

IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO  
SEND A KID TO TAMARACK

# IMPACT REPORT



מחנות תמרק  
**Tamarack Camps**



# WELCOME HOME

It takes a village. And the village at Tamarack Camps continues to grow, enabling more participants to enjoy space inside the tent.

During these challenging times, “The Greatest Place on Earth!” feels more important than ever. In 2025, campers filled our villages—at Camp Maas, Camp Kennedy (with visits to Charles N. Agree Outpost Camp), Western, Alaska, Costa Rica, family camps, and the Tamarack Adventure and Retreat Center—and nurturing staff welcomed them home. Then, through enhanced facilities (shared within this report), experiences were maximized and our camp community flourished.

And, in our village, Jewish life thrived. We wish the world could have a front row seat for our programs, where expression of Judaism is celebrated in a safe space. And, again, this year, with no screens—only face-to-face interaction—campers lived authentically and inclusivity was valued.

We also thrived by a core value of financial fairness, where, since 1902, our mission has never wavered. We celebrated the most successful Send a Kid to Tamarack program in our history, honoring Andi and Larry Wolfe as Community Leaders with a special tribute to Harriet and Irving Berg (z”l). At Temple Israel, the evening overflowed with families, alumni, corporate sponsors and engaged supporters—allowing us to allocate over \$1M in scholarship dollars, providing opportunity for so many kids to “jump on the bus.”

Our year-round professional team, seasonal staff and lay leadership at the center of our success. Together, we worked “ten for two” and are grateful for the volunteers who offered invaluable time, generous dollars, passion and informed ideas helping us do more. Within a group of countless partners, during our Annual Meeting at Camp Maas, inside the fabulous HuG amphitheater, we specifically acknowledged the contribution of Dr. Joel Kirsch, an executive board member, with the President’s Award for his leadership and commitment to our mission.

Now, with immense pride for the previous 124 summers, and unparalleled enthusiasm for the 125th milestone ahead, we move forward as a bonded group with one voice... and as a unified village.

With deep gratitude for your engagement,

*Lee Trepeck*

Lee Trepeck  
Chief Executive Officer

*Dr. Danny Klein*

Dr. Danny Klein  
President



# JEWISH LIFE



## ACCORDING TO 2025 TAMARACK FAMILIES SURVEYED BY THE FOUNDATION FOR JEWISH CAMP:

98% REPORTED TAMARACK CREATED AN INCLUSIVE AND PROTECTIVE SPACE FREE FROM ANTISEMITISM.

95% SAID THAT THEIR CHILD HAS WANTED TO CELEBRATE SHABBAT AFTER CAMP.

95% REPORTED FEELING THAT THEY ARE CONNECTED TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND LARGER JEWISH COMMUNITY.



For nearly five generations, Tamarack Camps has been a home where Jewish identity is nurtured, friendships are strengthened, and meaningful memories are made. In a year when antisemitism and anti-Israel rhetoric continue to rise, our mission feels more essential than ever. Campers need places to experience authentic Jewish joy—to unplug, sing loudly, celebrate proudly, explore Israel through personal connections, and find positive outlets for self-expression. This year, whether at Camp Maas, an outpost camp or on a travel trip, Jewish life at Tamarack wasn't just lived—it was celebrated.

The summer of 2025 was no exception. Among the highlights was the debut of **The HuG Amphitheater**—our stunning new gathering space made possible through the generosity of **Harriet and Gregg Orley**. Anchored along the shoreline of the lake, the amphitheater brought the entire camp community together throughout the summer, including on Friday nights for Kabbalat Shabbat. As the sun set over the lake, hundreds of campers and staff welcomed Shabbat with music, joyous Israeli dancing, prayer, and a powerful sense of unity.

Our connection to Israel remained strong through the **Elaine and Michael Serling Israeli Camper Program**. Even amid the challenges of Operation Rising Lion in Iran, which delayed the arrival of our first-session Israeli campers, Ortonville was home to one of the largest Israeli delegations in Jewish camping. Included in the 60 *shlichim* (Israeli staff) and 84 Israeli campers for the summer, a powerful homecoming unfolded on July 4th, when our Camp Maas community shifted from red, white, and blue into blue and white to welcome Shabbat at The HuG. During this emotional service, as counselors paused to bless their campers with the *Birkat HaBanim* (Blessing of the Children), 20 returning Serling Israeli campers—now leaders in our Teen Leadership Village—emerged dressed in white. The entire camp erupted in applause, song, and embraced this unforgettable moment of pride, resilience, and profound unity.

