



Getting To Know Havaya

A Handbook for Families

Camp Havaya is all about the joy of summer camp with the freedom to be who you truly are. We're a lively, welcoming, and diverse community where kids explore Judaism in their own ways and become the best versions of themselves. It's no wonder that so many campers call us home!

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Values

Someone once told us we don't just talk the talk – we walk the walk. It was the best compliment we've ever received! We're serious about living our values, taking responsibility for our actions, and building the world we want our children to inhabit and inherit. We named ourselves Havaya – which means “being” – in large part because it's a play on “how we be” and on the Hebrew word “*hoveh* / the present time,” as a reminder that being our best selves isn't something we aspire to in the future – it's something we strive to do every day. Our values, based on a framework from Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, help bring this to life.

Belonging

קהילה *Kehillah*

Belonging is the “indescribable feeling of being welcome.”^[1] It's that moment of total comfort, warmth, and love – when we see one another, and are seen, for exactly who we are. At havaya, this is the water we swim in; it's integral and infused into all we do. We are committed to representation and to celebrating lived experience, and we recognize the powerful and organic ways these can bring more dignity, justice, and joy to our work and our world.

Bee-ing

דרך ארץ *Derekh Eretz*

We cultivate an environment of respect and trust, where each of us is challenged and supported to explore and grow our skills, styles, abilities, and experiences. Our campers and staff stand up for themselves and their friends, take responsibility for their actions, and understand the part they each play in creating a joyful and welcoming community. We know we can't be everything to everybody and we won't always get it right; we're committed to being honest and transparent about this – even when it's not easy. We see ourselves as a family: laughing and celebrating together; crying and lifting each other up; cheering on successes and naming opportunities for growth ... not only over the summer, but all year round.

Believing

יהדות *Yahadut*

Judaism is alive and breathing for us – it's woven into the fabric of all we do. We are a community that lives Reconstructionist ideals; deeply rooted in Jewish values and passionate about making them boldly relevant for today's youth. We create intentional opportunities for campers to explore, define, and evolve their own Jewish identities and beliefs; because it's personal, the connections they make to a global and diverse Judaism are lasting.

Becoming

הויה *Havaya*

We're committed to excellence and are always pushing ourselves to be, and do, better. We expect the same of our campers and families, our staff and leadership, and our donors, alumni, and friends. This means being willing to engage in difficult conversations, challenge ourselves, and own up to our mistakes. It's about becoming our best selves and actively supporting those around us to do the same. We do this from a place of strength, proud of what we already do well and passionate about continuing to grow.

**Put simply,
it's how we be.**



What's up with the bee?

Bee-longing.

Bee-having.

Bee-ing part of a community.

Bee-ing your best self.

Meet our friend, Howie Bee.

At Camp Havaya, we stand up for ourselves and our friends, take responsibility for our actions, and understand the part each of us plays in creating a joyful and welcoming community. We call this “How We Be” – and Howie is always there to remind us to be our best selves.

Age Groups

Campers experience the day primarily with their *eidah* (unit), allowing them to create deep connections with friends and participate in activities at an age-appropriate level. Units have approximately six cabins, all of which are multi-grade.

Ilanot entering grades 3, 4, and 5

At this age, we know campers are more conscious of friendships and interpersonal connections ... and we create space that allows them to learn about both. We also acknowledge that they have their own likes and dislikes and, as we expose them to different activities, we recognize the reality that not everyone likes every activity. We encourage campers to pick choice-based activities that they are interested in, with the notion that they can be friends with people who don't like all the same things as they do. Ilanot staff help campers focus on hygiene and how best to move through the day while maintaining organization for their own items and taking responsibility for their own actions. Bedtime is generally between 8:45 and 9:15 pm.

