

# The Wise Times

Spring 2011 | Volume 5, No. 1

## Camp News!

**1. Excitement builds for SUMMER 2011!** What do over 700 kids, 60 counselors, 50 specialists, 20 support staff and 25 supervisors all have in common? We cannot wait for camp! Nearly 85 percent of last year's campers and 85 percent of our staff are returning 'home' to camp this summer, and we are so excited to give a warm CW welcome to our new campers and staff! With campers hailing from as far away as Florida, North Carolina, Switzerland, California, and Moscow, and staff joining us from England, Australia, Mexico, Sweden, Israel, and New Zealand, right now and all over the world and in many different languages – the countdown to camp is nearing its end!

**2. Live Wise by investing in the future of camp and our campers!** We're on our way to raising the \$375,000 we need to raise by August to receive MATCHING DOLLARS from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation! Our amazing campaign co-chairs, Scott Brown (past CW Director) and Jim Levine (CW alum) would love the opportunity to speak with you about how giving to the Live Wise Campaign may just be the most important investment you can make! Camp Wise is regarded as a national leader in the field of Jewish overnight camp, and we can't wait for our whole facility to match the exceptional quality of our program. Thanks to the generous support of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland's Centennial Initiative, we began the much-needed improvements to our facility a few years back. Now, we're looking to include our non-Cleveland families and alumni to be a part of our efforts in finishing the work. What's next on our project list? A new camp infirmary, a library, a stables, a nature center and new staff housing! Call the camp office for more information, or read more about the campaign at [www.campwise.org](http://www.campwise.org) or on our Facebook page! ★



*A sneak peak at our new aquaglide runway for the lake!*



*Campers sing Mi Chamocha in the chapel on Saturday morning.*

# ask Cindy

in the words of our  
camp social worker

Cindy Toncler can't believe she didn't know about the power of overnight camp sooner. "After spending the summer at Wise last year," she says, "I have one



regret – I wish I had sent my own girls when they were kids!" A Bellefaire social worker who's been in the schools for 20 years (with the last 10 at Orange High School), Cindy says camp is so important because it touches on every aspect of what it means to be a good person.

"What I like best about Wise is the approach we take with caring for kids," she explains. "In today's world, kids aren't just expected to reach the bar, they're pushed to jump over it," Cindy says. Because of this, she believes camp is not only a unique environment for them – it's crucial. "At camp kids can be kids," she says. "They make their own choices, are encouraged to be creative, and have these incredible counselors as role models guiding them." Even more, she says, the character development taking place at Wise leads to higher emotional intelligence, and teaches the kids how to positively relate to others. "The whole identity of being a Camp Wiser is about this," Cindy explains.

So what exactly does a camp social worker do? Just like nurses are at camp to take care of the physical needs of campers and staff, Cindy helps take care of the emotional and psychological needs of the camp community. Describing her role as 'supportive consultant,' Cindy says she

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## CW staff represent in national leadership program

This summer, seven of our amazing staff will be part of an elite group of camp counselors selected from Jewish camps across the country to be Cornerstone Fellows. Created by the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC), a non-profit that serves as a champion and resource to Jewish overnight camps (and offers the "One Happy Camper" grants!), the Cornerstone program works specifically with 3rd and 4th-year bunk counselors, recognizing that these experienced counselors are the 'cornerstones' of camp.

The Fellows are part of a national conference at the end of May that gives them additional training and skills, largely in the areas of programming and Jewish education. "The Cornerstone conference is amazing," says Mara Berde, who's not only our Camp Wise Jewish Education director, but is one of the FJC's Cornerstone Faculty. "It gives our staff the opportunity to network with other camp staff from all different kinds of Jewish camps and learn from amazing teachers. They learn to think more critically about the delivery of Jewish content in camp and further develop their role as counselors and educators."

Once back at camp, the Fellows work on several key projects. A first-year counselor mentoring program, all-camp programs like last summer's Tu B'Av Wedding Night, and Israel programming

are some examples of projects run by our Fellows. Our camp-wide Mishpachot (families) program, where the whole camp is divided into small mixed-age 'families' for Shabbat programming, was created two summers ago by our Cornerstone Fellows, and continues to grow under the leadership of the Cornerstone team.

