



## WHERE THE STARS GOT THEIR START



### RUTH BADER GINSBURG

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg attended Camp Che-Na-Wah in upstate New York. It has been reported that in 1948, at the age of 15, she earned the title of "Camp Rabbi."



### MAYIM BIALIK

Actress Mayim Bialik, star of the 1990s show *Blossom* and current co-star on *The Big Bang Theory*, credits the Jewish Federation for making it possible for her to attend summer camp. Per the *Canadian Jewish News*, in a 2015 address at the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto's annual campaign event, Mayim stated, "Because of federation [in California], I was able to attend Jewish camp for five weeks a year, to meet other Jews and learn." She continued, "It's because of people like you who gave to people like me, whose family didn't have money for camp."



### PENNY MARSHALL

No, actress-director Penny Marshall, aka Laverne from *Laverne & Shirley*, is not Jewish, but she did spend her summers attending Camp Geneva in the Poconos alongside her siblings, the same camp their mother once worked at as a dance counselor. Camp Geneva was owned by Penny's mom's best friend's family. Marshall chronicled her positive Jewish camp experiences in her memoir *My Mother was Nuts*. She said, "I recited the Sabbath prayers on Friday nights like everyone else." When Marshall was 14 and 15 she returned to Camp Geneva to work as a waitress, where she met the camp's musical director, a young Juilliard student by the name of Marvin Hamlisch.



### BEN PLATT

*Book of Mormon* and *Pitch Perfect* actor Ben Platt began performing shows in his backyard at the age of six. In an interview on *Late Night: Seth Meyers* Ben said he and his family would sing during the high holidays and at bar mitzvahs, weddings and parties while growing up in Los Angeles. Seth Meyers asked Ben if he could sing any showtunes in Hebrew and Ben replied, "I played Sky Masterson four times in *Guys and Dolls* in my childhood and one of those times was at my Jewish summer camp, Camp Ramah in California, and we do all of our productions there in Hebrew." Ben went on to sing the Hebrew version of "Luck Be a Lady Tonight."

# A CONVERSATION WITH JCC ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA



**JODI SPERLING**—senior consultant, JCC Overnight Camps and  
**AARON GREENBERG**—senior consultant, Day Camp Initiatives

## WHY IS CAMP SO CRITICAL?

**Aaron:** Our camps unplug kids from the entire system so they're not slaves to their phones and their ipads and their i-this and i-that. They get to live in this sort of cocoon where they're learning. They don't always know they're learning which is part of the magic and we're teaching some very substantial skills along the way.

In school the teachers do the teaching, the students do the listening. When you're at camp and you're in a community, you're learning from each other, how to communicate, how to be independent, conflict resolution. These are life-long skills.

**Jodi:** In the education world, 21st century skills include the 4cs: creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking. You practice all of those things at camp on a daily basis. Camp teaches kids how to ask for help, express how they feel and how to articulate what they need.

Camp is a magical experience, but as those of us who work in the profession know it's not magic. It's very, very well orchestrated and every inch of every moment is often choreographed so that it will be really meaningful.

## SO WHY JEWISH CAMP?

**Jodi:** That is where kids are developing their sense of Jewish soul. I once had a parent say to me "day school is where my kids develop their Jewish head but camp is where they develop their Jewish heart." It's a place where it's very hands on and experiential. You're doing Jewish. You're not learning Jewish.

## WHAT MAKES JCC CAMPS DIFFERENT?

**Jodi:** All of our camps are pluralistic. Here we are in this incubator of ideas and traditions and let's learn about why things are done in different ways and not be judgmental but accept people for their differences, celebrate the differences and respect each other. Everywhere else in a child's life, how they are Jewish, has been dictated by someone else. Now they are stepping into a camp environment where there's so much opportunity for them to have ownership of their Judaism.

**Aaron:** We're training the future of Judaism. Are they going to follow one set of guidelines or will they have the ability to think for themselves and to explore alternative points of view?

**Jodi:** When you look at our camps you see the highest number of interfaith and unaffiliated families. People see JCCA camping as a low barrier for entry. It's a safe place to try on a new experience which is why it's so important that it be a positive one. We use to say that JCCs in the olden days existed to help new immigrants learn how to be American but now we say that JCCs exist to help Americans learn how to be Jewish.

I want to grow a next generation of campers who will grow up wanting to make the world a better place. Abraham Joshua Heschel said "Teach them a Judaism to remake the world." To live in a place that reflects values and instills in kids the need for them to be active in the world. I think that is an incredibly powerful gift to be giving children.—*Ellen Meltzer*

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# SUMMER ADVENTURE

guided by Jewish values.

