



## IMPACT STATEMENT

As an independent, pluralistic camp, Herzl serves the breadth of the Jewish community. From the most observant to the least, from big cities to small towns, from all kinds of families, young Jews come together at camp to create a community that feels like family. Tens of thousands of Jewish youth have experienced the magic of Herzl Camp. Judaism is woven into every aspect of daily life. Campers experience a completely Jewish community, temporarily relieved of the complexities of living Jewishly among a mostly non-Jewish population. At Herzl Camp, all forms of Judaism are embraced and explored and Judaism is the heart and soul of our most joyous moments. Our campers become independent and self-reliant and, at the same time, deeply connected to each other and to the community. Camp staff quickly grow into leaders as they realize the tremendous responsibility and reward of nurturing and leading their campers. As adults, camp staff carry on as leaders in Jewish and secular communities. Over seven decades, how many campers have returned home from Herzl Camp with a new buddy who becomes a lifelong friend, or a first love who turns into a spouse, or a passion to learn more, to give back, and to lead that turns into a career, all fueling the future of our Jewish communities?

Herzl Camp has built the Jewish identities of thousands of young people, created countless lifelong friendships and marriages, and inspired dedicated leaders who care deeply about Israel and the Jewish community. In our fast-paced, modern society, assimilation is escalating and the next generation's idea of what it means to be Jewish is changing rapidly. Study after study shows dwindling interest in Israel and declining commitment to synagogues and other Jewish community groups. At the same time, research establishes that Jewish camping is the antidote to these changes. Campers grow to be adults who are more engaged in the community, more observant in their homes, more generous to JCCs, federations and synagogues, and more passionate about Israel. Jewish camps are the Jewish neighborhoods of old, fostering commitment and community in the next generation. Just as each challenge facing our community is clearly delineated by empirical research, the positive effects of Jewish camping, day school education, and trips to Israel is also clearly demonstrated. Combined, Jewish camping, day school education, and visiting Israel are the best hope for Jewish continuity. Among the three, Jewish camping stands out as the most accessible to the widest array of Jewish families. An investment in Jewish camping creates a long-lasting effect on the largest number of Jewish youth. Lessons learned and friendships made at camp endure for a lifetime.

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