Nehalim entering grades 6, 7, and 8

By middle school, many campers have a picture of who they want to hang out with, which activities they want to dive into more deeply, and which parts of the day they will “tolerate.” Nehalim campers have a bit more unstructured time, but still follow a clear schedule. We encourage them to choose what they like during their choice-based programming ... and we also recognize that some kids just want to be with their friends, so we make sure there's a balance of both. Campers are encouraged to help lead younger campers in some activities, play competitive games (whether in sports or Magic: The Gathering), and share their passions at a much higher level in our weekly all-camp talent shows. Cabin cohorts can get a little larger (up to 14 campers) and campers are able to feel some “controlled” freedom – beginning to walk around camp on their own, share their ideas with camp leadership, and be responsible for their personal items without a lot of guidance from staff. (Well, we can hope!) Bedtime is generally between 9:15 and 10:00 pm.

Harim entering grades 9 and 10

High schoolers live in our award-winning Eco-Village. In addition to all the fun, there's a much larger emphasis on becoming who they want to be, how camp can help them learn more about their passions and their personal identities, and what it means to be part of a larger collective society both within camp and outside of our “bubble.” We talk about role-modeling behaviors for younger campers and we provide opportunities for being a leader in the camp community. There's more unstructured free time and a few times when Harim teens can “takeover” their daily schedules, expanding camp's offerings to meet their own needs in ways that are authentic to who they are as individuals and as a group. Campers travel campus on their own, are expected to know (and follow!) the schedule, and are personally responsible for their belongings and actions. Bedtime is generally between 9:30 and 10:30 pm.

Food

Kids love the food at Camp! Why? It's not just because we don't serve bug juice, but because we're committed to serving food that is fresh, varied, and full of flavor. Our menus have been reviewed by a nutritionist to ensure they are healthy and well-balanced. All of our food is kosher and we have plentiful vegetarian food as well as vegan, lactose free, and gluten free options. (In a commitment to the environment, we generally serve meat no more than five times per week.) We strive to run a nut-free program and we work closely with families to accommodate other food allergies and needs. Check out some of our favorite meals!

Arukhat Boker (Breakfast)	Arukhat Tzohorayim (Lunch)	Arukhat Erev (Dinner)
Warm croissant sandwich with fried egg and cheese	Grilled cheese, tomato soup, and homemade kale chips	Chicken marsala, mashed potatoes, and steamed vegetables
Shakshouka (Israeli breakfast of tomatoes, onions, peppers, and eggs)	Vegetable quiche, chickpea salad, and quinoa salad	General Tso's tofu, jasmine rice, vegetarian spring rolls
Breakfast burrito	Cheese pizza with topping bar (including sauteed onions, mushrooms, and peppers)	Fish tacos, jicama and cabbage slaw, cilantro and lime rice
Waffles and syrup	Potato latkes and cheese blintzes, served with applesauce and sour cream	BBQ with chicken breast, hot dogs, baked beans, macaroni salad, green salad, and watermelon
Scrambled eggs and hash browns	Salad bar	Curry tofu, aloo ghoobi, basmati rice, naan
Our breakfast bar is available daily, including cottage cheese, fresh berries, hot and cold cereals (with dairy and Soy milk), hard boiled eggs, and cheese		Salad bar

Soynut butter, jelly, and whole wheat bread are available throughout the day, as is fresh fruit. At most dinners, we offer plain pasta with red sauce for campers looking for a more simple meal.

Our fresh and plentiful salad bar is out at every lunch and dinner. What we offer changes daily: romaine lettuce, spinach, carrots, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, olives, beets, baby corn, edamame, cheese, avocado, mushrooms, black beans, mandarin oranges, tuna, and hummus are some of the most popular offerings.

Mental, Emotional, Social, and Spiritual Health (MESSH)

We're firm believers that mental health is just as important as physical health. Our staff includes a school counselor, LDTC, rabbi, special educator, and other professionals with decades of experience supporting the MESSH needs of campers and staff. Campers regularly meet with our Director of Emotional Wellness and Support in both individual and group settings and, if it's helpful, we are happy to arrange time and space for campers to have private video sessions with their home therapists.

