



## ***Schechter Manhattan Annual 2010 Shabbaton***

### Frequently Asked Questions

- ***When is the Shabbaton?***
  - **June 11<sup>th</sup> - June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010** (Shabbat Parashat Korach).
  - The Early Bird Special offers a reduced price for families signing up by **May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010**. Regular sign-up due date is **May 8 - 27, 2010**. See the sign-up form for more details.
  
- ***Where is the Shabbaton?***
  - Berkshire Hills Emanuel Camp. BHE Camp has two areas, one used by senior retreat groups and the other, a kid's camp. The Camp is located at 159 Empire Road, Copake, New York 12516. It's a rural country setting, complete with lake, soccer fields, a baseball diamond, basket ball courts, a sports pavilion and much more.  
**It's ONLY about 2 - 2 ½ hours away, right off the Taconic!**
  
- ***What are the rooms like?***
  - BHE Camp emphasizes simple accommodations. Every room has its own complete bath and a large closet and AC. Most rooms have two twin beds, and additional mattresses are added to provide for additional beds in the room. Most rooms have porches in the front and most are grouped in strips of 12-16 rooms with a lounge area in the middle of each grouping. There are few larger accommodations for those that need them. The rooms do not have TV.
  - Children are assigned to their parents' rooms and sometimes we make special arrangements for a chaperoned middle school bunk. Sometimes parents ask about informal "sleepovers" for their children. If you choose to arrange any kind of sleepover with other parents, please be mindful of other children's feelings and PLEASE keep boys with boys and girls with girls. Parents are responsible for supervising their children.
  
- ***What are my transportation options?***
  - Organized Transportation: An air-conditioned bus with a bathroom has been hired to leave from the East Side PAS campus and West Side SAJ campus on Friday, and return there on Sunday. We bring movies to show everyone, share snacks, listen to CD's and I-pods, read, and schmooze with our friends, making the time go by quickly. There is a luggage hold underneath the bus.
  - Driving: Driving directions and maps will be sent to registered families before the trip. A parking lot is available to camp guests.

- *We strongly encourage attendees to take the bus; the more people on the bus, the more fun. Also, only the driver and the bus captain have to worry about directions! Lastly, the more people who ride it, the more we defray the cost of the bus.*
- **Are meals included in the cost?**
  - Yes, all meals, and snacks, are included.
- **Are the meals kosher?**
  - All meals are *kosher*, and there is a *Mashgiach* hired for the weekend.
- **What kind of activities will there be?**
  - Water facilities including a pool (with lifeguard). It is opened up on Shabbat afternoon and Sunday morning, weather permitting. Sunday mornings after breakfast also feature staff-assisted boating on the lake, including canoes, paddle boats and row boats.
  - Soccer fields, baseball/softball fields, basketball courts are available. The *Shabbat* afternoon soccer and baseball games are legendary, and are especially beloved if the ground is muddy! (Bring extra clothes!!)
  - Fitness center, walkways, leaves and flowers to look at, a library, a ping-pong table and lots of sports equipment at the Pavilion, card tables, and more.
  - We've traditionally had a campfire '*kumsitz*' on Saturday night. Parents, students, and faculty who play instruments bring them along as there's much singing, both American and Israeli songs. We have the campfire rain or shine - how we do an indoor campfire is a secret!
  - We're having parent and teacher led study sessions, family programming on Saturday afternoon to bring the entire community together, arts & crafts, nature walks, scavenger hunt, star-gazing, and we are always open to suggestions based on what you would like to see or are prepared to help make happen!
  - Programming is designed to offer a variety of activity choices for different age groups and we try and schedule activities so that young children are occupied when sessions geared to adults are taking place.
  - Services are done simultaneously in groups geared to different ages, offering engaging activities for all.
- **What kind of religious experiences should I expect?**
  - We recognize that our community is diverse in its religious orientation, knowledge, and skill. We are committed to helping everyone feel comfortable and at the same time, encourage all families to see this Shabbat celebration as a learning opportunity. We will celebrate Shabbat with traditional practices such as, *tefilot* [prayers], blessings over candles, wine, and *challah, bircat ha-mazon* [blessing after the meal], and, of course, singing!
  - *Tefilot* are held over the course of the *Shabbaton*. At Schechter Manhattan, we are particularly proud of our tefilah program. Our students have very personal

relationships to their prayer experiences. Over the years, they have developed their own understandings of the prayers and skills in their recitation. *Tefilah* on the *Shabbaton* is an opportunity for you to join your child in this special act and to learn from his/her appreciation of the experience. There will be several options for adults to participate in *tefilah*, including a learners' *minyan* and a Torah discussion, which are alternatives to the regular *minyan* and Torah service. Children will have their own *tefilot* led by teachers. We expect that children will attend the *tefilot* and encourage all adults to take part in the variety of *tefilah* offerings. We also ask parents to help us in ensuring their children's participation in *tefilot*. Parents are more than welcome to join the students' *tefilot*.