In the seven years Camp Wise has been a part of the program, over thirty CW staff have been Fellows. Seen as a huge honor both in camp and out, past Fellows say that Cornerstone is an incredible leadership opportunity that often even comes up in job interviews. "Cornerstone made me a better leader and taught me more about working with other people," says Becca Semel, a 2010 Fellow. "It also gave me a lot of insight into how Judaism fits into our fun life at camp. I loved being a part of it!" ★



*Mara Friedman and her 'parents' for the Cornerstone Mishpachot program, counselors Lissy Collin and Matthew Zukerman.*

# wise alumni – where are they now?

## Michael Woll

If you've ever spent a meal at Camp Wise, it probably didn't take long to deduct that the true sign of making it big in this world is having your own CW cheer. Maybe it was having his own cheer, or maybe it was feeling like camp was where he was the happiest in the world, but anyone who was at camp with Michael Woll in the 1980s and early 90s would agree that he was obviously destined for greatness, even back then.

"Camp Wise was a world that was completely different from anything I knew," says Woll, who started at CW as a Chalutzimer in 1984. "I could be as outgoing as I wanted without being judged. I could be whoever I wanted to be and feel tremendous unconditional love from everyone around me."



Long-time camp friends Dana Platt Blitstein and Michael Woll.

It was with this confidence he developed at Wise that Woll set out to take the theater world by storm. Holding to a promise made to his mother that he wouldn't be an actor if he switched his major in college from business to theater, he chose fashion. He has been fulfilling his dream to work in the fashion world ever since—no shock to his fellow campers, who fondly remember Michael gracing the CW stage in a variety of over-the-top costumes! Now the Wardrobe Supervisor for Blue Bloods, the new television series starring Donnie Wahlberg and Tom Selleck, Woll has

spent the last ten years outfitting the stars in movies, television, and on Broadway. Some highlights include working on All My Children for five years and dressing Ethan Hawke in Henry IV on Broadway.

With his professional dreams realized, in the fall of 2009, Woll set out to make his personal childhood dream come true. "From the time I was little I was planning my wedding. I may not have known if I wanted to be the bride or the groom, but I knew I wanted to get married, and that I wanted it to be at Beth El in Akron." As the location of almost every important family milestone including his parents' wedding, his sister's wedding, and his Bar Mitzvah, Woll says getting married there was his childhood wish. While Woll and his partner Greg Orenstein were officially married by a justice of the peace in Massachusetts, his wish came true when Rabbi Stephen Grundfast agreed to conduct their commitment ceremony as the synagogue's first same-sex union. "The Rabbi and the synagogue were wonderful," recalls Woll. "It was everything I could have imagined."



(From L to R): Jared Fischer, Michael Klein, Michael Woll, and Adam Klein at camp in the 80s.

Woll says that Camp Wise was without a doubt the place where he learned to be the kind of person who could go after his dreams and make them reality. "Camp taught me so much about being a leader, having a strong work ethic, and accepting others for who they are," he says. "Most significantly, camp taught me to be the person I want to be, rather than letting myself be dictated by my environment." Still to this day, he says his closest friends in the world are his camp friends. Woll says he can close his eyes and immediately be taken back to the feeling of stepping off the bus at camp as a camper. "I can close my eyes and still see everything," he says. "And it still feels like coming home."

Want to drop Michael a line? Email him at [mh\\_9655@yahoo.com](mailto:mh_9655@yahoo.com). ★

### be in touch!

#### Summer:

13164 Taylor Wells Road  
Chardon, OH 44024  
440.635.5444

[www.campwise.org](http://www.campwise.org)  
[wisekids@mandeljcc.org](mailto:wisekids@mandeljcc.org)

#### Fall, Winter & Spring:

26001 South Woodland Rd.  
Beachwood, OH 44122  
216.593.6250

Become a fan of Camp Wise  
on Facebook

# the village all-stars:

## summer 2011 village supervisors



**Lauren Rubin**  
**Chalutzim Girls**  
 Senior at Tufts University  
 14th summer @ Wise

*Favorite camp activity:* Ropes Course – so scary but so fun!

