

Camp
Mataponi

Parent's Edition The Mati-Mag

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4
PARENT'S SPRING
NEWSLETTER

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Director's Message

Dear Parents,

As we gear up for what we know is going to be another fabulous season, we reflect for a moment how fortunate we are not only to have what we think are the greatest jobs in the world but to also remind ourselves how lucky we are to be able to offer your daughters a summer experience that will hopefully be so positive and memorable that it will leave them feeling empowered to know they can do anything they set their mind to and of course create friendships that will last a lifetime.

According to the American Camping Association, trends are showing that camper enrollment in the camping industry has been down in the last few years. Camp Mataponi is pleased to share with you that we are once again filled to capacity this year. We owe this success to you, our camp families, for your continued dedication and commitment to helping us make Mataponi such a special second home for your daughters. Together with our spirited team assisting us, we are excited for the summer and enthusiastically wait for camp to begin.

2005 DATES

Camp begins
Saturday, June 25th

Visiting Day Weekend
Saturday, July 23rd / Sunday 24th

Camp ends
Friday, August 12th

If you have not already made arrangements for the visiting day weekend, we urge you to make reservations now as the hotels do sell out. You can find a list of accommodations on our website

Earlier in the year, we sent out a letter introducing Molly Markulics as Camp Mataponi's new fulltime Office Manager. Molly is a veteran of Mataponi for 5 years and will now manage both our winter and summer offices with continued efficiency and enthusiasm. As a dedicated Mataponi administrator, Molly will be available to answer any questions you may have and will be available at the summer address beginning May 25th.

NO GIFTS PLEASE

One of the most important things we can offer at Camp Mataponi to our campers is a sense of equality. We want camp to be a place where every child should feel that they are just as special as the next camper. In order to instill this strong sense of fairness, we set certain rules and standards at camp and need your assistance in making these achievements attainable.

As you know we have requested that packages are limited to 2 per summer. Hopefully you have already received the 2 labels that we use for each camper's 9x12 envelopes. We also ask that junk food not be sent to the campers and that the girls do not have food in their bunks.

This year, in keeping with the standards above, we feel that we need to set one more perimeter for the summer. Gift giving on visiting day for the cabin

counselors and the other bunkmates have escalated to a point where we are uncomfortable with the excessiveness of the gifts. Bunk clothing, jewelry, toys, etc. is a fun idea yet it does take on a feeling of entitlement from the campers who receive these gifts and consequently a sense of disappointment in those campers whose bunks do not receive gifts.

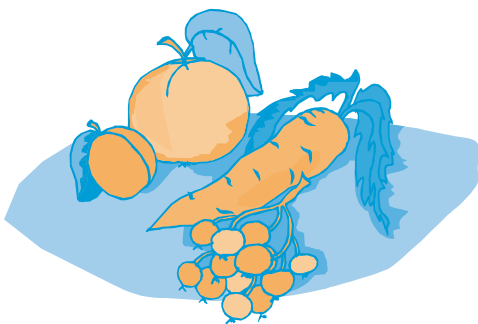


With that said, please only bring gifts for your child and refrain from bunk gifts for the rest of the cabin. We also ask that you do not give money or gifts to the counselors on visiting day because it creates an unhealthy severance amongst our staff. We promise you that all of our staff is immensely appreciated and we take very good care of the staff throughout the summer. If you feel compelled to send your daughter's counselor(s) a gift, please do so at the end of the summer.

New and Improved menu for 2005:

Healthier choices are the way of the summer. In years past, camp food got a bad "rap"- meatloaf, rainbow roast beef, stale bread. Nowadays, camp food offers more variety, healthier choices and can

cater to the many interests of our campers.



In addition to the side salad bar that boasts over 25 choices for lunch and din-

ner, daily portions of fresh cut cucumbers, celery and/or carrots will be offered on the tables rather than the traditional boiled peas/green beans/carrots.

In lieu of having desserts at lunch and dinner and snacks mid-day and before bed, we have decided to eliminate dessert at lunchtime and offer healthier choices at snack (cheese sticks, individual yogurts, more choices of fresh fruits).

Lastly, we have purchased a new frozen yogurt machine. The girls will be excited to self serve themselves yogurt after dinner or for an evening snack. Be sure to tell your daughter(s) not to worry, we will still have fun camp food. Pizza and soda on Saturdays are a tradition as are Sundaes on Sundays so no worries, the junk food stays!





Feature Article

Each year, we receive literally dozens of letters from campers and staff who just want to say thank you for their summer and to share with us how much Camp Mataponi means to them and how it has in many ways shaped who they are today. Below is a letter from a camper who spent 7 summers with us and after her Senior summer, felt compelled to write and express her gratitude. We thought this heartfelt letter was really special and she agreed to let us share it with you in the Parent Newsletter. If you ever wonder if camp is right for your daughter, read on. . .

Dear Marcy and Dan,

If only I could express to you how challenging it is to write this letter. I've been planning on writing it since the day I arrived "home"...I guess writing this note just confirms that my days as a Mataponi camper are over, so I have put it off until now as a way of extending my camper days and prolonging the days until the painful confrontation; I will not be returning to camp this summer.

I'm sure when you think of me; you will automatically recall my first summer. I literally cried every single day. Literally, all 49 days! But I came back. I remember walking to Bunk 7 my home for my second Mataponi summer to find two of my bunk mates standing on the stairs hysterically laughing. The first words they managed to spit out were, "Why did you come back?" Why did I? What caused me to return to a place that I described in my letters home as "jail"? Well, there was something about camp that was magical and I could feel it even though I was terribly homesick. I knew I had to give it another shot, so I did, and after a second summer in which I cried only half the days of the summer, I became addicted. What I thought was a jail truly was the most liberating, free, blissful place I could find.