For Teen Leadership Village (TLV), in partnership with **BBOY Passport**, the **Costa Rica “Stand Up” Adventure** offered another meaningful expression of Jewish life. Supported by the Foundation for Jewish Camp, participants explored nature, leadership, and Jewish identity—celebrating two unforgettable Shabbats, including one they lovingly designed themselves on the beaches of Uvita.



# SUMMER PROGRAMS



## BUILDING CHARACTER, ONE CAMPER AT A TIME

Summer 2025 was filled with the connection and *ruach* (spirit) that define Tamarack Camps. From the excitement of arrivals at Camp Maas and departures for beloved travel trips and outposts to finding new passions at *omanut* (arts and crafts) at The Ravitz Arts Center, or on our popular fishing dock, campers embraced each day.

This summer also debuted a new layer of intentionality in our programming with the launch of **Tamarack Traits**, a camp-wide program designed to support and celebrate personal growth. Built around five core traits—and a sixth chosen by each camper—the program wove character-building into the rhythm of daily camp life. Through Jewish experiences, creative expression, group challenges and shared moments, these traits became interwoven with our campers long after the buses returned home.

## AT TAMARACK, WE...

**...stay resilient, even when things feel hard.** Camp Maas campers showed this on village camping trips, lake swims and while navigating homesickness—meeting challenges with determination and pride as they discovered inner strength.

**...show appreciation for nature, each other, and our community.** Across our outposts—Camp Kennedy and Charles N. Agree Outpost Camp—and on travel trips to Alaska, the American West and Costa Rica, campers learned to support one another, care for the environment and work together as a team. Back at Camp Maas, a redesigned fishing dock opened up even more opportunities for one of our most beloved activities, giving more campers the chance to cast a line and connect with Lake Radin.

**...choose kindness in our words and actions.** On campgrounds and throughout our travel programs, kindness showed up everywhere—in small gestures, encouraging words and growing friendships. Campers created an atmosphere where everyone felt welcomed and valued.

**...support others, because we're stronger together.** From cheering during Tamarack Idol and the all-camp play to helping a friend through the Ropes course, campers discovered the joy of lifting one another up. Shared responsibility and teamwork made each accomplishment—big or small—even more impactful.

**...build connection by being open, curious, and welcoming.** Connection extended beyond bunks and Havdalah circles. Families came together at Bubbie Zaydie Family Camps, Summer Family Camp and Tamarack Homecoming, celebrating Shabbat, singing songs and creating multigenerational memories. These moments reflected the heart of Tamarack—a community where everyone belongs.

**tamarack traits**

I would like to recognize (camper's name): Maas in specialty

For demonstrating (circle one):

★ Kindness chosen ★ Resilience chosen ★ Support micha

★ Connection kasher ★ Appreciation ha'gracha

By: (Describe what they did) I appreciate the fact that Maas will be there for me when I need to and is really funny!

From: Sydney

**tamarack traits**

I would like to recognize (camper's name): Spencer

For demonstrating (circle one):

★ Kindness chosen ★ Resilience chosen ★ Support micha

★ Connection kasher ★ Appreciation ha'gracha

By: (Describe what they did) Spencer the team the cheer for Israel every day.

From: Shay

**tamarack traits**

I would like to recognize (camper's name): Mila

For demonstrating (circle one):

★ Kindness chosen ★ Resilience chosen ★ Support micha

★ Connection kasher ★ Appreciation ha'gracha

By: (Describe what they did) When we went to the beach and I forgot my towel she shared hers with me.

From: Esther



## TRY TAMARACK

We launched a special new program for rising first graders — **Try Tamarack!** Seventy excited kids met at Adat Shalom, rode the Green Bus, and spent the day with counselors and friends enjoying favorite camp activities—lunch in the *chedar ochel* (dining hall), water fun, *omanut* (arts and crafts), and so much more. The program was a success, and we cannot wait to welcome this group back as Applebaum and Shiffman campers in 2026!