- I don't keep the laws of Shabbat at home - do I have to do so here?
  - The overall atmosphere of the *Shabbaton* is traditional, though families are welcome to experience Shabbat in their own way in the privacy of their room. We encourage everyone to participate actively in creating and enjoying the traditional Shabbat atmosphere - quiet conversation, leisurely walks, informal indoor and outdoor games, spontaneous singing and laughter, reading and study. The great Conservative theologian, Abraham Joshua Heschel, described Shabbat as "an oasis in time," and that's what we try to create at the *Shabbaton* - a day when the stresses and pressures of the work week and school week are temporarily relieved. (Don't worry - they'll still be there on Saturday night!).
- Who is invited?
  - Our entire family community including current families, from Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, incoming Kindergarten families and alumni families, as well as extended family members are invited. The *Shabbaton* offers families who are new to the school, specifically kindergarten and incoming kindergarten families, an excellent opportunity to get to know one another and the school's community, in a socially relaxed atmosphere. It also fosters the feeling of belonging to a community, making the atmosphere enjoyable to everyone that attends.
- How many faculty members come to the *Shabbaton*? What is their role?
  - Generally, the head of school and representatives of the administration and faculty attend, sometimes accompanied by their families as well.
  - The faculty and administration serve several important roles: 1) the children love being with them, and it is really exciting for the children to get to eat meals with their teacher; 2) the faculty prepare and lead *Shabbat* morning services for different age groups; 3) the faculty prepare those students attending the *Shabbaton* ahead of time so that they can participate to the fullest extent, including leading the community in song at meals; 4) some members of the faculty prepare adult study sessions; others prepare special activities for the children; 5) the faculty and administration bring a special spiritual ruach to the weekend, emphasizing *menschlichkeit* and various lessons learned in school.
  - Faculty attendance is dependent upon donations over and above the price of the *Shabbaton*, so please give generously.

- **Is the Shabbaton a fund raiser for the school?**
  - No, its purpose is to build a strong bond within the Schechter Manhattan Community, allowing the families to get to know one another in a unique surrounding and to spend Shabbat together. Prices are set as low as possible.
  
- **What's important about the Shabbaton?**
  - The *Shabbaton* helps create a strong, vibrant, caring Schechter Manhattan community. The qualities of the Schechter Manhattan world create a distinctive environment, setting the school apart. The *Shabbaton* is one way of weaving our lives together into a community, a *hevra* that supports and sustains the school as well as each other. It is why this *Shabbaton* is being coordinated by the PA but planned jointly between the PA, the Administration and the Faculty. We would like to emphasize that the point of the *Shabbaton* is to bring the entire school and their families together as one!
  
- **I would really like to go to the Shabbaton, but I am concerned about the cost?**
  - Our goal is to have the entire SSSM community share in this very special weekend. If you are concerned about the cost, please contact Jonathan Chimene for reduced pricing information. All conversations will be confidential.
  
- **Well, I'm just not sure....**
  - Talk to families who have come on the *Shabbaton* - ask them if their children had a good time; ask them what they thought of their weekend together. Chances are, you'll hear good reports.
  - As attested to by three 3<sup>rd</sup> graders:

"The Shabbaton is the best place to come to spend time with your family and friends. It's a vacation from school, but you still spend time with your teachers and friends."

Jordyn P.

"I like the pool, the food, and where it is. It's fun to be with all your classmates on the weekend, and it's fun to get away from the city."

Remy T.

"I like the Shabbaton because it's not school, but you get to see your teachers. I like not doing homework. I love to run around. I like spending Shabbat with my friends.'

Sydney T.

- ***So, sign up NOW!***

**If you have any questions, please feel free to call Jackie Pykon at 917-441-3028 or email her at [jackie716@gmail.com](mailto:jackie716@gmail.com).**

**Thank you and we look forward to seeing you at this year's *Shabbaton*!**