"JCC camp is where [my kids] discovered their Jewish heart."

Karen B., camp parent



## TRADITIONAL AND SPECIALTY CAMPS

JCC Camps build confident kids, friendships, and Jewish connections that last a lifetime. With more than 120 day camps and 25 overnight camps, our family of JCC Camps is the largest network of Jewish camps in North America.

### JCCs of North America overnight camps

#### **Berkshire Hills Eisenberg Camp**

Copake, NY  
[bhccamps.com](http://bhccamps.com)

#### **B'nai Brith Camp**

Otis, OR  
[bbcamp.org](http://bbcamp.org)

#### **B'nai Brith Jewish Community Camp**

Kenora, Ontario  
[bbcamp.ca](http://bbcamp.ca)

#### **Camp Barney Medintz**

Marcus JCC of Atlanta, Cleveland, GA  
[campbarney.org](http://campbarney.org)

#### **Camp B'yachad**

JCH of Bensonhurst, Medford, PA  
[jchb.org/camp-b-yachad](http://jchb.org/camp-b-yachad)

#### **Camp BB Riback**

Pine Lake, Alberta  
[campbb.com](http://campbb.com)

#### **Camp Chi**

JCCs of Chicago, Lake Delton, WI  
[campchi.com](http://campchi.com)

#### **Camp Interlaken**

JCC of Milwaukee  
Eagle River, WI  
[campinterlaken.org](http://campinterlaken.org)

#### **Camp JCA Shalom**

Malibu, CA  
[campjcashalom.com](http://campjcashalom.com)

#### **Camp Livingston**

Bennington, IN  
[camplivingston.com](http://camplivingston.com)

#### **Camp Mountain Chai**

Angelus Oaks, CA  
[campmountainchai.com](http://campmountainchai.com)

#### **Camp Poyntelle Lewis Village**

Samuel Field YM&YWHA  
Poyntelle, PA  
[poyntelle.com](http://poyntelle.com)

#### **Camp Sabra**

St. Louis JCC  
Rocky Mount, MO  
[campsabra.com](http://campsabra.com)

#### **Camp Tawonga**

Groveland, CA  
[tawonga.org](http://tawonga.org)

#### **Camp Wise**

Mandel JCC of Cleveland  
Chardon, OH  
[campwise.org](http://campwise.org)

#### **Capital Camps & Retreat Center**

Waynesboro, PA  
[capitalcamps.org](http://capitalcamps.org)

#### **Emma Kaufmann Camp**

JCC of Greater Pittsburgh  
Morgantown, WV  
[emmakaufmanncamp.com](http://emmakaufmanncamp.com)

#### **JCC Camp Kingswood**

JCCs of Greater Boston  
Bridgton, ME  
[kingswood.org](http://kingswood.org)

#### **JCC Maccabi Sports Camp**

Atherton, CA  
[maccabisportscamp.org](http://maccabisportscamp.org)

#### **JCC Ranch Camp**

Robert E. Loup JCC of Denver  
Elbert, CO  
[ranchcamp.org](http://ranchcamp.org)

#### **NJY Camps**

Milford & Lakewood, PA  
[njycamps.org](http://njycamps.org)

#### **Pinemere Camp**

Stroudsburg, PA  
[pinemere.com](http://pinemere.com)

#### **Surprise Lake Camp**

Cold Spring, NY  
[surpriselake.org](http://surpriselake.org)

#### **Tamarack Camps**

Ortonville, MI  
[tamarackcamps.com](http://tamarackcamps.com)

#### **Y Country Camp**

YM-YWHA Montreal JCCs  
Huberdeau, QC  
[ycountrycamp.com](http://ycountrycamp.com)

For our list of JCC day camps please visit [jccamps.org](http://jccamps.org)



Find your camp at [jccamps.org](http://jccamps.org)



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### B'NAI B'RITH PERLMAN CAMP

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[www.perlmancamp.org](http://www.perlmancamp.org)  
[info@perlmancamp.org](mailto:info@perlmancamp.org)  
(301) 231-5300

### JCC DAY CAMPS

JCC day camps are the preeminent pluralistic Jewish day camping experience in North America, boasting a network of more than 120 camps in 35 states in the United States and five Canadian provinces. Our camps feature caring, well-trained, experienced directors and

staff who are dedicated to making your child's JCC camp experience the best of their life. JCC camps are values-based communities, providing excellence and variety in activities and program, while instilling in campers strong identity and positive connections to their Jewish community and the world around them. At JCC day camps—whether campers are learning archery, horseback riding, boating, ceramics, baseball, swimming, climbing or any number of other specialties—they're doing it in an environment designed to provide significant growth in self-esteem, peer relationships, independence, and leadership. After attending a JCC day camp, your child will have new skills, life-long friendships, a stronger Jewish identity, a deeper connection to Israel, and a lifetime of memories.