For many kids, being away from home can be nerve wracking – especially after the last few years. Nervous feelings and homesickness are totally normal parts of the camp experience ... even for experienced campers. Here are some tips to help minimize their impact on your kids:

- Talk about camp, visit the website, pack and label clothes together, and answer questions your child may have about the experience. Talk about all the great things they will do and all the new friends they will make. And be honest about homesickness as a possibility – and let them know it's normal and, usually, passes after a day or two.
- If your child isn't used to spending the night away from home, schedule some sleepovers with friends or relatives between now and the summer. These small experiences can make a big difference for kids while adjusting to camp life.
- We know you'll miss your kids and the house will be quieter without them ... but don't spend too much time telling them about it. Worrying that their parents miss them makes it harder for kids to really dive into the camp experience.
- Please do not promise to pick your child up early if they're homesick or unhappy. This is a sure-fire way to make sure they don't push past the challenges!

Even with all the best preparation, we know it's not possible to avoid all challenging feelings or experiences. So we also encourage you to talk through some coping strategies:

- For many kids, taping photos of family members to their bunkbed is a great way of feeling connected.
- Encourage your camper to talk with counselors or other staff if they feel sad or upset. Not only can this help with difficult moments at Camp, but it's a great life lesson to learn how to ask for help.
- Our experience shows that homesickness and anxiety are best managed when campers

stay engaged in activities, rather than stewing in their unhappiness. Let your child know that we will encourage them to dive back into the camp program ... and you hope, and expect, they will give it their best shot.

- Writing their feelings in a journal can be a great way for kids to name them and then move on.
- Phone (or video) calls home often make homesickness worse – not better. With this in mind, we generally don't offer them as an option. Having said that, we will be in touch directly with parents if we think a call might help.

One more important note, for you as a parent: Especially for first-time campers, the first letter (or two!) you receive can be pretty miserable. They're usually written in the first day or two, before kids have a chance to acclimate, build friendships, and push past the start-of-session nerves and homesickness. So, even though we know it's not easy, we encourage you to take a deep breath, check the photos on Companion, and then feel free to call us to check in; nine times out of ten, things have gotten exponentially better in the time it took the letter to get from the Poconos to you!

We are deeply committed to partnering with parents to ensure the most positive possible experience for their children. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the Director of Camper and Staff Experience or the Director of Emotional Wellness and Support with any questions or concerns before, during, or after the summer.

Glossary

Havaya: In Hebrew, “havaya” (with an ‘h’ sound at the beginning) means “being.” A name is central to an organization’s identity and choosing this particular name serves as a powerful statement that, at our core, we’re all about creating an environment where kids have the freedom to be who they truly are. We love that it’s a play on “how we be”; on the Hebrew word “khavaya” (with a ‘kh’ sound at the beginning), which means “experience”; and on the Hebrew word “hoveh / the present time,” reminding us that being our best selves isn’t something we aspire to in the future – it’s something we do right now.

Day-to-Day

Eidah: Camper unit, based on age. Much of the day is experienced with the eidah, allowing campers to create deep connections with friends and participate in activities at an age-appropriate level. Each eidah is named after part of nature: Ilanot (trees), Nehalim (rivers), and Harim (mountains).

Rosh Eidah: Unit Head. Staff member responsible for supporting and ensuring participation of all campers and counselors in an age group.

Motzi and Birkat Hamazon: Blessings we say before and after every meal. Throughout the course of the day and week, we sing both traditional and contemporary versions, helping campers explore different ways of expressing gratitude for the delicious food we eat!

Pontubing: Once a session, campers go tubing and on a pontoon ride on nearby Lake Wallenpaupack. (Pontoon + Tubing = Pontubing. Pretty creative, right?)