*Favorite tie-dye method – spiral or bull's eye:* Spiral for life!

*Most looking forward to...* Reuniting with old friends and make lots of new ones!



**Michael "Postie" Post**  
**Chalutzim Boys**  
 Wash. U. and headed to Cal Tech for grad school!  
 14th summer @ Wise

*Favorite camp activity:* Tie-dying

*Tie-dye:* Hybrid spiral and bull's eye

*Most looking forward to...* Standing on a bench in a packed chadar and cheering for Chalutzim!



**Ann Kravec**  
**Ohalim Girls**  
 German teacher at Turpin High School, Cincinnati  
 14th summer @ Wise

*Favorite camp activity:* Free Swim

*Tie-dye:* Spiral

*Most looking forward to...* Seeing all of my friends again and wearing ridiculous earrings every day!



**Avi Gordon**  
**Ohalim Boys**  
 Teacher at Stephen Gaynor School in NYC  
 1st summer @ Wise

*Favorite camp activity:* Maccabiah

*Tie-dye:* Bull's eye

*Most looking forward to...* Meeting new people and making new friends!



**Heather Pease**  
**Noar Girls**  
 Teacher at Lakefield College School, Lakefield, Ontario  
 3rd summer @ Wise

*Favorite camp activity:* Beach cook outs at the lake

*Tie-dye:* Spiral, double spiral if I'm feeling crafty.

*Most looking forward to...* Going canoeing on the Noar girls' overnight!



**Barry Marlin**  
**Noar Boys**  
 Senior at Penn State University  
 10th summer @ Wise  
*Favorite camp activity:* Sports

*Tie-dye:* Bull's eye

*Most looking forward to...* Having some awesome times with the Noar village, and finally beating the international staff in soccer on the 4th of July!



**Jessie Bruder**  
**Solel**  
 AmeriCorps Representative for The Jewish Federation of Cleveland's Public Education Initiative

15th summer @ Wise

*Favorite camp activity:* Mountain biking and free swim

*Tie-dye:* 3-color spiral

*Most looking forward to...* Every second with Solel 2011 and our new camp library!



**Abby Kaufman**  
**SIT Program (Staff-in-Training)**  
 Graduate of The University of Michigan; just returned from 6 months in Israel

15th summer @ Wise

*Favorite camp activity:* Overnights and soccer/Frisbee games!

*Tie-dye:* Double spiral

*Most looking forward to...* Working with the SITs (!!!) and going to Israel with them!



**Doug Sweet**  
**SIT Program (Staff-in-Training)**  
 Graduate Student in Education and Assistant in the Department of Student Leadership and Involvement,

University of Colorado-Boulder

1st summer @ Wise

*Favorite camp activity:* Campfires and camp songs (and I rock at lanyard!)

*Tie-dye:* Spiral

*Most looking forward to...* I cannot WAIT to meet everyone, and see some of my old Agnon students!

Visit [www.campwise.org/RedWagon.html](http://www.campwise.org/RedWagon.html) to read about the rest of our amazing supervisors, and to see the whole 2011 staff list!

ask Cindy *continued from page 2*

is primarily a resource and sounding board for staff. She starts each day at camp by sitting in on Touch Base, the daily morning meeting of the camp directors and village supervisors.

"Touch Base is a fantastic model, and it ensures that no camper's needs are ever overlooked. The supervisors go cabin by cabin addressing any concerns or conflicts, and this is where I get my marching orders for the day." Following the meeting, Cindy may go join a cabin for an activity or sit with a group at lunch. After observing, she'll meet with the staff to strategize their approach and make sure the cabin staff are all on the same page. She'll listen to what's worked and hasn't worked, and help them develop tactics. "I'm someone they can bounce ideas off of and talk to, particularly when they feel like they've used up their ideas for a particularly challenging issue."

Cindy can't wait for her second summer at Wise, and says she's excited to be coming back to be a part of a place where, "everyone is so positive and full of energy."