Each summer I returned, learning that even the strongest friendships could grow stronger. The closest friends I have in the world are from camp. There's just something so different about camp friends. At home my friends stabbed me in the back,

lied, and gossiped, but at camp, we all understand each other, we cry together, we sing together, we laugh at the same jokes, or rather laugh all the time. It's incredible. I want to thank you for giving me an opportunity to meet the most amazing people. When I thought things at home couldn't get any worse, I thought things at camp couldn't get any better, and they did. As a camper from Camp Illahee in the 1950's said, "At camp I had more of a sense of belonging than anywhere else in the world."

On top of the friendships, the memorable activities I was a part of during my seven summers add to the love I have for Mataponi. From bunk moments like singing "Barbie Girl" to win the division lip sync contest, to entire camp moments like Bingo and Jamboree, to Senior moments like leading Birthday Ball, Ropeburn, and winning Sing. All of these moments surpass anything I've ever done at "home". Thank you for being so creative, for putting so much energy and vigor into every activity. Without your hard work, these experiences would not have been so memorable.

What really amazes me most about Mataponi is its rich tradition. Sitting in a social hall leading services that Seniors from generations past also led is an invigorating experience. Camp fires, service songs, Alma maters, gold feathers-all of these camp traditions gave me the feeling that I was part of something bigger than just me, and that I was connected to it. Even small, private

traditions that my best friends and I created seemed crucial, and they are, because tradition is what holds Mataponi together. I hope you understand how miraculous it is to be a part of something that you love more than anything else in the world, but also that other campers before you loved with just as great of a passion, and somehow, somehow you are connected to them. Please continue to keep the magic of traditions alive.

I could go on and on about how much camp has changed me, how I live for camp, how we all do, how my best friends are my camp friends, how I smile every time I hear "No Rain" or "Build Me Up Buttercup", how I cry when I read old bus notes, how just smelling my camp sweat-shirt transports me back to my real home, how every time I hear the word Maine I perk up, and how upset I am that I can no longer be a camper at Mataponi...

Again, Marcy and Dan, thanks for everything you've done for me, including convincing me to stay at camp my first summer. Although I was quite angry with you at the time, you are now my heroes because of it...Hopefully, I will be able to return as a counselor and help a camper experience what I experienced. I wish I could give you even a fraction of what you've given me, but it's impossible, so I will settle for a "thank you!" I am forever grateful. I hope all is well, and I look forward to seeing you soon.

Lots of love and memories...

MEDICAL NEWS:

This year we are implementing a new prescription meds policy. In order to have the health center up and running smoothly, we are requesting that all prescription medications be sent prior to opening day of camp. This will enable our nursing staff to correctly label and organize the medications in an efficient manner. We would like the medications to arrive between June 15 and June 22. We will send out a letter reminding you of these dates. If the medication does not arrive prior to the campers' arrival, we cannot guarantee that your child will receive her medication on the first day.

It is imperative that all medication is in its original marked container with the original prescription label on it.

LICE CHECK:

Please be sure to check your daughter's head for lice daily 2 weeks prior to opening day. Unfortunately, it is prevalent in the schools and if we have a child come to camp with head lice we will have no choice but to have her stay in the health center until she is clear (usually 1-3 days). We do check the campers the first day they arrive at camp and inevitably we do find 1 or 2 cases of head lice each summer. Please help us eliminate any unnecessary embarrassment for your daughter.

If you have any questions regarding how to check or what to look for, you can visit a lice website or call your pediatrician.



HARRY POTTER DUE OUT IN JULY...

We know that many of your daughters are avid Harry Potter readers and that the newest book is due out in July. Don't worry about using one of the package labels to send the book. We will, by all means, accept the book as mail and forward it to your daughter.

NEW WEBSITE

We have just completed a new rendition of the Camp Mataponi website. Many of you will find familiar faces on the site as we have updated all of the pictures with fun camp events from last summer.

All forms can now be visited and downloaded from the website so if you have misplaced any paper work simply go to the forms section (under the Parent icon) and you can retrieve any lost forms.

Tips for Camp

- * If your daughter is flying to camp, please leave one uniform camp shirt out of the trunk and have her wear it on the plane.
- * Write your child a letter before camp begins so she will have a letter waiting for her when she arrives.
- * Pre-addressed stamped envelopes are super helpful for younger campers.
- * Lastly, relax...if your daughter knows that you are comfortable when she leaves on the bus or plane, she will be too. Hide your tears until she is out of sight!

Camp Mataponi
P.O. Box 1882
Jupiter, FL 33468

Camp Mataponi Expanding Their Community Service Works

This summer we will be joining hands with the Wayside Soup Kitchen of Portland. A subsidiary of America's Second Harvest and the United Way, the Soup Kitchen benefits the hungry in and around the Portland area. The kitchen serves approximately 240 people daily. It is the largest one of its kind in the state of Maine and the only meal option in Portland for those in need.

This program will become an elective (strictly voluntary on the children's behalf) for those campers interested in participating. There will be three parts to the elective.

1. The program will rotate taking 10-15 campers at a time into Portland to serve a meal.
2. Campers will help prepare casseroles in our camp kitchen with the perishable leftovers from those days' meals.

3. Nightly, we will have campers assist in bagging and labeling perishable leftovers. 1x a week the frozen leftovers will be driven to Wayside so that the soup kitchen can use the food as they see fit.

Camp Mataponi feels strongly to give back to the local community. In addition to the Camp Sunshine Marathon we run each August (which is a _ marathon to raise money for terminally ill children that attend a camp in nearby Casco, Maine) we would also like to help those less fortunate (many who are children) have proper meals as often as possible.

If your daughter has community service hours that she needs to meet for school, we will gladly document any paperwork that the school has. Feel free to email or call us with any questions.