and chickens.



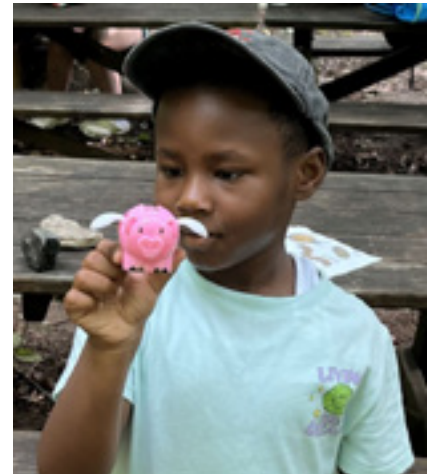
### **Week 2: Pollination and Bugs**

Campers “pollinate” a model flower and learn about plant propagation and insect pollinators. They catch bugs and toads and examine their catch before releasing them back to nature.



### **Week 3: Earth and Energy**

Campers collect earthworms for our worm farm. They learn about decomposers and the cycle of life. This lesson also covered fossils, fossil fuel, climate change and alternate sources of energy, illustrated by a solar powered flying pig.



### **Week 4: Natural Water & Water Pollution**

In a lesson on watersheds campers spray “rain” on a model of Camp Linden and witness how pollutants wash into the Brandywine. They collect macroinvertebrates in the Brandywine to test the water quality, and float in the current.



## Week 5: Native American Culture and Values

This lesson stresses the Lenape value of respect for the Earth and all living things. Campers observe our “Three Sisters” garden bed planted in corn, beans and squash, in the Native American tradition, an early example of organic gardening. We tell traditional stories about the “Three Sisters” and the lacrosse game between the land animals and the birds, and campers toss as in lacrosse.



## SWIMMING

Our swimming curriculum consists of a series of goals leading to mastery of the crawl stroke with alternative breathing. Colored wrist bands are given to campers to reward and document performance of each goal. Swimming instruction is followed by a free swim. The aquatic program also includes a focus on water safety.



## Week 6: Closing Celebration

Campers harvest in the garden, pop popcorn and make kale chips. They celebrate Planet Earth with a parade and parachute exercises, and a feast featuring produce from the garden and other healthy treats. After interviews about their response to our program, campers bid farewell to Camp Linden for the last time this season.



## CAMP LINDEN VALUES

Each day includes a lesson on Camp Linden Values, which are:

1. Value yourself - Keep yourself safe and open to experience and learning
2. Value other people (especially your fellow campers) - Keep them safe and help them learn
3. 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.

## CAMP LINDEN RESOURCES

We provide our partners with a list of resources available for free on the internet to prepare for each lesson. Links to these resources are found on the Ethical Society website at [phillyethics.org/camp-linden-resources](http://phillyethics.org/camp-linden-resources).

# Our History

## Early History

Camp Linden originated as a summer program for the youth of Southwark House, a settlement house serving a poverty stricken Irish immigrant community. Southwark House was established in 1906 as a project of the Philadelphia Ethical Society through the efforts of Jenny Fels and Society Leader W. Burns Weston, who volunteered as its Head Worker. After years of camping on borrowed property, in 1914 the Society purchased land in the Perkiomen Valley to serve as a rudimentary base for tent camping. That property was sold after Jenny's husband, Samuel Fels, donated a sixty-two-acre farm in Chester County, the current site of Camp Linden. The barn was converted to a dining hall and a pool, bathhouse and bunkhouses were constructed. The property was put into service as a children's overnight camp in 1926.

In 1946, through a series of mergers with other settlement houses, Southwark House became a part of United Communities of Southeast Philadelphia, which took over management of Camp Linden. While United Communities ran the camp, the Ethical Society continued to hold title to the property. Around 1960 United Communities secured funding and replaced the original stream-fed pool with a modern concrete pool and pool house. However, maintenance of the cabins and dining hall was neglected.

## Transition to Ethical Society Management

In 1981, United Communities closed Camp Linden because it was unable to secure funds to make necessary repairs. The Ethical Society was unable to find an organization willing to operate a children's camp at the site. At the Ethical Society's Annual Meeting in 1984, a proposal was brought to the membership to sell the Camp Linden real

estate for residential development and use the proceeds to increase the Society's endowment. Dr. Carol Love argued that because the property had been given to the Society to provide a summer camp experience for inner-city children, the Society had an ethical obligation to ensure that it was used for that purpose. She made a motion to table pending further investigation, which was approved by the membership.