ENGAGED  
APPROXIMATELY 1,150  
PARTICIPANTS IN SUMMER  
CAMP PROGRAMS.

EMPLOYED  
APPROXIMATELY  
350 SUMMER STAFF  
MEMBERS.



# YOUR IMPACT

## SEND A KID TO TAMARACK



Through the **Send a Kid to Tamarack (SK2T)** annual campaign, essential dollars are raised to support camper scholarships and the camp's greatest needs—and, thanks to the leadership of SK2T chairs **Jodie Kaufman Davis** and **Jeffrey Kirschner**, Vice President of Advancement Elizabeth Sollish, and the SK2T committee, 2025 was a “platinum” year. The campaign raised more than \$1 million, and nearly 600 guests attended the event on May 22 at Temple Israel.

We are grateful to our Community Leader honorees, **Andi and Larry Wolfe**, along with our donors, corporate sponsors and leadership, for helping us reach this record-setting moment—truly reflecting the event theme, “It Takes a Village” to Send a Kid to Tamarack. The evening also included a special tribute to the legacy of **Harriet and Irving Berg** (z”l), beloved artists-in-residence whose passion for the arts enriched generations of Tamarack campers. The Bergs’ influence continues to shape programming and remains an enduring connection to the camp experience.

*“I believe all kids should have an opportunity to go to camp. Tamarack creates a connection to Judaism, to nature, to peers and instills lifelong skills that often can change the trajectory of a child's life for the better. In addition, our community's future depends on bringing up strong Jewish leaders, and Tamarack plays a key role in that!”*

**Jodie Kaufman Davis**



*“For 124 years, Tamarack Camps has played an essential role in our community and remains one of the most important assets of Federation. Jewish camping is one of the first and strongest connections kids have to our culture, fostering strong friendships, independence and personal growth to over a thousand kids yearly.”*

**Jeffrey Kirschner**

**100% OF CAMPERS  
BENEFIT FROM PHILANTHROPIC  
SUPPORT THAT KEEPS CAMP  
AFFORDABLE FOR FAMILIES**

**\$3,800 AVERAGE  
SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED**

*“Our support for Tamarack stems from our belief that every child should have the chance to experience the unique community and spirit of a Jewish overnight camp. At Tamarack, campers of all ages form lasting friendships and share in truly extraordinary adventures.”*

**Andi and Larry Wolfe**



*“Many thanks to the Tamarack team that put together the tremendous tribute to my folks, and to everyone who shared their memories of my folks, and to the many who spoke to me privately about the inspiration and joy that my parents gave them. My parents loved Tamarack. Our family is thrilled that their spirit and work is alive and well and helping to build a future in which camp will continue to thrive.”*

**Marty Berg, son of  
Harriet and Irving Berg (z”l)**



**\$1,050,000 IN  
SCHOLARSHIPS — MORE THAN  
ANY OTHER JEWISH CAMP  
IN THE WORLD**



## CAMPAIGN FOR CHANGE

As part of our **CAMPAign for Change** initiative—teaching campers about the Jewish value of tzedakah and the joy of giving back—we held our first **Mitzvah Madness** event. Mitzvah-aged campers learned from “Mitzvah Mentors” (older campers who supported Tamarack through their own projects). Participants also did a mitzvah—writing notes and packing *mishloach manot* (Purim gift baskets) for residents of Jewish Senior Life. We are proud of these young philanthropists and future leaders and thank the **Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation** for making this innovative event possible.



# YOUR IMPACT TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFTS



## PILCOWITZ MEDICAL STAFF LODGE

Thanks to the generosity of **Phyllis and Bob Pilcowitz**, our medical team and their families enjoyed their first season in the new **Pilcowitz Medical Staff Lodge**. These dedicated medical professionals—along with our very own Camp Bubbie, a position introduced this summer to offer a little extra TLC to campers— provide comprehensive care to hundreds of children, teens and adults throughout the summer.

“The Pilcowitz Medical Staff Lodge feels like a home away from home—comfortable, spacious, clean and new. Every summer, I look forward to reconnecting with our ‘Week Six’ clinic group. We’ve worked as a team for many years, and being together under one roof fosters a sense of community and family,” said Dr. Alex Steinbock, who worked on our medical team this summer.

