



February 7, 2021

Dear Current & Future Camp Newman Families,

We hope this email finds your family healthy and safe in what continues to be challenging times in so many ways.

While we know many parts of our lives have changed over the last ten months, we can't wait to welcome our campers and staff back to Porter Creek this summer! When we opened registration this fall we shared some general information about how we are approaching next summer. Our planning has continued to develop as we prepare to deliver a safe experience for each and every person in our community.

Today's email is intended to update you on those plans, while also recognizing that many things related to COVID-19 are continuing to evolve. We are grateful for your trust and partnership and over the coming months we will share additional updates in writing, as well as have opportunities to hear directly from our staff and have your questions answered in virtual town halls.

Creating and maintaining a healthy and safe environment for everyone has always been and remains our top priority. As we prepare for Summer 2021, we continue to learn from the many camps that successfully ran this past summer, and we are grateful for the guidance from the American Camp Association (ACA), and our partnership with our colleagues across the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) camps.

Here are some of our key strategies for the summer as we make plans for our community (as with so many parts of COVID-19 these plans will continue to evolve and change as we learn more):

Activities and Program

As of now, we are planning to have close to our full lineup of activities at camp – including favorites such as Adventure Mountain, Israeli dancing, and overnights! We are carefully examining how our activities may need to be modified due to COVID-19 and are following guidance from the ACA and URJ COVID-19 Medical Task Force in this planning. Modifications include additional time between groups for cleaning, relocation of activities to outdoor spaces, and smaller group sizes.

Historically, our campers have participated in activities with mixed groups of campers from their unit, and sometimes other units. **This summer, at the beginning of each session – mostly likely up to the first 14 days of the session – activities and programming will primarily take place by pod.** Pods will be defined by cabin and tent groupings, and by shared bathroom facilities. This will help to minimize the interaction across camp and allow us to operate in smaller subsets of our camp community.

Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs)

Non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) will be a cornerstone of our COVID-19 mitigation strategies this summer. NPIs include mask-wearing, handwashing, physical distancing, and being outside as much as possible. We anticipate that when campers are interacting outside of their pods, they will need to be wearing masks, and in areas that allow for maximal distance and airflow. Additionally, facility modifications, including hand-washing stations and sanitizers throughout camp, are in process and we will share more detail around those updates later in the spring. There will be additional signage around camp and additional time throughout the day for symptom checking, handwashing and sanitization.

At camp, we strive to teach the Jewish value of *derech eretz* - caring for our community. This summer every day will be an opportunity to have that value put in action as following guidelines around NPIs for our campers and staff will be critical. We will be looking to each member of our community to do their part in keeping each other healthy.

Community Interactions

For Summer 2021, we are planning to limit interactions with individuals outside of our camp community as much as possible, effectively putting a significant “bubble” around our community. We are realistic and recognize that given the size and make-up of our camp community, the Camp Newman bubble will be different than your bubble at home. Some of the steps we are taking with this regard include:

- We are minimizing the number of local staff who do not live in-residence at camp this summer. Local staff will have minimal exposure to the camp community, will wear masks when interacting with others, and will follow the same rigorous NPI standards with regards to physical distancing, handwashing, and sanitization as the rest of our community.
- We strive to be flexible with families and other commitments; however, currently we do not anticipate campers being able to arrive late to camp or depart and return for any reason during the session.
- We plan to not have any visitors to camp while camp is in-session, and do not anticipate giving tours to prospective families this summer.
- Our faculty – the rabbis, cantors, and educators who serve as tremendous resources to our programming – will be at camp for longer this summer and not return to camp if they must leave, to maintain the integrity of the bubble.

Vaccines

We continue to carefully track the vaccine distribution in the United States. As spring progresses, we will continue to monitor developments with vaccines and the timeline for its availability; we will remain flexible and adjust our protocols as needed. We are still are planning for summer assuming that many members of our camp community, especially children, will not yet be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Testing and Quarantine

Many camps that operated in Summer 2020 mandated a quarantine period for campers prior to arriving to camp. We will carefully balance the need to quarantine and limit interactions with others prior to camp.

Additionally, camps that operated in Summer 2020 had robust testing strategies. We anticipate the same for 2021 and are already preparing for protocols around testing, prior to, and during the camp session. We will have more details about quarantining and testing in April, as summer nears, and we have a clearer picture of the COVID-19 status in our communities.

Food Service

For Summer 2021, we have contracted with a third-party food service vendor, Sterling Food Service. Their experience and knowledge of operating during COVID will enable us to continue providing all of the great food options our campers enjoy in a safe way.

Mirpa'ah (Health Center)

We are fortunate every summer to have a health center staffed by physicians and nurses, about five people at a time. For Summer 2021, we are expanding our health center team and we have set aside additional space at camp as isolation/quarantine space, if needed. Many of our health care providers have been working throughout this year in communal settings and they are well versed in operating within the parameters of COVID-19. Our health care staff will follow guidelines based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control, state and local health authorities, and the URJ COVID-19 medical taskforce - a group of 5 physicians from across the country.

We know this email was a lot of information and we look forward to continuing to share more information in the coming weeks and months as camp nears. Please know you have our commitment to keep our families informed, and we are always available for questions and conversation. Should you have questions regarding COVID-19 and summer 2021 or wish to discuss anything in this email further, please reach out to me at afischman@urj.org.

We can't wait to welcome your camper back to Santa Rosa and our Porter Creek home.

With gratitude for your ruach and on-going support of camp!



Rabbi Allie Fischman | Camp Director