Dr. Love went on to enlist other members of the Society in a campaign to restore and reopen the camp. Richard Kiniry, who later became the Society Leader, played a leading role. In 1987 they sold

eleven acres, including the old house, the barn, and part of the frontage on the creek, to generate funds for the camp's restoration. A stalwart group of volunteers undertook the demolition, renovations, and construction - much of it with their own labor. The pool and bathhouse were upgraded. The main cabin and the sleeping cabins were



*Samuel and Jenny Fels*

demolished. A smaller cabin was stripped and rebuilt on its existing foundation and structure. Lewis Buckingham, who served as resident caretaker for 18 years, built the main cabin, which was completed in 1989. This cabin, which houses the Camp Linden office and the caretaker's residence, was dedicated to Richard Kiniry after he passed away in 2019.

Dr. Love took the lead in raising money for Camp Linden. She personally funded construction of an enlarged septic system. In 1992 she initiated the Friends of Camp Linden, asking supporters to pledge \$100 a year. She organized an annual Caribbean pool party as a fundraiser. Additional income was derived from rentals and donations from the Philadelphia Ethical Society, the Rose Rappaport Long fund, the Schreiber family founda-

tion through Ellen McBride, the Sara Bowers Fund of the Kennett Monthly Meeting and other grants and individual contributions. Other individuals who were part of the effort to rebuild and reopen the camp in the early days are Jean Bradley, Chuck and Felicia Hinson, Bertha Waters, Susan Jo Klein (now D'Alessio), Deborah Hodes, Joe and Jesse Zelnick, and Temma and Arnold Fishman.

In 2012 Leonard Weeks, a retired former executive director of a social service agency, volunteered to serve as Manager of Camp Linden and his wife, Sharon Wallis, an attorney, volunteered as Program Director of the Children's Summer Program. They converted the bunk house to a nature center and developed a six-week curriculum which is the basis for the current Camp Linden program. In 2012, they secured a grant from the Sara Bowers Fund to fund Chief Shelley DePaul of the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania to present her Native American culture program at Camp Linden for five consecutive days. Chief DePaul returned to Camp Linden for a week every summer from 2012 until she retired following the summer of 2016.



*Carol Love, far left, Richard Kiniry, center, and Bertha Waters, far right, with friends at Ethical Society picnic circa 1990*

Amy Johnston, an experienced environmental educator, was hired as Sharon's assistant for the summer of 2022. That fall, Amy was promoted to Co-Program Director with Sharon, a part-time position during the off-season, which became full-time when camp was in session. In October 2025, Amy took over as Executive Director of Camp Linden. Leonard and Sharon continue to volunteer in supportive roles as Associate Directors. In 2026, Dr. Dubb retired as Chair of the Camp Linden Committee, and Sharon Wallis assumed that position. Dr. Dubb remains Chair of Friends of Camp Linden.

Ethical Society volunteers began transporting children to Camp Linden for day trips in 1988. In 1990, and for a few years thereafter, members paid for a bus, a lifeguard and extra food for the children. By 1993, counselors were hired to serve a few city day camps, two or three days a week. The program gradually expanded to providing services five days a week, with a different group attending each weekday and returning the same weekday for six weeks.

## Recent History

Richard Kiniry was President of the camp "Board of Trustees" from its formation in 1987 through 2002, followed by Dr. Love (2003- 2005) and Dr. Jeffrey Dubb from 2006 to 2010, when the camp's governing body was transformed into a committee of the Ethical Society with Dr. Dubb as its Chair. Dr. Dubb also assumed responsibility for fundraising as Chair of Friends of Camp Linden. Jean Bradley was hired as Camp Linden Executive Director in 1997. She hired her partner, Saul Machles, as Director of the Children's Program in 2004. Jean and Saul left the Ethical Society in 2010. Tristan Zeigler served as Camp Director in 2010 and 2011.



