



## Camp Ramah in Wisconsin

...where the best of Jewish life meets the joy of camping

# מחנה רמה בוויסקונסין

Shalom Ramah Families,

Monday afternoon, at the end of our official Visitors' Days, the maintenance crew reset the home run fence on the softball field. Two days later, after a sudden thunderstorm and right before dinner, we looked up and saw a double rainbow stretching from the lake to the softball field.

The home run fence and the rainbows - do they have anything in common? Both are half circles. Both can say much about being at Ramah Wisconsin.



The home run fence was taken down for Visitors' Days. Cars parked all over the field. We only roped off the base paths and infield. Kids poured out of their cabins on Sunday and lined the basketball court. Inch by inch they shuffled and squirmed closer to the tennis courts. It took a lot of cajoling to keep them from bursting onto the parking area whenever they spotted the arrival of family. The parking attendants had their hands full keeping the cars in line while managing the flow of cars and families walking to meet their camper children. The softball field became a parking lot. Everything was in flux.

By Monday afternoon the cars were gone. The ball field once again had its fence. There was a palpable sense of order.

Batters waiting on deck to hit stayed behind the on deck circle.

The home run fence, a half circle of mesh and poles, defined the space. Multiple games, soccer, softball, Frisbee, could all take place. The clear boundaries opened up possibilities for safe play. Everyone knew where to run, where to walk, where to swing a bat.

On Wednesday the rainbow appeared. Campers and staff literally stopped in their tracks. It was amazing - a complete double rainbow! It had the full palate of colors. Counselors and campers stopped, looked up, and many said the Beracha of Zocher HaBrit, the blessing praising God who remembers the Covenant. The blessing uses language recalling the story of Noah after the flood!

One counselor asked her camper to come in to dinner. She said, "I just want to watch this."

It is an age where kids can have almost anything, do almost anything, say almost anything and yet often have a hard time committing to anything. The fence symbolizes structure. Camp offers a chance for these wonderful kids to experience the structure of Jewish living. One example is Shabbat at camp. The Shabbat offers a way to engage in rest and peaceful living and achieve a heightened sense of being Jewish.



A second example is learning Berachot. Kids can learn to stop and look at nature, smell the flowers, appreciate and celebrate being alive. By being part of a peer community campers open their world to others, expand their sense of who belongs, and learn that building a Jewish community is real work with great rewards.

This week we saw two half circles - one on the ball field and one in the sky. In some ways they link together, form a full circle and symbolize a Ramah summer.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi David Soloff, Director  
Shalom Ramah Families,

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