Advice for new camp parents? "Parents need to figure out how to work through their own (totally natural!) fears and anxieties about letting go. Once they can do that," she says, "they'll be able to help their child immensely." Until then, kids can sense their discomfort, and it usually makes them feel it too. She also encourages parents to be confident in their choice of Camp Wise, and to make sure they've clearly conveyed that confidence to their new camper. "And," Cindy emphasizes, "Remember, it's SO GOOD for them to go, and you're doing such a great thing as a parent by sending them!" ★

## behind the scenes: our maintenance crew

How does an Ohalim tent survive a Cleveland blizzard? Who built the new infirmary porch? When the gaga ball accidentally flies through a cabin window screen, how does it get fixed so quickly? It's all thanks to our terrific maintenance staff!

At camp, we have a dedicated team who work all year long to keep everything working properly and looking beautiful. The seasons dictate their work, and they say that one of their favorite parts of the job is getting to do different things each day. When camp isn't in session and they're not busy getting camp ready or cleaning up from an off-season retreat, they're often working on special projects. Over the last few years, some of their projects have included refinishing the floors of the Ohalim and Noar moadons, building gaga pits, building a new landing platform for the zip line, making cubbies, and rebuilding the porch of the infirmary for a smoother and faster med pass. Before any snow hits the ground, they also have to shut down most of camp, and then reopen it in the spring. This involves shutting off the water to cabins, making sure all of our equipment is stored properly, and closing the pool. With 325 acres of land, a lake, and over 40 buildings, they're always busy!

This year, we're excited to welcome Steve Cobb, our new Facilities Manager. Steve is joining us after several summers as the caretaker of a Girl Scout camp in Michigan.

This past fall, we said goodbye to two of our beloved maintenance staff. Our Facilities Manager James Clay moved to West Virginia with his family (and his labs Chew and Velvet) after five summers with camp, and Don Fuerst retired just after his 80th birthday! After 28 years at Camp Wise (19 as head caretaker!), there was no one who knew camp better. Don set an example with his incredible work ethic and tireless energy, and we are very grateful to have had someone as dedicated and committed to camp with us for so long.

Luckily, still at camp is his partner-in-crime, Curly Eubanks, who is going on his 34th summer at Wise! Often in the summer you can spot Curly driving around on the lawn mower or back hoe. Our year-round crew is rounded out by Gabe Brough, our second-in-command and jack-of-all-trades, and Sue Wilson, who does most of the housekeeping and cleaning. In the summer, our maintenance staff grows as we welcome seasonal staff to our team each year. ★



Curly, Sue, and Steve show off their favorite Camp Wise accessories.  
(Missing: Gabe Brough)

# ways we're living wisely

Dance specialist **Becky Sebo** has spent this year volunteering in Qiryat Gat, Israel, teaching dance classes to Israeli teens. She spent a portion of the year teaching a special jazz class to a group of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish teens living together in Ramla. Becky choreographed a dance for her advanced hip-hop class that helped her students place first in a national dance competition!

Solel supervisor **Jessie Bruder** has spent the year volunteering for AmeriCorps through the Jewish Federation of Cleveland's Public Education Initiative. Jessie works with a corps of community volunteers tutoring children in Cleveland's public schools. The tutors develop personal relationships with their students while working on reading skills. Our very own **Jodi Sperling** is a tutor in Jessie's program. As part of her AmeriCorps stay, Jessie is spearheading the launch of the Camp Wise Library this summer to promote reading at camp!

For his Bar Mitzvah project, Noar camper **Keeva Schneider** is raising money to help build the new Camp Wise library! **Jamie Semel** asked that in lieu of gifts for her bat-mitzvah,

donations be made to Camp Wise or the above-mentioned Public Education Initiative.

2010 SIT Israel trip supervisor, camp parent, and alum **Kevin Levine** will complete 3 marathons this year in honor of his daughter Lila who passed away at age 3 from Tay-Sachs disease. Kevin has raised over \$10,000 through his racing for Columbus Jewish Family Services.

Arts and crafts specialist **Kari Semel** will be spending next year volunteering

around the world. After three months living in Ghana working in schools and orphanages, she will be spending the rest of the year doing community service in Israel.