[www.jccamps.org](http://www.jccamps.org)  
[jcccamp@jcca.org](mailto:jcccamp@jcca.org)  
(212) 786-5093  
See ad on pages 65

### JCC MACCABI

When thousands of teens come together for JCC Maccabi Games and ArtsFest® each summer, they are joining over 150,000 teen athletes and artists who

have participated in the world's largest Jewish summer program for the past 34 years. If your teenager has a passion for sports or the visual, performing or culinary arts, making new friends, and connecting to the larger Jewish community, then this premier program is the one for them. During the week-long program, all participants take part in JCC Cares, a hands-on volunteer effort to give back to the larger community, bringing the value of tikkun olam, or repairing the world, to life. JCC Maccabi Games and ArtsFest® will take place this summer in Birmingham, AL, Albany, NY and Miami, FL. Contact your local Jewish Community Center to join this summer-of-a-lifetime experience.

[www.jccmaccabi.org](http://www.jccmaccabi.org)  
[jccmaccabi@jcca.org](mailto:jccmaccabi@jcca.org)  
#WeAreJCCMaccabi.  
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### JCC MACCABI ISRAEL

JCC Maccabi Israel® introduces Jewish teens to all that's great about Israel—its culture, its history, and its people. For teens in 10th through 12th grade, this non-denominational program seeks to strengthen their connection to the Jew-

ish homeland and their own Jewish identity within a framework of an organized, educational teen travel program that doesn't forget that learning can be done when you're having fun. Through dialogue with Israeli peers, hands-on community work, and an itinerary that takes in both the historical scope and contemporary accomplishments of Israel, your teen will gain a newfound connection to the country and a strengthened sense of Jewish identity while making new friends and exploring the meaning of Jewish peoplehood.

[www.jcmaccabiisrael.org](http://www.jcmaccabiisrael.org)  
[ablue@jcca.org](mailto:ablue@jcca.org)  
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### JCC OVERNIGHT CAMPS

With more than 110 years of tradition, JCC overnight camps are the premier, pluralistic Jewish overnight camp experience, providing a "home away from home" for thousands of campers and staff each summer. Our family of 25 camps offers camping excellence in fun and meaningful, values-based Jewish communities. JCC camps offer the very best in camper care, providing supportive and loving environments designed by professional leadership. Well-trained, dynamic staff create the perfect balance for individual growth and community-building, with opportunities for campers to build their confidence, resilience, leadership, friendships, and an appreciation for the world around them. Whether your camper enjoys backpacking or

sports, fine arts or horseback riding, there is a JCC camp your child will love! After attending a JCC overnight camp, your camper will have gained new skills, made lifelong friends, developed a stronger Jewish identity and a deeper connection to Israel, and will want to make a difference in the world.

[www.jcccamps.org](http://www.jcccamps.org)  
[jcccamp@jcca.org](mailto:jcccamp@jcca.org)  
(212) 786-5093  
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### JCC CAMP KINGSWOOD

Your kids will say they had an awesome summer, met some great kids and did a ton of different activities. What they really did was create lifelong memories, develop long-lasting friendships and enhance their Jewish identities. That's what happens every summer at JCC Camp Kingswood, set on a bucolic lake in southern Maine. Boys and girls entering grades 3-11 enjoy an unforgettable overnight summer camp experience filled with sports, water activities, outdoor adventure, visual and performing arts and special events. Long-standing traditions of color wars, themed banquets, log signing and off-site trips make summers at Kingswood truly memorable. Campers and staff come from all over the world with different backgrounds and levels of Jewish observance. Defined by its welcoming, inclusive environment, your child will develop confidence, build skills and thrive at JCC Camp Kingswood. Oh, and they'll have

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*An overnight camp of the JCCs of Greater Boston*  
[www.kingswood.org](http://www.kingswood.org)  
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(617) 558-6531  
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### KESHET

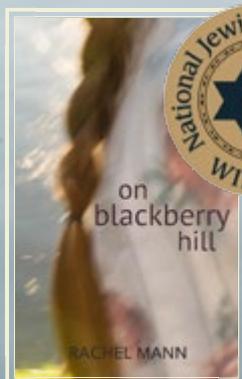
Keshet summer programs are the perfect settings for campers to develop friendships, gain independence, and enhance their self-confidence. Keshet integrates children and teens who need extra support alongside their peers into existing summer camps. Held at 15 sites, Keshet summer programs have a place for most children and teens with social or physical challenges. A majority of campers have one-to-one assistance within the larger group, but it is our goal to make it very difficult to know which camper is registered through Keshet and which campers are registered through the host site. We believe that success at an integrated camp-site begins with the education of host site staff and typically-developing peers. Therefore, Keshet staff presents comprehensive abilities awareness training to ensure an accepting milieu. Because of our 30 years of experience and thoughtful approach, the Association of Independent Jewish Camps lists Keshet as its preferred training provider for camper integration.

