



Camp Echo Lake

THE TRAIL NEWSLETTER

2025 Fall Edition





DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

It can be fun to unlock the history of a place and go back to the original germ of an idea or an inspiration - and then look from where you are standing in this place and time and just say “Wow - it all started there!”

It was 1919, and Bill Medine (Tony’s grandfather) spent his first summer at a summer camp as a 13 year old camper. On his 90th birthday in 1995, Bill said “I enjoyed camp so thoroughly, somehow or another, in the back of my mind a seed was planted that one day I would spend my time at camp ... though never dreaming that I might become an Owner of a camp one day.”

But with Bill’s first camp experience over 100 years ago, the inspiration was born. 26 years later in 1945, Bill, his wife Edith and two partners, Archie and Bea Kaplan, bought the property of Camp Echo Lake. It had existed as a family camp and an adult camp, but became a children’s camp in 1946. That one decision in 1919 to send one teenage boy to camp turned into 80 years of Camp Echo Lake! Amazing!

So this entire year has been a milestone for Echo Lake ... for our campers, our staff, our parents and, of course, our alumni!

2025 was a very special summer at camp, filled with happy campers and invested and loving staff. We know by our robust enrollment and by the number of wildly enthusiastic campers we had at the Camp Reunion this past Sunday, that the spirit of Echo Lake remains firmly intact. After the summer was over, we hosted an incredible 80th Anniversary Reunion at camp in September. We had over 350 alumni from EVERY decade of camp - from the 1940’s to the 2020’s - present and over the moon to be with us. The stories shared back and forth between the “old timers” and “young alums” were hilarious and everyone enjoyed getting to understand the Echo Lake experience from a different era’s perspective. It was a beautiful capstone to a wonderful summer - where we spent seven weeks with our amazing current campers and staff - and then a weekend with our friends from the past eight decades!

As it regards the history of Echo Lake, oftentimes when meeting prospective families during the summer, they ask “what has changed over the years at Echo Lake?” If you are looking at the tangible things you can see and touch, then almost everything about camp has changed. From new buildings to new programs to new spaces around camp - many, many things look different and function differently than they did way back when. We bet if you had a photo of every single location around camp where we have run Archery since 1946, you would have a stack of at least 15 photos! And where the amphitheatre, the Grove Pavilion, the Main Village swimming pools are, they would simply have been part of our nine-hole Par Three golf course from back in the day.

But ... if you are considering the intangibles, the things that don’t show up on a postcard, you know that we have stayed true to our original founders mission. As Bill said at the 50th reunion in 1995 when he was 90 years old, “When we started the camp, we started it on the simple philosophy that we would give our kids a very good summer under excellent supervision with WARMTH and LOVE ...” So you can see the most important values do not change. From Fuzzies to Warm Inner Glows to Dedicated to Human Development, our focus remains on simple but timeless values. We work hard every day towards the goal to make Echo Lake a community where every single person feels valued and appreciated for who they are, where campers and staff always feel the wind at their backs and where everyone feels welcomed and loved.

We are fortunate to be continuing this legacy as we march into the next 80 years!

Laurie and Tony



WHAT'S NEW FOR 2026?



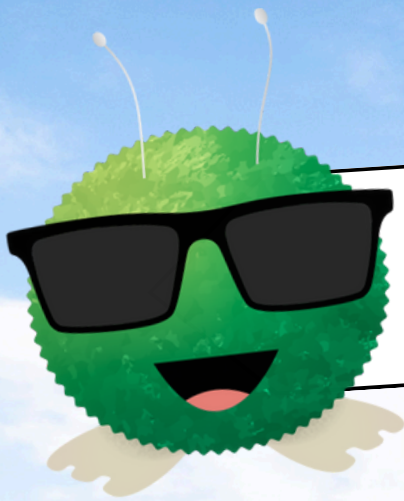
Every year, we strive to make improvements to camp so that each summer is even better than the last!

We are excited to share a couple of the updates we will be making for Summer 2026, which we also shared at our 2025 Winter Reunion for returning campers.

We already know that the deep section of the lake is the place to be! This summer the fun will be BIGGER and better than ever, with our new inflatable called “El Jefe.” El Jefe is nearly 20 feet tall, and includes a massive climbing wall, two jump stations, and a high-speed slide with a sloped end that will give campers a big lift and splash! We can’t wait for all the fun in the lake!



