



# TRAVEL TRIP PARENT GUIDE



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## **WELCOME**

### **Purpose of the Parent Guide**

This packet is your all-inclusive reference for Tamarack Travel Trips. It includes helpful information for you and your camper prior to the summer and addresses policies and procedures that apply during the summer. Please become familiar with the information in order to ensure a successful experience for you and your child.

We look forward to a fantastic summer!

### **History of Tamarack Camps**

The Fresh Air Society was created as a committee of the United Jewish Charities by Blanche Hart and Ida Koppel, who recognized the need to provide recreational activities in the out-of-doors to immigrant women and children. To fulfill this dream, they began taking groups of mothers and children to Belle Isle. Carrying baskets piled high with food, they climbed aboard a chartered trolley for a day in the "fresh air."

Today, 107 years later, the Fresh Air Society stands as the umbrella organization for Tamarack Camps, which includes Camp Maas, Teen Travel Trips and Outpost Camps. Our paramount principles have endured the test of time, and are consistently the cornerstones of our summer goals: learn new skills, have fun, gain independence, thrive in group dynamics, and enjoy Jewish programming – all organized in a safe, positive, nurturing, and stimulating environment.

### **Goals**

The Teen Travel Trips are wilderness programs where campers will be asked to step outside of their comfort zones, try new things, meet new people and become a part of a special community. It is an opportunity for campers to explore different parts of North America through hiking and camping, to practice "letting go" and to develop autonomy and a stronger sense of self.



## **BEFORE THE TRIP**

### **Expectations**

The trip, like the rest of life, has high and low points. Not every moment of the trip will be filled with wonder and excitement. Encourage your child to have a reasonable and realistic view of camp. Discuss both the ups and downs your child may experience. Your child should not feel pressured to succeed on the trip, either. The main purposes of the trip are to relax and have fun.

### **Physical Preparation**

Due to the physical nature of the travel trips, it is important for campers to exercise prior to the trip. Campers should spend at least six weeks breaking in their hiking boots, even if they were used the previous summer. In order to break them in, campers should wear a school backpack with books while “hiking” around the neighborhood for at least 30 minutes, four days a week. This will help to soften the hiking boots and toughen up their feet to prevent blisters during the trip.

### **Packing**

A travel trip is more rugged than many other camping experiences. Campers do not need all new clothing for camp. There are important items, such as a sleeping bag, hiking boots and rain gear that are beneficial to the safety of your child and must be appropriate for the experience.

Additional information about how and what to pack will be covered at meetings at Moosejaw in Birmingham. Attending one of these meetings is mandatory for all campers and parents.

March 29 at 11:00 am for Western Trip families

March 29 at 1:30 pm for Western Trip families

May 3 at 11:00 am for Alaska families

### **Clothing for Shabbat**

Shabbat is a very special time on travel trips, but special clothing is not necessary. Normal, casual camp attire can be worn.

### **Labels**

To minimize loss, we require that you mark all of your child’s clothes and personal property with first and last name. You can use permanent marker or purchase nametapes. Please label all camping equipment, disposable cameras, eyeglasses, sleeping bags, etc. **Do not send anything sentimental or expensive! No knives of any kind are allowed at camp!** Please review with your child what he or she has brought to camp and where in the duffel bag they are located.

**TAMARACK CAMPS WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY LOST, MISPLACED OR STOLEN ITEMS.**

### **Electronics**

Travel Trips are about enjoying the outdoors and sharing wonderful experiences with old and new friends. The use of electronic devices such as radios, CD players, iPods and electronic games negatively impact your child’s socialization. **CELL PHONES MAY NOT BE BROUGHT ON THE BUS.** If cell phones or other electronic devices are brought on the bus, they will be confiscated and returned to the camper on the last day of the trip.