Phyllis and Bob, part of a multigenerational Tamarack family (with Phyllis as a former camper), have been longstanding supporters of our mission. “We are thrilled to be part of this project, which has special meaning for our growing family. It’s an honor to play a role in ensuring camp’s progress, development, and commitment to health and safety. Our hope is that the medical team, their families and campers enjoy the space for years to come,” they said. Their leadership gift—together with contributions from across our community—brought this vision to life.

## SIMON’S SHELTER: A PLACE OF MEMORY, COMMUNITY AND LOVE

This past summer, we gathered to dedicate a new, sacred space: **Simon’s Shelter**, built with generous support following the tragic passing of **Simon Mirkes** (z”l), on July 17, 2023, during the Alaska Trip (AK23). Nestled adjacent to the Farber Family Housing Village and Imerman Teen Travel Lodge, the shelter provides a welcoming space at Camp Maas and is a testament to the profound impact Simon had on his peers, counselors and the broader camp family.

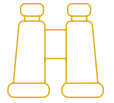
During staff pre-camp training, after Shabbat services at the William Davidson Foundation Amphitheater (the NOA), hundreds walked together to the new site, forming a powerful circle of remembrance. There, the Mirkes family felt the loving embrace of Simon’s AK23 friends, their parents and the staff—interwoven with the compassion of the full Tamarack community. In an emotional ceremony, we honored an indescribable loss and celebrated life and legacy. Campers and staff shared memories, prayers were recited and music filled the space—played on Simon’s own guitar.



As Rabbi Ben concluded with the Traveler’s Prayer for a safe summer ahead, an unexpected moment brought the dedication full circle: This year’s AK bus, preparing for its departure the next morning, rolled past. It felt like a gentle reminder that in Simon’s Shelter, and throughout Tamarack, his spirit continues to journey with us.

# YOUR IMPACT

## ENDOWMENT & PLANNED GIVING



What happens at Tamarack lasts far beyond the summer. Campers grow, connect and carry their experiences into the rest of their lives. Endowment is what protects that continuity. It is the steady foundation that allows Tamarack to welcome future generations with the same energy, care and Jewish vibrancy. We are proud to share some highlights from some of the many generous individuals and families who deepened their commitment and are helping to ensure its future.



### THE BUDDY SYSTEM

Thanks to the generosity of Tamarack parents and grandparents, **Gerrie and Buddy Sollish**, Tamarack has enhanced its Special Needs Inclusion Program through the establishment of a significant endowment gift affectionately named **“The Buddy System,”** providing staff support for the Yachad and Avodah programs. Their investment reflects how we live Jewishly by celebrating each soul as *b’tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God). It bolsters our promise to create safe spaces where every camper—whatever their individual needs—feels included, valued and understood. It allows us to be financially fair, helping reduce barriers to participation. And most profoundly, it deepens our ongoing shared responsibility to build an inclusive community, where Tamarack’s

Jewish camping experience fits everyone, including neurodivergent individuals and campers with learning, social and/or communication differences.

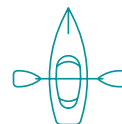
As part of their support, Gerrie and Buddy also implemented “Buddy Benches” across from the clinic—providing another comfortable space for campers to be their best selves. In Buddy’s words, “Take a seat and let’s watch the show. Listen for the laughter, see the joy, and feel the *ruach* (spirit) of the campers everywhere.”

Lifelong Detroiters, Buddy and Gerrie Sollish have deep roots in this community. All three of their children were Tamarack campers, as were their grandchildren. Their quiet generosity and unwavering support of Jewish life have culminated in this extraordinary gift—a lasting legacy that will shape lives for generations.



# YOUR IMPACT

## ENDOWMENT & PLANNED GIVING



### DR. JEFF FARKAS MEMORIAL MEDICAL EDUCATION CENTENNIAL ENDOWMENT FUND

Tamarack Camps was an integral part of Jeff Farkas's life—treasuring his years as a camper and counselor, which inspired him to become a pediatrician.