[www.keshet.org](http://www.keshet.org)  
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## HAROLD GRINSPOON FOUNDATION

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[www.rachelmannwriter.com](http://www.rachelmannwriter.com)  
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### RAMAH CAMPING MOVEMENT

As the camping arm of Conservative Judaism, Ramah has enabled campers and staff to live committed and vibrant Jewish lives through immersion in a summer Jewish community. At Ramah overnight and day camps, campers participate in a program of sports, outdoor education, drama, dance, music, media arts, arts and crafts, and overnight trips combined with Hebrew and Judaic literacy, Shabbat observance, kashrut, and daily prayer. To maintain our strong connection to Israel and to encourage the use of Hebrew in everyday activities, Ramah camps are enriched by the participation of Israeli staff members. National Ramah Tikvah Network of special needs programs: All Ramah camps provide a summer experience for children, teens, and young adults with disabilities. Year-round Ramah programs: family camps and retreats, adult camps and retreats, Shabbaton facilities. Ramah Israel: Ramah Israel Seminar—summer program for Ramah “graduates” including a pre-Seminar option in Poland; Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim (TRY)—fully-accredited high school semester; Ramah Israel Institute—custom-designed trips for families, synagogues, and schools, Poland Journey for Adults, Ramah Morocco Experience. Location: Overnight camps (grades 3–10) in Northern California, Southern California, Canada, Georgia, New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin; outdoor adventure specialty camp in the Colorado Rockies; Ramah Sports Academy—opening in the northeast in 2018; day camps (preschool–7th grade) in metropolitan areas: Chicago, Jerusalem, New York, Philadelphia, Greater Washington, D.C.

[www.campramah.org](http://www.campramah.org)  
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### THE SZARVAS FELLOWSHIPS

The Szarvas Fellowships are a unique opportunity to join a pluralistic group of high school students from across North America to attend the largest international Jewish camp in Szarvas, Hungary with participants from over 25 countries around the world. This program will explore issues of Jewish

identity, Pluralism, Jewish Peoplehood, the role of the Diaspora and more. In the international context of Camp Szarvas, these topics take on new dimensions and complexities. Fellows also spend time each day in a “mifgash,” a meeting with another country, where they discuss Jewish life and identity in their respective communities as well as participate in many recreational activities together. One of the core goals of the program is to establish a framework that allows every participant, no matter their Jewish background, to feel comfortable expressing who they are. Fellows leave the program with a strong understanding of diverse Jewish life around the world!

*The Szarvas Fellowships are administered by The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, in association with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.*

[www.szarvas.org](http://www.szarvas.org)  
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### UNION FOR REFORM JUDAISM CAMPS & SUMMER PROGRAMS

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cultural, and recreational opportunities for students who read for the love of reading and are eager to explore modern Jewish literature with peers from around the country. The five-day program, open to rising high school juniors and seniors, takes place at the Yiddish Book Center, in Amherst, Massachusetts. In seminars led by college professors, students consider how the rich legacy of modern Jewish literature informs us in the twenty-first century. They also develop skills in literary analysis and self-expression that will prepare them for college. Outside the classroom, students meet with prominent visiting writers, take part in recreational activities, and get a taste of college life, living in dorms at Hampshire College, adjacent to the Yiddish Book Center. Every admitted participant receives a scholarship covering the full cost of tuition, room, board, books, and special events.

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**“From the outside, some camps seem to use a ‘secret sauce’ to engage the camp community, offering formative Jewish experiences and memories that continue afterwards. In reality, creating strong Jewish connections requires careful planning and programming, starting well before the summer, supported by all levels of the camp’s staff.”**

Joel Einleger, Senior Program Officer at the AVI CHAI Foundation

**“The immersive experience of Jewish overnight summer camp is so powerful. Campers develop deep and lifelong bonds with each other, and a love of Jewish life and learning. Now, with increasing numbers of Jewish specialty camps, even more youth experience the unabashed joy and dynamic learning environment that Jewish camp offers.”**

Barry Finestone, President and CEO of the Jim Joseph Foundation