Camp Sing: Our end-of-session performance extravaganza! Each cabin creates a dance to a popular song and shows off to the rest of camp. Being crowned the winner is a moment that stays with kids for years!

Havaya Arts in the Poconos: Offered exclusively during the first two weeks of the Best session, this unique opportunity is perfect for young artists who want to tailor their Camp Havaya experience to include significant time each day specializing in musical theater or ceramics.

To see a typical daily schedule, check out
CampHavaya.org/typical-day

Aseyfah: We begin the day with a pre-breakfast gathering. Sometimes there are morning games where general silliness is the rule. Other mornings we have a short musical service. Once a week, campers choose their own ways into prayer. Whatever happens, it's a great way to get the blood flowing and prepare everyone for a fun and exciting day.

Nikayon: Time to clean up in our cabins. Campers make their beds, organize their clothes, sweep the floor, take out the garbage, and do other "chores" ... all in hopes they'll get a "10" on their daily scorecard.

Middot: Literally meaning "virtues," this is our name for experiential Jewish educational programming. Throughout the summer, campers focus in fun and engaging ways on values, tikkun olam (social action), Israel, and "hot topics" that impact their lives – both in Camp and throughout the year.

M'nukhah: With such a busy day, we all need a rest! After lunch, campers and counselors return to their cabins for some quiet time to read, write letters, play quiet games, relax, and get ready for a great afternoon ahead

Breira (plural, Breirot): During electives, campers choose from nearly 30 different activities, which rotate weekly.

Hofshi: Free time. Campers of all ages gather together to hang out, swim, play ga-ga, or just sit under a tree and read. And it's a good time for...

Nishnush: Snack!

Peulat Erev: During evening programs which are typically unit-based, campers run around for capture the flag or a scavenger hunt, have a pool party or a talent show, play silly relay races, sing their heart out at a concert, or participate in some other amazingly fun activity to round out the day.

Zman Tzrif: As each day comes to a close, campers and counselors have some cabin time to reconnect, review the day, and start looking forward to another great day ahead!

Shabbat Unplugged: Our weekly all-camp talent show, which takes place after dinner on Saturday night.

Havdalah: This service of the senses ends Shabbat with singing, arms around each other, and an always energetic, multilingual singing of "Everybody Loves Saturday Night."

Medurah: After havdalah on Saturday night, we gather around a campfire in the Eco-Village to sing folks songs and welcome in the new week.

Hadar Okhel: Dining Hall, where we eat all of our delicious meals together as a community.

Tzrif: Cabins are named after trees, rivers, and mountains in Israel.

Eco-Village: Harim campers (entering ninth and tenth graders) live up the hill in this multi-award-winning village, complete with yurts, an incredible bath house, and lots of space to hang out and build community.

Kikar: The lawn in front of the Dining Hall is our central gathering spot.

Migrash Katan: Our “small” field, between the pool and lake, where we play soccer, ga-ga, volleyball, and have free time every afternoon.

Migrash Gadol: Our “big” field, where we host an annual Ultimate Frisbee tournament, play lacrosse and football, and have all sorts of other all-camp activities.

Etgar: Literally meaning “challenge,” this is our amazing high and low ropes course – including a climbing wall, Jacob’s Ladder, and zipline over the lake (always a camper favorite!).

Teatron: Our beautiful indoor/outdoor theater, where we gather together for services, movie nights, Camp Sing, and more.

Beit Tefillah: Our awe-inspiring outdoor sanctuary, built by campers and staff many years ago.

Shuk: At our canteen/store, campers are given funds to “purchase” Camp Havaya gear such as sweatshirts, stuffed animals, and water bottles, along with toiletries and any other needed items. No food is sold at the shuk!

Mirpa’ah: In our Wellness Center, nurses and other medical staff are always present to support campers’ medical needs.

