

## The Kibbutz Program at Camp Grossman

The Kibbutz program is a unique opportunity for campers entering grades eight and nine to experience both greater independence and greater responsibility. It is almost like a partial overnight camp experience within Grossman.

Campers who have gone through the Kibbutz program generally remember those years as their most special at Camp Grossman. The Kibbutz program differs structurally from the younger units at Grossman in a number of ways to support this philosophy. In the Kibbutz, campers are not divided into bunks with an assigned counselor. Rather, all campers are part of one group – the Kibbutz. Campers in the Kibbutz work, choose their activities, participate in Maccabiah and enjoy overnights at camp twice per week. There are four Unit Heads, male and female, who supervise the program, with additional counselors who join Kibbutz for the overnights. All Kibbutz campers work for one or two periods every day. Jobs are assigned by the Unit Heads, with input from the campers, and rotate every two weeks. Jobs include helping in the office, picking up trash, organizing the Lost and Found, assisting specialists in running activities, assisting counselors in our youngest bunks and helping in the kitchen to make meals for campers who forgot their lunches and for the overnights. Kibbutz campers also work together to help prepare their own meals, set the tables and clean up. They are responsible for their belongings and cleaning up after the overnights.

Along with this increased responsibility, Kibbutz campers are given greater independence. While the campers are certainly supervised, because Kibbutz campers are not assigned to individual bunks, they walk to and from work, activities and meals on their own and are expected to be where they are supposed to be, on time. Kibbutz campers begin their day with a morning meeting with their Unit Heads. They then report to their jobs for one or two work periods each morning (depending on whether they participate in first period swim lessons or not). After their work periods, Kibbutz campers are able to enjoy camp activities like any other camper. However, rather than being assigned to activities as a bunk, Kibbutz campers choose from many different activities assigned as options to them each period. Campers may choose to continue to enjoy a varied schedule, as they did when they were younger, or they may choose to develop greater proficiency in a particular area by selecting that activity more often. Most afternoons Kibbutz campers then enjoy Maccabiah - at this age often reported to be the best part of their day - and on Fridays continue to enjoy Oneg in honor of Shabbat.

The overnight component of Kibbutz takes place once per week during the first two weeks of the summer and then twice per week thereafter. Overnights are consecutive – either Tuesday and Wednesday or Wednesday and Thursday depending on the week. Kibbutz campers bring sleeping bags and pillows and sleep in the Lodge, as they did on their occasional overnights in Golan, Kinnerit and Kfar. However, in Kibbutz, because of the regularity of the overnights, campers are invited to leave their sleeping bag and pillow at camp in a designated space upstairs in the Lodge to make life easier. On those days, when the rest of the camp goes

home, Kibbutz campers and Unit Heads get to experience the camp in a rare, quiet state. They slow down and enjoy each other as they work together to prepare dinner, set the tables and clean up. After dinner there is an evening activity. Each week there is an out of camp activity one night and specialist-run activities at camp the other. In the past, Kibbutz has gone bowling, to play miniature golf, to baseball games, the movies, and Faneuil Hall. Whether the evening activity is in camp or out of camp, campers are back in the Lodge at camp settling down each night by about 9 or 10 pm, with lights out at about 11 pm. The next morning the campers eat their breakfast, clean up and prepare for their day.

Due to the structure and unique character of the Kibbutz program, where bonding with peers and feeling a part of the group are important goals, we strongly encourage Kibbutz campers to enroll for a minimum of four consecutive weeks. Of course, we have made, and will make, exceptions but we have found that the campers who get the most from the program are the ones who have committed to an extended session. As one camper stated, "You only get to spend 16 weeks of your life in Kibbutz, so you should experience every one of them."