CW Alum **Jordan Rothkopf** spent ten days this winter in Israel as part of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland's Engliyada program, teaching English to teens and adults in Bet She'an, Cleveland's partner city. ★



*Becky Sebo and her winning hip-hop dance team in Israel.*

## camp in style this summer in CW gear!

Once upon a time there was a super cool camp with gear that was more stylish than The North Face, Abercrombie and J. Crew combined. All those who wore this camp's gear had magical powers bestowed upon them, such as smiling and hugging all the time and an uncanny ability to turn anything into a cheer.

Check out all of the great items including song session tees, hoodies, hats, shirts,

and water bottles at our online store at [www.campwise.org](http://www.campwise.org).

**Mention that you want to wear your gear to celebrate Wise Wednesdays and receive 10% off your next order!**

Orders can either be mailed to you or delivered to a camper at camp.



*Rebecca Shankman and Kayla Giterman show their CW spirit in our ridiculously comfy gray sweatshirt*

## here's a big CW cheer

When someone at camp celebrates a big day we all stand on our benches and cheer about it! Here's a big C.W. cheer for all those campers who have celebrated their B'nai Mitzvot since our last newsletter. Please let us know if we missed you and we'll include you in our next issue.

Also, tell us how you are "Living Wise" by emailing us at [wisekids@mandeljcc.org](mailto:wisekids@mandeljcc.org) about your mitzvah project.

Claire Bober	Adam Rossio
Jessica Cohen	Marcie Rotblatt
Maya Cohen	Rachel Roth
Lily Eisen	Samantha Schaffer
Halle Elman	Erin Schwartz
Michal Epstein	Sarah Senkfor
Jessica Friedman	Evan Shaw
Taylor Goldberg	Kaleigh Shupp
Michael Golden	Bradley Simon
Harrison Gross	Kadia Simon
Jack Herman	Ryan Singer
Todd Izen	Noah Sissoko
Seth Kalish	Lauren Tucker
Asa Kip	Hannah Turell
Leventhal	Jake Vinci
Sarah Light	
Joel Ludin	
Derek Rose	

## C.I.T.s (Campers-in-Training)

Camp Wise Alum	Years At Camp	'Future Camper'
Michael Butler	1985-1989	Julia Butler
Erin Saffran Stevens	1989-1991, 1999	Coley Stevens
Renee Schroeder Christensen	2005-2006	Thomas Christensen
Kenn Kerper	1986-1990	Joshua & Harlie Kerper
Rachel Klein Wolf	1985-1989, 1995-1996	Lily Wolf
Bryan Scott	1983-1990	Tristan Scott
Matt Henoeh	1991-1999	Mason Henoeh
Mindy Waronker	1987-1989	Mitchell Coleman

Please let us know when any Camp Wise alumni welcome a new baby, and we'll send them a 'Future Camper' onesie, and feature them in our next newsletter.



Julia Butler



Coley Stevens



Thomas Christensen



Joshua & Harlie Kerper



Lily Wolf



Tristan Scott



Mason Henoeh



Mitchell Coleman



## memories from the archives

(Pictured left to right) Jerry Rand, Harold Davis, Fred Sternfeld, and Jeff Lehrich walk up from the lake after practicing their canoeing skills for their overnight trip to Mohican State park.

open  
house

Sunday June 5, 2011  
1-4 pm at Camp Wise  
RSVP by May 21

Open to new, returning,  
and prospective camp  
families! Bring a picnic  
lunch and enjoy an  
afternoon tour of camp.



the mandel jewish community center of cleveland  
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# The Camp Wise Library is back!

What's better than reading under the shade of a CW tree?

After more than 10 years and many requests from campers and parents, we are reviving our beloved camp library, but we need your help!

#### Here's what campers and parents can do:

- Donate your favorite new or gently-used books for kids and teens ages 7 through 16
- Run a mini book drive by asking friends and family to help
- Donate bean bag chairs for our comfy library
- Contribute to the Live Wise Campaign (by August to have your gift matched!)...the library and a new camp infirmary will be the first two projects built!



*Pool Supervisor Beth Young and camper Cyrus Young take a reading break at the pool.*

*The library will eventually be housed in its own space attached to our future new infirmary. While we continue raising funds for this project, the library will be temporarily located in the SIT lounge in the dining hall.*

**Books can be dropped off at the front desk of the Mandel JCC by May 1  
or mailed directly to our summer address.**