

The Newsletter of
The Nature Place
Day Camp
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Spring

2002

The Dirt

“There’s a little green
in everything.
Winter is over.
Welcome spring!
The world is waking
up at last,
going towards tomorrow,
ending the past.
There’s a little green
in everything.
Winter is over.
Welcome spring!”



Ed’s Corner...

Every Spring we look forward to a most wonderful camping conference – the Tri-State Camping Conference of the New York Section of ACA (the American Camping Association). During this largest gathering of camping professionals in the world there are many excellent talks and workshops:

Raising Children of Character in an Indulgent Age, Program With a Purpose, Staff Recruitment and Interviewing, Camp Roundtables, Managing Difficult Behaviors, Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys, Bullying at Camp, Risk Management Strategies, Helping Counselors be Proactive, Getting the Most Out of Your Health Center, Techniques for Staff Supervisors, Better Beaches and Waterfront Essentials, Camp in the Aftermath of Sept. 11, Getting the Most Out of Staff, Safety in the Camping Environment, Art Showcase, Evaluations, Meetings That Make a Difference and many more.

When we attend this conference we always learn so much and come away from it extra motivated as we enter our busy season. Our conference experiences also let us know that we are doing many things “right.” One workshop titled *Back to Nature* had the following description: ‘In these times of computers and fast paced graphics wouldn’t it be nice to go back to the simplistic beauty of nature?’ Well, as you know, we at The Nature Place never left!

We have always believed that children want what is simple and real. Time and again as I work with children in the out-of-doors this concept is verified. I recently took my first-grader Mia and her friend Rebecca to New York City to visit the Museum of Natural History. It was fun and a little overwhelming to visit some of the exhibits. But real joy and aliveness happened when we crossed over the street in front of the museum and explored that part of Central Park. We discovered people fishing, the first dandelions of the year, the song of the returning red-winged blackbirds, horses and runners, hills and valleys, ‘secret’ gullies.

I love the Museum and Central Park and am glad we have both. I’m also glad that for the last 17 years we have been able to offer you the summer alternative of The Nature Place Day Camp.

Open House Dates for 2002

Would you or someone you know like the opportunity to learn more about The Nature Place Day Camp? Interested families should stop by the camp during one of our open houses, anytime between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Tour the grounds, view a slide show of the summer's activities and meet some Nature Place staff. "Old" camp families are welcome to drop in as well!

Saturday – April 13

Saturday – April 27

Saturday – May 11

The Nature Place On-Line

Want to learn more about The Nature Place but can't make it to one of our open houses? No problem! Learn about our camp's philosophy and programming, view photos, get driving directions and more in the "About Us" section at our web site www.thenatureplace.com.

Are you already enrolled in camp? You'll find the information you need including forms, camping trip packing lists, parent letters and more by clicking on "Summer 2002".

Be sure to visit "Season's Greetings", our gift to you all year long. Season's Greetings offers outdoor activities to bring parent and child together, in an innovative, 'organic' and simple approach, by suggesting activities which will say 'hello' to winter, spring, summer and fall in your own backyard and neighborhood.

You can even share nature news with others around the country in our "Sightings" section.

Camp Transportation

Bussing is available on a limited basis for campers from Manhattan's Upper West Side, Upper East Side and Lower West Side, as well as from the following New Jersey towns:

- Demarest
- Glen Rock
- Old Tappan
- Teaneck
- Woodcliff Lake
- Wyckoff

We utilize public pick-up and drop-off sites for all of our bus routes. Please call the camp office for specific bus stop information.

Benefits of the Camp Experience

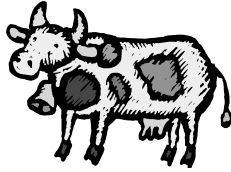
A message from the American Camping Association

Sure, camp is fun! What could be better than spending your summer days playing, adventuring and creating in a child-centered environment? The Nature Place and the ACA would like parents to know that camp offers other important benefits including:

- Social skills development through group participation and leadership opportunities.
- Character building by encouraging resourcefulness and responsibility.
- Cognitive growth by learning to do new things and mastering physical skills.
- Emotional growth by fostering both independence and interdependence.
- Child-centered community living that promotes caring, fairness and trust.