CORE: This room at the back of the Dining Hall is a space for campers to “Chill Out, Relax, and Energize.” And we have private rooms for campers to have scheduled calls with home therapists, as needed. Our Director of Emotional Wellness and Support, along with other members of our community life team, are available throughout the day to help campers with their mental, emotional, and social health needs.

Who's Who

While your child is at Camp, the best way to reach us is by calling 833-CAMP-HAV (833-226-7428). Our friendly office staff will take a message and make sure the right member of our team gets back to you as soon as possible. Our goal is to return all calls within 24 hours; if you don't hear from us within a day, please don't hesitate to reach out again – Camp gets busy and, on occasion, we simply aren't able to get back to you as quickly as we'd like.

If you'd like to be in touch directly with a member of our year-round team, contact information is below. We've included some notes about who to call with different questions, but we're proud to work hand-in-hand as a team, so don't worry if you write to the "wrong" person – we'll be sure to connect you!



Rabbi Isaac Saposnik (he/him/his)
Executive Director

E: Isaac@CampHavaya.org
P: 267-635-0360

Contact Rabbi Isaac to talk about vision and values; belonging, dignity, justice, and joy; evaluation; movement/community connections; and partnership opportunities.



Joshua Sternburg (he/him/his)
Director of Finance and Operations

E: Josh@CampHavaya.org
P: 267-635-0362

Contact Josh to talk about financial questions, transportation, medical needs, and any logistical issues.



Adra Lustig (she/her/hers)
Director of Camper and Staff Experience

E: Adra@CampHavaya.org
P: 267-635-0361

Contact Adra to talk about cabin placement, summer staff, and general questions about the camper experience.



Jacob Oshins (he/him/his)
Director of Site and Programming

E: Jacob@CampHavaya.org
P: 267-635-0264

Contact Jacob to talk about site, facilities, and general operations.



Sara Chernov (she/her/hers)
**Director of Emotional Wellness
and Support**

E: Sara@CampHavaya.org
P: 833-226-7428

Contact Sara to talk about supporting your child's specific mental, emotional, social health (MESSH) or special needs.



Alex Malanych (they/them/theirs)
Education Director

E: Alex@CampHavaya.org
P: 833-226-7428

Contact Alex to talk about b'nai mitzvah tutoring, Havaya Israel, and our experiential education programming.



Lisa Stanton (she/her/hers)
**Development and Alumni
Relations Manager**

E: Lisa@CampHavaya.org
P: 267-635-0343

Contact Lisa to talk about volunteer opportunities, alumni engagement, and making donations (including to the Staff Appreciation Fund).