## **DURING THE TRIP**

### **Luggage**

Unlike Camp Maas, campers should bring their duffel bag to the bus with them on the first day of the trip. Each camper is permitted to bring one duffel bag and a small backpack. The sleeping bag, sleeping pad and pillow do not need to fit inside the duffel bag.

## Departure Day

Campers depart for their travel trip from Adat Shalom Synagogue, 29901 Middlebelt Road in Farmington Hills.

- Alaska Trip on Sunday, June 21
- Western Trip 1 on Wednesday, June 24
- Western Trip 2 on Sunday, June 28

**PLEASE ARRIVE AT ADAT SHALOM SYNAGOGUE NO LATER THAN 7:00 A.M.**

Please be sure to come to the bus on departure day with:

- ✓ A daypack loaded with a sweatshirt, long pants and reading materials
- ✓ Nalgene water bottle filled with water
- ✓ A bag lunch
- ✓ Duffle Bag, Sleeping Bag, Sleeping Pad and Pillow
- ✓ Medications in a ziplock bag
- ✓ Passport (Alaska Trip only)
- ✓ \$25 in a sealed envelope with camper's name for camper-designed trip sweatshirt or t-shirt



## Typical Day

Teen Travel is unique in that there is no typical day on a trip; the schedule is very much dependent on location, weather conditions and group energy level. The following is a close representation of a typical day.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 7:00 am  | wake up – if the trip will be sleeping at a different campsite that night, campers will pack their day packs, duffle bags, tents |
| 7:30 am  | cook group will make breakfast   |
| 8:00 am  | breakfast  |
| 9:00 am  | pack up bus, pack lunches, clean campsite and depart for trail head  |
| 9:45 am  | day hike   |
| 12:00 pm | lunch on the trail   |
| 3:00 pm  | finish day hike and drive to next park or back to campsite   |
| 6:00 pm  | arrive at park or campsite, set up tents, cook group will begin making dinner  |
| 7:00 pm  | dinner   |
| 8:00 pm  | evening program  |
| 9:30 pm  | campfire and community meeting   |
| 10:00 pm | park quiet hours begin   |
| 11:00 pm | bed time   |

## Identification

Each camper must bring photo identification with them on the trip. This is useful for cashing travelers checks or when using a credit or debit card.

## Passports

All Alaska campers must have a **Passport or Passport Card** and the **Border Crossing Form** which must be signed before a notary.

## Birthday Celebrations

If your child's birthday falls during the trip, the staff and campers will make your child's birthday special for him or her. The celebration varies based on where the trip is during the birthday.

## Laundry

Laundry is typically done one time in the middle of the trip. Campers and staff visit a laundromat where they wash their own clothing. The staff will provide laundry detergent for the campers to use.

## Spending Money

This depends on which trip your child is on (Western or Alaska). We suggest approximately \$300-\$400 for Western Trip campers and \$400-\$500 for Alaska campers. The amount varies depending on how many gifts and souvenirs each camper is interested in purchasing and who they are purchasing for. Tamarack Camps will provide three meals each day along with snacks, however campers may spend their money on occasional snacks and meals. Each trip will establish its own "Pop Stop" system, typically giving campers an opportunity to purchase a single snack item and drink every few days. Town days are very limited, however during laundry, phone and mail days, campers may have an opportunity to eat a few meals out. The staff will always provide snacks and meals for campers who do not want to eat out or who do not wish to purchase any snacks.

The staff are not responsible for campers' money.

## Last Day

Campers complete their travel trip at Adat Shalom Synagogue, 29901 Middlebelt Road in Farmington Hills. The bus typically returns around 11:00 am. Each family will receive a call one or two days before the end of the trip to confirm the approximate time to meet the campers and bus.

-Alaska Trip on Wednesday, August 5

-Western Trip 1 on Tuesday, July 28

-Western Trip 2 on Friday, July 31

## STAFF

### Trip Supervisor

In addition to five staff members, there is a supervisor who is directly responsible for the Trip. Our supervisors are older, more experienced staff members who have proven themselves as leaders on trips. Supervisors arrive at camp before the campers depart for highly-focused training facilitated by our senior staff.