Camp does kids a world of good!

Welcome Spring!



At **Duryea Farm of the Fellowship Community**, “Spring” has arrived with soft brown fur, big brown eyes and a “mooooo!” “Spring” is the name of the new calf born at the farm in March. Campers will have the opportunity to meet Spring during the summer, along with the other animal residents at Duryea Farm (two horses, three sheep and four cows).

Founded in 1883, Duryea Farm is still a real working farm. In 1925, Rockland County New York had almost nine hundred farms. Today, there are only five. Duryea Farm is listed as one of a handful of Historic Farms in Rockland County.

The old barn has become the Jessup Learning Center, home to an interesting array of antique farm machinery and tools original to the farm. Once considered “state-of-the-art”, they provide a glimpse into the farm’s (and New York’s) rural history. Campers will enjoy trying to guess the original use of this curious collection of objects that were once essential for life on the farm.



Harvest Day is an end of summer tradition at The Nature Place. The entire camp hikes to the farm’s fields to help harvest organically grown potatoes, onions, beets, carrots and other vegetables. It is an exciting morning as crates and then tractor wagons are loaded with good food from the good earth, harvested by the hands of young

and old. Many little pockets return to camp with a treasured prize potato tucked inside! If you would like to visit the farm with your family, you can do your own picking among the 350 apple trees in the fall. Contact the farm for more information.



*Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
how does your garden grow?
With flowers so sweet
and berries to eat
and salsa mixed up in a bowl!*

The Nature Place’s gardening program is a lot more than planting seeds and pulling weeds. Campers find **The Children’s Garden** to be a magical, colorful, flavorful place where they can sit inside a bean-pole tee-pee or sunflower house, dig for earthworms in the compost pile, water the roses, harvest fresh fruits and veggies or paint with flower petals.

Campers help tend the garden in various ways such as composting, watering and planting. They also get to enjoy the rewards of their work: delicious treats made from fresh picked organic fruits and veggies (berry smoothies, salsa, sweet corn) and garden crafts such as potpourri, flower wreaths and cornhusk dolls. A new “Secret Garden”, housed in the walled courtyard of Orchard House, awaits our youngest campers.

Come to our annual **Garden Party** on Sunday, June 2, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and help us prepare our camp’s garden for the summer. Enjoy music and refreshments while we begin preparing the soil, weeding the beds and planting some vegetables and flowers. Children can plant a sunflower to take home!

Learning to Swim

Swimming, swimming at the waterfront!

*When days are hot
when days are cool,
at the waterfront.*

Breaststroke, sidestroke, fancy diving too!

*Oh, wouldn't it be great
if we had nothing else to do?*

What could be better on a hot summer day than a dip in “the pond”? How about learning to swim? The Nature Place Day Camp’s waterfront staff is proud to offer campers The American Red Cross “Learn to Swim” program. The objective of the program is to teach children to swim using a logical progression of skills and to be safe both in and around the water. The program is organized in seven courses:

- Water Exploration (Level I)
- Primary Skills (Level II)
- Stroke Readiness (Level III)
- Stroke Development (Level IV)
- Stroke Refinement (Level V)
- Skill Proficiency (Level VI)
- Advanced Skills (Level VII)

The “Learn to Swim” program is designed to give students a positive and successful learning experience. Each level includes various skills in the following categories:

- Water adjustment
- Buoyancy and breath control
- Water entry and exit
- Locomotion
- Turns
- Personal safety and rescue

At Level I, Water Exploration, campers are oriented to the water and gain some basic skills such as, putting his/her face in the water, blowing bubbles in the water and

bouncing up and down in chest-deep water. Safety skills are taught in the beginning so participants start to be aware of what they can do to be safe around the water.