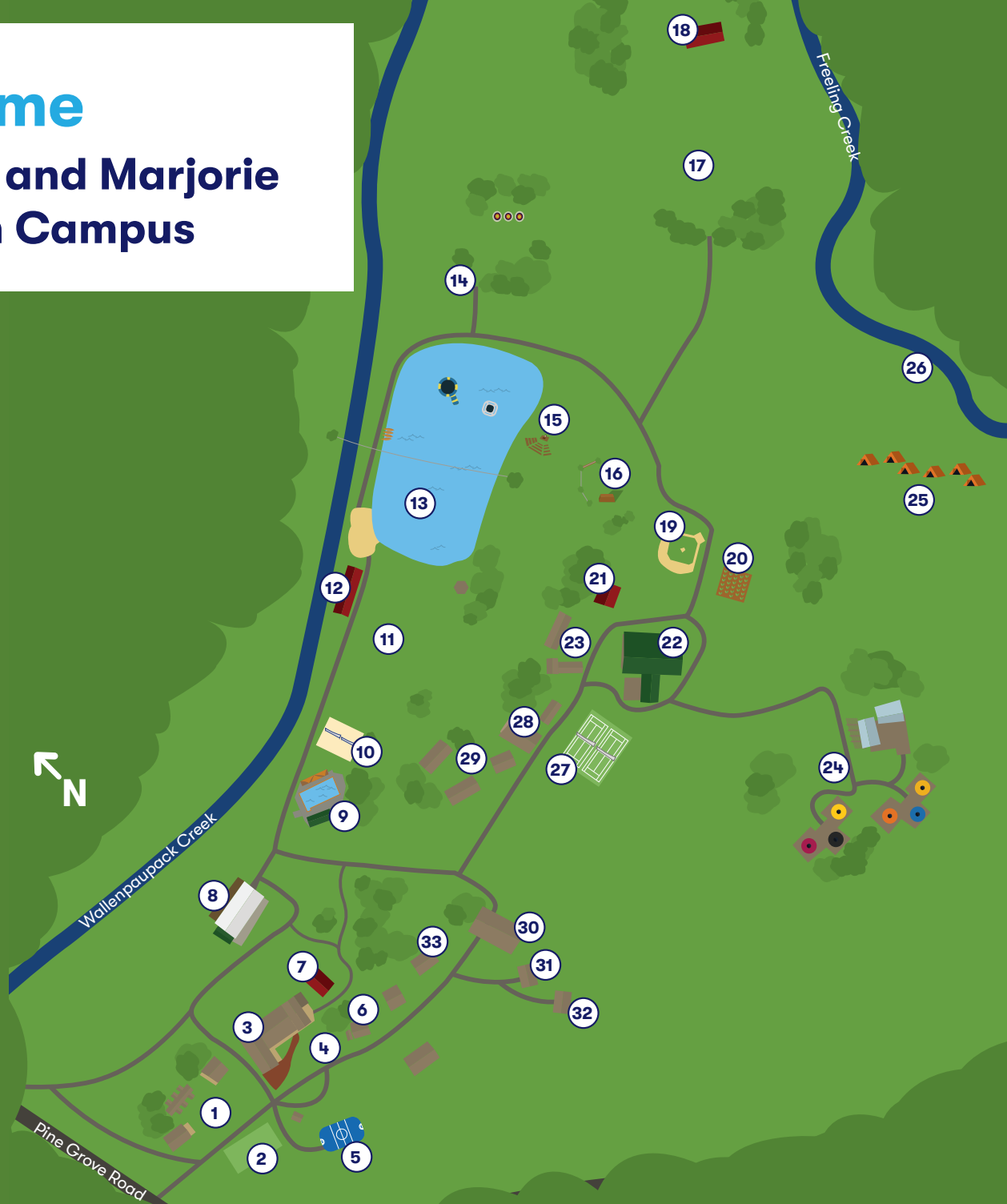
Victoria Finnegan (she/her/hers)
Administrative Assistant

E: Victoria@CampHavaya.org
P: 267-635-0263

Contact Vicki to talk about camper forms.

Our Home

The Aaron and Marjorie Ziegelman Campus



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1) Camper Cabins | 9) Breikhah (pool) | 17) Migrash Gadol | 26) Waterfall |
| 2) Migrash Kadur-Sal (basketball) | 10) Volleyball Court | 18) Makhtesh | 27) Migrash Tennis |
| 3) Hadar Okhel/Merkaz/Misrad (dining hall) | 11) Migrash Katan | 19) Migrash Kadur-Basis (baseball) | 28) Teatron (theater) |
| 4) Kikar | 12) Tel Aviv | 20) Farm | 29) Camper Cabins |
| 5) Hockey Rink | 13) Agam (lake) | 21) Jerusalem | 30) Staff Moadon |
| 6) Camper Cabins | 14) Archery Range | 22) Barn | 31) Mirpa'ah (wellness center) |
| 7) Haifa | 15) Beit Tefillah (outdoor chapel) | 23) Camper Cabins | 32) Staff Housing |
| 8) Ulam (arts and sports) | 16) Etgar (challenge course) | 24) Eco-Village | 33) The Coop |
| | | 25) Campsite | |



833-CAMP-HAV (833-226-7428) / hello@camphavaya.org