### Trip Counselors

Your child's counselors are college students who have camp work experience or other informal education experience in settings working with children. Staff reports to camp one week before the trip departs for highly-focused training facilitated by our senior staff and supervisors.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Camper Phone Calls**

Campers are permitted to use the telephone on three scheduled phone days. Campers are taken to pay phones where they are able to call home to talk to parents for a few minutes. Pay phones are limited so campers should not expect to call multiple people or to be able to talk for more than a few minutes. From past experience, phone calls are typically made in the late afternoon or early evening. Because campers will not have cell phones, we encourage parents to write down important phone numbers (cell, home, etc.) for the campers to keep with them.

**As previously noted, campers are not permitted to bring cell phones on the trip.**

### **Parent Concerns**

If you need information, have concerns or would like to relay a message to your child at a time other than during the phone call days, please call the Camp Maas office and leave a message with one of our office staff. They will pass the message along to Jason Charnas, Director of Teen & Family Programs. Jason is in regular contact with the trip supervisors, checking in on the campers, staff and trip, and is also able to pass messages to the trip and their campers.

### **Camp Summer Office Information**

Phone: 248-627-2821

Office Hours:

Sunday through Thursday: 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Saturday: Closed in observance of Shabbat

*For urgent calls, please note that staff is available in the office daily until 1:00 a.m. (except Saturday).*

### **Mail and Packages**

Please write to your child 1-2 times per mail pickup. It means a great deal to campers to hear from home and mail is always a fun time on the trip. Packages may be sent to your camper on a trip but are not necessary. Items such as bus games, magazines and other small fun activities are typically enjoyed by campers. Please do not send anything larger than 9" x 14". UPS, FedEx and other carriers are NOT accepted by General Delivery. Please only send mail and packages through the United States Postal Service.

Please consult the specific trip itinerary for mail address and pick up dates. Mail can take up to one week for delivery, so please mail letters early.

### **Email and Fax**

It is not possible for emails or faxes to be sent to the travel trips, only traditional USPS mail is available.



## **AFTER THE TRIP**

### **Havdallah at Camp Maas**

All travel trip campers are invited to return to camp for Havdallah at Camp Maas.

Western Trip 1 on Saturday, August 1

Western Trip 2 on Saturday, August 1

Alaska Trip on Saturday, August 8

A Tamarack bus will depart from the West Bloomfield JCC (6600 W. Maple Rd. in West Bloomfield) parking lot off of Drake Rd. at 7:30 pm sharp. The bus will return to the JCC at approximately 11:45 pm.

### **Lost & Found**

Our staff will make every effort to identify and return any labeled lost & found items to your child throughout the trip. The bus is cleaned and organized one final time during the final days of the trip and all lost and found is returned to campers. Please ensure that all of your child's clothing and other equipment is clearly labeled to make identification easy.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Medical Form**

The Tamarack Camps Camper Medical Form is the only form that we are able to accept – no other forms may be substituted. This form contains all the information that we are **required, by law**, for your camper. Also, consistency in forms allows quick access to relevant information for your camper.

### **Completed Medical Form**

Please complete the enclosed medical form, which is due May 1, 2009. Medical forms will not be accepted at the bus on the first day of the trip. All campers must have a current (completed yearly) camper medical form on file with us. The information used to complete this form may come from a physical examination completed within the last two years. If you have any questions regarding your child's medical examination, please contact our offices. DUE TO MICHIGAN BOARD OF HEALTH REGULATIONS, CAMPERS WHO DO NOT HAVE A COMPLETED MEDICAL FORM WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ON THE TRIP.