Jeff shared, in his personal statement on the pediatric resident application, "My initial interest in pediatrics began as I worked as a camp counselor [at Tamarack] during the summers as an undergraduate. The qualities I enjoyed most about the children were their enthusiasm and spontaneity."

In July 1989, Jeff realized his dream and began his Pediatric Residency at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Dr. Jeff Farkas' career as a pediatrician was cut short when he was tragically killed only five months into his residency.



To honor his legacy and help future generations of pediatricians, nurses, physician assistants and others going into the medical field, Jeff's mom, Connie Farkas, with the generous support of her late husband Don Wood, established the **Dr. Jeff Farkas Memorial Medical Education Centennial Endowment Fund**.

The fund will provide training for clinic staff planning to pursue medical careers. While Dr. Jeff Farkas never had the opportunity to fulfill the career he had earned and so dearly loved, the fund will encourage and create opportunities for others to pursue pediatrics and continue to help the children that Dr. Jeff Farkas cared so deeply about. We are grateful to Connie for her generosity and we are honored to be part of Jeff's story.



### ELI A. SCHERR ENDOWMENT FUND FOR TAMARACK CAMPS TLV PROGRAM

For several years, **Eli Scherr** has been providing generous annual support to Tamarack Camps' Teen Leadership Village ("TLV")—a staff training program for rising high school seniors. This year, in addition to that annual contribution, Eli decided to endow his gift, allowing it to continue and benefit our future. When he sees a program that he believes in, Eli recognizes the impact of endowment. TLV is among many endowments he has created throughout our community and, with this remarkable commitment, Eli is helping Tamarack nurture future counselors and leaders summer after summer.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ESTABLISHING AN ENDOWMENT FUND OR CONTRIBUTING TO AN EXISTING ONE,  
PLEASE CONTACT LORI SEMEL: 248-952-9118 OR SEMEL@TAMARACKCAMPS.COM

# OUR COMMUNITY'S CAMP



## FAMILY FUN DAY

We marked the opening of our 124th summer by welcoming hundreds of campers, soon-to-be-campers, staff, grandparents, alumni and supporters to Camp Maas for another successful **Family Fun Day**. Our program areas were fully open for the community to enjoy, and it was the perfect way to set the tone for a summer of connection and Jewish joy.

## FAMILY CAMPS

This year, our family camps brought more than 1,000 parents, kids and grandparents to camp for joyful, intergenerational Shabbat weekends together. Through **Bubbie Zaydie, Mom & Me, Dad & Me**, and **congregational camps**, families shared services, meals, song sessions and classic Tamarack moments—creating memories across generations and strengthening their connection to our Jewish community.

## SUMMER FAMILY CAMP/TAMARACK HOMECOMING

Summer lasted just a little bit longer this year with the debut of **Summer Family Camp**! The weekend after camp, families joined us Thursday—Sunday for classic Tamarack fun—from activities and meals to spirited Shabbat celebrations. That Friday evening, alumni and friends also gathered for an adult-centered Tamarack Homecoming, bringing the spirit of a Tamarack Shabbat to a grown-up crowd.

## FALL FUN

The Tamarack *ruach* (spirit) continued into autumn with the return of the **Tamarack Trot 5K** and **Fall Fest** and the introduction of **Sukkot Harvest Fest at The Farber Farm**, presented in partnership with Adamah Detroit. These festive, fun fall events allowed us to come together and celebrate the season, Tamarack-style.



# CORPORATE SPONSORS

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS! VIEW OUR 2025 FISCAL YEAR DONOR LIST BY VISITING [TAMARACKCAMPS.COM/YEAR-IN-REVIEW](https://tamarackcamps.com/year-in-review) OR SCAN THE QR CODE:



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## CHAI

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# LEADERSHIP 2025-2026



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## TAMARACK CAMPS TEAM

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William Barrios	Joe Nichols
David Beebe	Kelly Nitzschke
Hollie Cooper	Anne Tullos
James Cooper	



## MISSION STATEMENT

Tamarack Camps, established by the Fresh Air Society, builds a vibrant community by providing enriching Jewish camping experiences for children and families, respectful of financial ability.

**TAMARACKCAMPS.COM 248-647-1100**



Camp Maas | Outpost Experience  
Teen Travel | Family Camps | Israel

