

## City Kids Go to Camp for Free, Thanks to the Philadelphia Ethical Society

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

The Philadelphia Ethical Society on Rittenhouse Square operates Camp Linden, a six-week summer children's program for kids from low-income city neighborhoods, on their property in Chester County. In 2018, 250 kids attended free of charge, sent by eight community organizations, six from Philadelphia and two from Wilmington, Delaware. Each organization brings the same group of children to Camp Linden on the same weekday throughout the camp season.

Kids learn to swim, experience nature, plant a garden, wade and float in Brandywine Creek, and hike on a trail. They learn how plants grow and which insects are helpful and which ones are harmful, all while having fun. They feast on produce from their garden, celebrate Planet Earth with music and games, and learn about Native American culture. Camp Linden also teaches ethical behaviors including valuing yourself, valuing other people, and valuing the Earth.

The camp runs on a low budget because much of the work is done by volunteers, including Jeffrey Dubb, MD, Committee Chair; Leonard Weeks, Camp Manager; Sharon Wallis, Program Director; and Joe Dubb, Head Counselor. Volunteers also plant the garden; help clean up, set up and prepare the property for the camp season; and conduct the fundraising. The paid staff includes a year-round resident caretaker, and counselors and lifeguards hired during the camp season. Last summer the staff also included two counselors-in-training and a part-time social and emotional learning consultant.

Most of the cost is covered by individual contributions through "Friends of Camp Linden," a fund of the Ethical Society, supplemented by financial support from the Ethical Society and other organizations and foundations. You can contribute in three ways: volunteer, donate items, and make a financial contribution. Volunteers carpool to Camp Linden on designated Saturdays in April, May and June to plant the garden and perform other maintenance tasks. To participate, please email [sharonkwallis@gmail.com](mailto:sharonkwallis@gmail.com). Camp Linden



Courtesy of Philadelphia Ethical Society

Catching butterflies

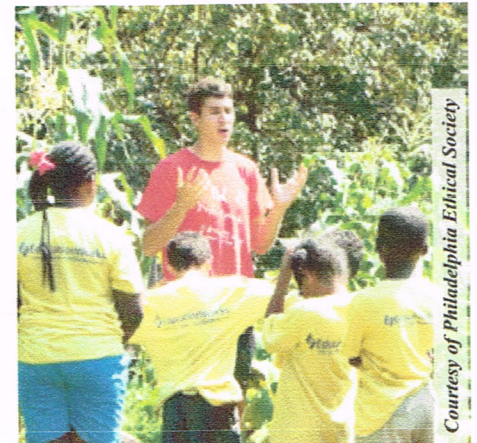


Courtesy of Philadelphia Ethical Society

Camp Linden vista

needs bathing suits, foam clogs or other water shoes, and life jackets sized to fit children ages 6 through 12. If you have any of these items to donate, you can drop them off at the Ethical Society building, 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square.

If you wish to make a contribution to Camp Linden for the upcoming summer program, please send it care of the Philadelphia Ethical Society, 1906 S. Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia PA 19103. For more information, go to <https://phillyethics.org/camp-linden/>



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Counselor teaching