At Level II, Primary Skills, campers master new swim skills such as learning to float unsupported, going underwater to retrieve an object in chest-deep water and how to move through the water using their arms and legs. As campers progress, they build on their basic skills to learn propulsive movements on both the front and back. They learn different strokes at various levels and then refine them at later levels.

Personal safety and rescue skills such as performing a reaching assist, rescue breathing and wearing a life jacket are always included to help campers meet safety goals. By the end of Level VII, Advanced Skills, students have all the prerequisite skills, have mastered a variety of swim strokes and have developed the necessary fitness level for entrance into the American Red Cross life guarding courses.

On their first day of camp, all campers are pre-tested regardless of their previous level. The swim staff can then recommend an appropriate starting point for each child. In addition to our five Water Safety Instructors, group counselors are trained as teaching assistants to give more individualized attention to the campers. Four lifeguards are on duty to supervise the swimmers and maintain safety at all times.

Tom Mayes, Aquatics Director, is an American Red Cross certified Water Safety Instructor, Canoeing Instructor and Lifeguard as well as a certified Pool and Spa Operator. He and his staff of eight encourage feedback from parents about their child’s swimming needs or concerns. They are looking forward to continuing to help each camper become a safer and better swimmer.

Exercising the Imagination

Heather Marini is known at The Nature Place for her wonderful imagination and creative, playful spirit. During the summer of 2000, Heather played the character of “Hermita”, a gentle mother-nature character who lived in the “enchanted forest”. Hermita shared her nature-wisdom with campers, teaching them such things as the healing properties of plants, the importance of respecting the earth and appreciating the wisdom of wild animals.

In 2001 Heather introduced her new character, “Una Wildwood”, keeper of the Children’s Garden. The garden became not only a place for flowers and fruits to bloom and grow, but also a place where make-believe came alive. The children’s imaginations grew, too! This summer Heather moves to a new venue, Theater.

In addition to the camp’s beautiful indoor theater, a theater space will be created outdoors in the “enchanted forest”, a piece of woodland near the Art’s Building. Campers will participate in improvisational activities, storytelling, costume creation and character development. Campers will also enjoy readings from author Shel Silverstien, group games and craft activities.

For younger groups, Heather will play the character “Neldo the Fairy Bee”, a silent and mysterious fairy who appears and disappears throughout the summer at various activities. Children will play the bee hive game, be told a story about bees, visit a special garden to see real honey bees working and then taste some honey, all at a safe distance from the hive!

In addition to theater activities, older campers will be sent on riddle-solving quests where counselors participate as various characters that will help them solve the riddles.

What’s Cookin’

Cookin’ Cori Grapin returns to The Nature Place kitchen for her fourth summer, to guide campers in cooking up some delicious and nutritious treats. Campers enjoy “putting on their chef’s hats” to create their own kid cuisine.

We’d like to share with you one of her recipes from the summer of 2001.

Bruschetta

6 ripe plum tomatoes
1 T minced garlic
1 T minced red onion
½ cup fresh basil leaves
½ fresh lemon
salt and pepper to taste
1/3 cup olive oil
¼ cup olive oil
3 garlic cloves, slivered
french bread, sliced and toasted

1. Cut tomatoes into small pieces. Place in a large bowl and set aside
2. Using a garlic press, mince garlic to equal one tablespoon. Add to tomatoes.
3. Dice red onions to equal one tablespoon. Add to tomatoes.
4. Gently tear basil leaves to tiny pieces. Add to tomatoes.
5. Squeeze a lemon half into the tomatoes. Add salt, pepper and 1/3 cup olive oil.
6. In a small skillet heat ¼ cup olive oil with 3 cloves of slivered garlic. Remove garlic and discard.
7. Spoon a small amount of garlic flavored oil onto toasted french bread slices. Place a spoonful of tomato mixture on top.