Additionally, we will be converting the Frosh Lodge into a brand new Music and Cooking center! Two of our favorite activities will be getting a new home so that we can continue to elevate our program. Stay tuned for progress and we can’t wait for our campers to jam out and create culinary masterpieces in this reimagined space this summer!



WELCOME SUMMER 2026 NEW CAMPERS!

The whole CEL family is thrilled to welcome another incredible group of first-year campers in Summer 2026! Please give a warm welcome to...

**Aaron Adler
Blaker Adler
Theodore Adler
Emma Akst
Charlie Bavaro
Jordan Bellows
Olivia Bender
Leo Billig
Dominic Birnbaum
Jaime Blank
Sloane Bledin-
Rosenthal
Ariana Borus
Noah Brodsky
William Chizzik
Benjamin Cohen
Sadie Cunningham
Maxwell Drew
Alex Edwards
Asher Elson
Jesper Erhardt
Eloise Fried
Brielle Friedman
Lennox Friedman
Wyatt Friedman
Jasper Ganer**

**Brodi Gelman
Erica Glick
Liana Glick
Jake Goldman
Dahpne Hanft
Hollace Hanft
Ellie Horvath
Naomi Hruska
Rory Kaminsky
Noa Kaplan
Parker Kooris
Dashiell LEbensfeld
Stella Lehrman
Mookie Lerer
Orly Levy
Talia Levy
Nolan Liebeskind
Remy Maganti
Ari Moore
Zachary Morganstern
Jack Mundhe
Blake Newman
Lillie Oppenheimer
Olivia Peretz
Brooke Perry
Cole Pofcher**

**Isaac Reich
Ellie Reisman
Sienna Roslin
Romy Ruchefsky
Eva Salamon
Sadie Schaffler
Noah Scheinkman
Becky Seigel
Maxwell Shapiro
Austin Singer
Ellsworth Slater
Zachary Smith
Willa Spector
Eli Stein
Sophie Stein
Harper Turetsky
Eva Turner
Sammy Ushkow
Joseph Varon
Lilah Volk
Benjamin Weisman
Liam Wolfe
Lily Yglesias
Logan Zahler**



ALUMNI HAPPENINGS

We love staying connected with our Camp Echo Lake alumni and celebrating the exciting moments in their lives! On this page, you'll find updates about achievements, weddings, new babies, and other special happenings. It's our way of keeping the CEL spirit alive and sharing in the joys of our extended camp family. If you have something special to share with us, let us know [here](#)!



Alyson Landa Margulies, Sandi Greene Dubin, and Julie Rappaport Smith recently got together to celebrate a milestone birthday! 4 decades of friendship and birthdays, which started at CEL, continued at Penn and beyond despite living in New York City, Chicago, and LA! Camp friendships really do last a lifetime!

Camp Echo Lake Alumni camper and staff member **Theo Feldman** is delighted to share that he married his beautiful wife, Sydney, at their family home on September 20, 2025 in Pawley's Island, South Carolina. It was a beautiful day surrounded by their closest family and friends, CEL alumni included! Mazel tov to the happy couple!



We are thrilled for CEL Alum **Michelle Rinke Wallace** and her husband Dan, who welcomed their son, **Neven Abram Wallace**, in August! We can't wait for Neven to join big sister **Alyla Wallace** at camp in the future!

A big congratulations to our Health Center Director, **Annie Nelson**, and her husband Judd who welcomed a baby girl this month! All are doing well and we are so excited to have another baby joining our summer crew!

Three Fuzzies, One Day!

A Story by Sophie Pratter (LJGE)

Have you ever had the best surprise ever? Well I have, it was the time at camp when I got three fuzzies in one day!

Before I tell you about the story, I'm gonna talk about what a fuzzy is. A fuzzy is a colored cotton ball with eyes to it. A paper is also attached to it, on the paper it says, "I got a warm inner glow at Camp Echo Lake. This is what a fuzzy looks like.

Now I'm gonna talk about what a fuzzy means. At evening line up, Laurie the owner picks a few pieces of paper out of a box. These pieces of paper say why someone should get a fuzzy. The reasons would be because this person tried hard or was nice. This is my camp saying like how Gladwyne has the respect saying.

Now that you know what a fuzzy is I will tell you the story. It was evening lineup. My heart was pounding. I really wanted a fuzzy. I suddenly hear Laurie saying, "We have three fuzzies for the same person." I got so excited I thought maybe it could be for me.

