



Tuesday, April 15, 2008

NEWS: Keeping Kosher

Tamarack Camps hire rabbi, an alumnus, to supervise kitchen and enhance Jewish programs.

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Tamarack Camps will remain kosher, according to executive director Jonah Geller; however its kitchen will no longer supervised by an Orthodox rabbi.

The Bloomfield Hills-based agency will open its camps this summer with a revised system of supervising its kitchens when a Conservative rabbi assumes responsibility for ensuring kosher dietary laws are met. Tamarack has no plans to alter its menu or food purchases because of the change in supervision.

"Our agency is fully committed to providing kosher food to the members of our community," Geller said of the transition. "We believe this move will enhance what we do and how we do it."

The move, according to Geller, is currently in process following months of discussion between Tamarack representatives and representatives from the previous kashrut supervising entity, the Council of Orthodox Rabbis of Greater Detroit. Geller says the move was a joint decision when both parties agreed that a change in supervision was the most beneficial solution.

"The Council was very helpful to us in evaluating our needs and we plan to consult with them as we move forward," Geller added. "We will continue to welcome and accommodate Orthodox groups to ensure that their comfort and dietary needs are met at camp and the Butzel Conference Center in Ortonville."

Representatives from the Council of Orthodox Rabbis said the change at Tamarack is a productive one. "We reached this decision amicably," said Michael Eizelman, chair of the Council's lay board. "We wish Tamarack all the best and will work with the camp to accommodate Orthodox groups."

Rabbi Jason Miller, a Tamarack camper in the early 1980s, will now serve as the camp's mashgiach (kashrut supervisor). The role is not new to Miller. While a student in the rabbinical program of the Conservative Movement's Jewish Theological Seminary, he served as mashgiach of the New York-based school's dining facility. He also worked summers at Camp Ramah, a Conservative movement camp, in a similar capacity.

"This is an exciting opportunity," Miller said of his return to Tamarack and reflecting on his involvement with the camp's Jewish programming. "I developed my love for Jewish camp here at Tamarack many years ago. To now play a role in the camp's ability to excite children and adults about their Judaism is a great honor."

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