### **Medication**

Please bring any medications to the bus with your child in a ziplock bag labeled with his or her **first and last name**. Generally, we try to dispense medications at meal times. If these times are not the norm for your child, please indicate this information inside your ziplock bag. Inside the bag please include detailed instructions for the medication (please use the form in this packet), including dosage, time of day meds must be taken, and any other special instructions. All medications must be in their original container, which ensures that your child's medication will be ready for distribution the day the trip begins.

If your child takes over-the-counter medication on a regular basis, please bring a supply in a ziplock bag as you would with prescription medications. Otherwise, each trip has its own supply of over-the-counter medications such as Tylenol, Robitussin, etc. provided by the Clinic. If your child needs an inhaler or epipen, please send extra.

## **Lice**

Campers on Travel Trips are in very close contact with each other. Therefore, we expect that parents will check their children for head lice in the weeks preceding camp and treat as necessary so that all children coming to the trip are lice and nit free.

Every child will be checked on the first day by Tamarack clinic personnel at the bus. Children found with live lice and/or nits (eggs) less than 1/2" from the scalp will be sent home along with their belongings and written guidelines for treatment. Parents/guardians will be responsible for administering the first treatment including nit picking and transporting their child to the location of the group. The staff will administer the second treatment and any subsequent treatments. No option will be offered to have staff administer the first treatment.

## **Food Allergies**

Increasing numbers of children have food allergies and we will gladly work with families to provide alternative menu items or special foods for most children with allergies. If, however, your child has a life-threatening or airborne food allergy, a Tamarack Camps Travel Trip is not be the right place for him or her.

Tamarack Camps is not a nut-free program. We do not use any nuts or nut products in food preparation. However, labels on some packaged items might state that their product was made in a factory or on equipment that processes nuts.

Peanut butter is available to campers at every meal. Campers are encouraged to make their sandwiches and then return to the group. In addition to this, counselors are instructed about children with significant allergies, including when and how to use an Epi-Pen. The counselor and/or camper will carry an Epi-Pen at all times:

We do not guarantee that:

1. everyone will follow the above guidelines.
2. there will not be food fights at your child's meal.
3. campers eating peanut butter will not touch each other or objects at meals.
4. campers will not purchase items containing nuts during pop/snack stops.

Our goal is to provide a safe and healthy environment for every camper. There may be circumstances when our program will not be appropriate for an individual child. If your child has a severe, life-threatening allergy to nuts, a nut-free program is recommended. Our health director is happy to answer any questions or concerns.

## **Medical Staff**

Your child's health and safety is our absolute, number one priority. Doctors and Nurses at the Camp Clinic are accessible by phone at all times. Every precaution is taken to safeguard the health of each and every camper. In addition to the clinic staff, a licensed social worker is available for consultation. Trips are supplied with a listing of the nearest medical facilities for each of their campsites and consult with the Camp Clinic throughout the summer. Each staff member on the Travel Trip is certified in Wilderness First Aid and CPR. Many staff members are also lifeguards.

Each trip is also supplied with three satellite phones that can be used to contact the proper authorities or medical personnel in the case of an emergency.

## **Notification for Medical Circumstances**

Parents will be contacted by a trip staff member or medical staff if a child must see a doctor.

Parents will not be notified if child receives routine diagnosis and treatment by the trip staff for cuts, colds, insect bites, stomach virus or headaches, rashes, sore throat, vomiting, etc.



## **SUPPORT**

Tamarack Camps depends upon the generosity of families like yours. You can volunteer to help with camp projects during the year. You can open your home and invite others to hear about camp at a “parlor meeting” with some of our directors. You can bring your professional expertise to camp as a doctor, nurse, psychologist, social worker or administrative assistant. You can provide funding for a special program or initiative. You can make a contribution to the Tamarack Camps Send a Kid to Tamarack fund in order to provide financial assistance for other children to attend camp.

By doing one or a number of these things, you can and will make a difference! Please contact Executive Director Jonah Geller for more details. Thank you so much for your generosity.

**As always, please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments.**

It's going to be a great summer at Tamarack Camps!

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