She reads the first fuzzy, "We would like to give a fuzzy to this person for being so nice to us." The next one said, "I would like to give this fuzzy to someone for cheering me up," finally but not least this one said, "this person should get a fuzzy for helping me in sky village." I turn to my counselor and say, "I think it's for me because I did all of that stuff." Finally Laurie is announcing who gets the fuzzies, "The person who get's three fuzzies is Soph in the LJGE!!" I'm so happy and surprised! I go up to get my fuzzies and take a picture with them.

Now it has been a few months and I'm getting back into school but I'm still really missing camp. Getting those fuzzies was the best surprise I could ask for! But knowing why I got those fuzzies is even better!

If you have writing you'd like to share in The Trail, send it to us at office@campecholake.com!



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: SAMANTHA GOETZ

From her first summer as a Frosh Girl in 2016 to a Leader in Training in 2024, Samantha Goetz has always brought joy, positivity, and energy to Camp Echo Lake. Samantha, along with her brothers Harrison and Jonah, grew up at Camp Echo Lake with the support of their parents, Heather and David, who have long been deeply involved in and supportive of the CEL community. David has even been one of our camp doctors in past summers! Earlier this year, Samantha was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of kidney cancer. Below, Samantha shares her journey and the strength she's found along the way.



Can you share a little about what this past year has been like for you — from diagnosis through treatment?

In January, my life changed in a way I never could have imagined. It started with feeling sick. I had constant pain, nausea, and discomfort on my left side. At first, we thought it might be something common, like a kidney stone, a kidney infection, or a UTI. But after a CT scan with contrast, everything shifted. The scan revealed a massive tumor on my left kidney. Soon after, a CT scan of my chest showed metastases to both of my lungs. A biopsy confirmed the diagnosis: a very rare and aggressive stage IV kidney cancer called CIC:DUX4 fusion metastatic sarcoma.

Because my cancer was so rare, I couldn't be treated locally. My mom and I moved to NYC and stayed with my Aunt, who lived 2 blocks from the hospital. I was treated at Memorial Sloan Kettering, where I underwent months of intense treatment. Over eight months, I received 7 rounds of chemotherapy, 4 major surgeries, 10 days of radiation, and more days in the hospital than I can count. Throughout this process, I felt everything. Fear, anger, sadness, loneliness, and shock. Some days, it felt unreal, like I was living someone else's life.

One of the hardest parts was feeling like cancer stole my high school years. I was supposed to be focused on competitive dance, touring colleges, and spending time with friends. Instead, I was in hospitals. Losing my hair from chemotherapy was especially painful. It felt like I was losing a part of my identity, something that made me feel like myself. Over time, though, I learned that hair doesn't define who I am. What felt devastating at first became a lesson in strength and perspective.

Now, I am receiving maintenance chemotherapy at The Melodies Center at Albany Medical Center, two weeks on, one week off until August. While the journey isn't over, I am incredibly grateful to say that as of today, there is no evidence of disease in my body. That truth fills me with hope I didn't know I could feel again.

Cancer changed me, but it also showed me how deeply supported I am, and how precious life is. Even though this experience took away moments I can never get back, it gave me something just as powerful: resilience, gratitude, and a new understanding of who I am.



You've always been such a joyful, positive presence at camp. What helped you stay strong or find moments of joy during all of this?

I stayed positive by using humor as a coping tool and intentionally finding the good wherever I could. Laughter became a way to cope on the hardest days. I also found strength in connecting with others who were going through similar situations. It reminded me that I wasn't alone. I learned to celebrate the small victories, no matter how minor they seemed, because each one meant progress. My family played a huge role in keeping me positive. They were my biggest cheerleaders and a constant source of strength. Through it all, I held onto my motto: face the sun, because the darkness will always be behind me.

How has the Camp Echo Lake community shown up for you this year?

The CEL camp community has supported me in more ways than I could ever put into words. From the LIT boys sending forever orange roses to the LIT girls sending cookies, flowers, balloons, doughnuts, chocolates, pajamas, stuffed animals, shirts, hats, and so much more, I was constantly reminded that I was never alone. They even made me a camp blanket that I brought with me to the hospital every day, which became a huge source of comfort.