*Chief Shelley DePaul teaches in Nature Center*

# Honoring Carol Love

The account of the history of Camp Linden included in this newsletter relates the critical role Dr. Carol Love played in preventing the sale of the Camp Linden property and leading the effort to return it to its mission of enriching the lives of inner-city children. Dr. Love has continued to be a vital and active member of the Philadelphia Ethical Society and a committed supporter of Camp Linden. She patrols the grounds before each camp season to eradicate poison ivy from areas used by campers. She solicits contributions to Camp Linden at her birthday party in January every year. She and Marvin Friedman asked for contributions to purchase a new mower for Camp Linden in lieu of wedding gifts when they married in 2015. Carol and Marvin cultivate a flower garden at the entrance to the camp property. They also assumed responsibility for planting and maintaining the rose garden Bertha Waters endowed in her will.

Upon recommendation of the Camp Linden Committee, the Philadelphia Ethical Society Board of Trustees has determined to dedicate the cabin now known as the "Nature Center" in honor of Dr. Carol Love, to henceforth be known as the "Love Nature Center". The dedication ceremony will be part of the One Hundredth Anniversary Celebration on July 11 and repeated on July 12 for the benefit of attendees at the Ethical Society picnic.



# Our Partner Community Concern 13

Our longest standing partner, Community Concern #13 Multi-Purpose Learning Center, a day care and after school center located in the heart of North Philadelphia, has been bringing its school age summer program to Camp Linden since 2000 or longer. Its Director, Ann Nicholas, is a member of the Camp Linden Committee. CC13 provides year-round service for children from 6 weeks to 9 years of age and accepts up to twelve-year-olds in the summer. It describes itself as an "academic institution for early childhood learning". It holds a Star 4 rating, the highest quality certification given by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

CC13 was established in 1969 as part of the Philadelphia Model Cities Program, an initiative of President Johnson's "War on Poverty", which called for coordination of federal services to redevelop the nation's poorest and least-served urban communities. The legislation mandated "maximum feasible participation" of local residents. The Area Wide Council (AWC), a federation of grass-roots organizations, was designated as the "citizen participation" partner for North Philadelphia. The AWC was structured into 16 neighborhood "hubs". CC13 was established in response to hub 13's determination that quality childcare was a priority need of the community it represented.

The campers from CC13 are like a large family, and Camp Linden is a family tradition. Every Thurs-

day during the summer season they arrive in their yellow minibus, brimming with enthusiasm. It is a new experience for some, others have been attending Camp Linden for years. At the conclusion of the Week 6, we evaluate our program by asking campers for their opinions. Last summer children from CC13 responded by dancing as they sang: "We love Camp Linden".

## Our Other Partners

Over the last 30 years Camp Linden has partnered with organizations serving low-income minority populations in Philadelphia, Camden, Wilmington and Chester County. Our community partners for 2026 are: Monday - Melton Center, a community center located in West Chester with a long history of serving and advocating for its Afro-American residents; Tuesday - Dixon Learning Academy and Western Learning Center, childcare centers operated by the Greater Philadelphia Community Alliance, a multiservice organization covering South Philadelphia; Wednesday - North 10 Philadelphia, a community focused foundation headquartered at the Lenfest Center, which works to improve life outcomes in the Hunting Park and East Tioga sections of North Philadelphia; Thursday - CC13; Friday - Netter Center, the community outreach program of the University of Pennsylvania. Two high school students from Coatesville Youth Initiative will serve as Counselors-In-Training Monday through Thursday.



*CommunityConcern#13 at  
Camp Linden, 2000*



*Community Concern #13 at Camp Linden pool, 2025*

# Our Property

Camp Linden is an idyllic, fifty-one acre, mostly wooded property, situated on the west branch of the Brandywine Creek in rural Chester County, about five miles west of West Chester. The facilities include three cabins, a bathhouse, a picnic grove, an outdoor classroom, a raised bed garden, an inground concrete pool with a pool-house, two open fields, a network of trails, and a Brandywine waterfront.

Our property, as well as all of the properties in the immediate vicinity, are under easement to preserve their natural character. In addition to limiting future development to two residences, our easement places restrictions upon the use of the property. The Ethical Society is permitted to continue to hold its annual picnic at Camp Linden and offer it to similar organizations for outdoor events and meetings. However, it is no longer available for rent for social events such as weddings.

We encourage respectful use of our land, trails and Brandywine landing for activities related to enjoyment of the natural world. We maintain a relationship with hunting and fishing clubs which use our property during their respective seasons. We allow hikers and horseback riders on our trails. We also grant permission for scouts and similar groups to engage in overnight tent camping. Groups which use our property make voluntary financial contributions or provide services to help maintain the property and support the Camp Linden Summer Children's Program.