Some of the girls dropped off care packages in person, while others shipped them from as far away as Canada. We FaceTimed often so I could still feel included, and on days when I felt up to it, I would go out to lunch or shopping with a camp friend. On especially hard hospital days, the camp community would surprise me with ice cream and treats to lift my spirits.

Past counselors reached out and went above and beyond anything I could have imagined, running marathons in my honor and even shaving their heads in support. Camp staff sent the most thoughtful cards, camp shirts, and I even received an orange fuzzy that made me smile. My brother's group also showed their support through a generous donation.

The love, kindness, and sense of family from the CEL community carried me through some of my hardest moments, and I will forever be grateful for the way they showed up for me.

Is there a way people can continue to support you or other kids facing kidney cancer?

Yes — there are several organizations that have made a meaningful impact and that I'd love to highlight:

- Pediatric Cancer Foundation - www.pcfcare.org
- Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center - www.mskcc.org
- The Melodies Center for Childhood Cancer & Blood Disorders - www.albanymed.org
- Kidney Cancer Association - www.kidneycancer.org
- RCCS Rofeh Cholim Cancer Society - www.rccscancer.org
- Chai Lifeline - www.chailifeline.org



CAMPER & STAFF SHOUT OUTS

Missing my UJGW
girlies the most! Hope
your school year has
been amazing and I
can't wait to see you
again soon!! - Cami

I want to give a shout
out to Mia the LIT for
being so nice!! I miss
you!

Shoutout to Marco,
Ben, Daithi,
Ludwig, Calum,
Leon & Matt for
being the best
UJBW ever!



I really want to
shout out Ewan,
Melissa, Peggy,
Conor & Ellen for
being so kind!
- Mario

**If you'd like to
give a shout out
in the next edition
of the Echo Lake
Trail, submit it
[here!](#)**

Shout out to Alexa
from Frosh! I had
so much fun with
you at camp and
can't wait for next
summer!



CAMP ECHO LAKE APP

The Camp Echo Lake (CEL) app is available for all smartphones, providing easy access to everything CEL! Browse summer photos and videos, stay up to date with yearly news and reminders (including the Trail newsletter), and even receive push notifications so you never miss an update. Current campers, parents, staff, and alumni can all enjoy the app. If you haven't logged in yet, contact office@campecholake.com for a registration code and start exploring today!

How to Access the Camp Echo Lake App:

1. Visit the App Store or Google Play and search "Camp Echo Lake," or use the links or QR codes at the bottom of this page to locate and download the app to your device.
2. Tap "Create an account," use the email address we have on file at camp (also used for the Parent Dashboard), and set up a password. You will need to enter a registration code to access the app for the first time! If you need a registration code, please contact the Camp Echo Lake Office by emailing office@campecholake.com or calling 518-623-9635.
3. Login to the app and "allow" mobile push notifications to stay informed of important camp updates and reminders.



Scan this QR code to download the CEL app on iPhone, or click [here](#) to view in the Apple App Store.



Scan this QR code to download the CEL app on Android, or click [here](#) to view in the Google play Store.



2025-2026 CALENDAR

Though camp may only last seven weeks, the CEL magic stretches throughout the year! We were thrilled to see so many of our returning campers at our 2025 Winter Reunion this month. Check below for the rest of our off-season events and Summer 2026 dates!

2026 Off-Season Dates:

- New Camper Virtual Event - Sunday, February 8 at times per age group on Zoom
- New Parent Night - Wednesday, April 15 from 7:00pm-8:45 pm EST on Zoom
- Lower Village Zoom for Parents and Campers - Thursday, March 5th from 7:00 pm-8:00 pm on Zoom.
- New Camper Spring Into Summer Event - Sunday, May 3 from 10:30am to 12:00 pm EST at Breezemont Day Camp in Armonk, NY

2026 Summer Dates:

- Camp Echo Lake 2026 Season Begins - Sunday, June 28
- Family Visiting Day - Saturday, July 18 from 9am to 3pm
- Alternate Visiting Day ONLY for Divorced/Separated Families - Sunday, July 19 from 9am to 3pm
- Camp Echo Lake 2026 Season Ends - Saturday, August 15

BE A PART OF THE TRAIL!

Be a part of the Camp Echo Lake Trail! Share your stories, shoutouts, memories, and special moments to help celebrate our amazing Echo Lake community. Click [here](#) to submit and see your voice featured in the next edition! We'd love to hear from you!