



Journal

Fall/Winter 2021-2022

Celebrating 75 Summers of Joyful Community, Stewardship, and Nature Connection



As I write, Session One has just ended, yet what just took place these past three weeks seems so magical that it must exist outside of time. Halfway through our 75th summer of Camp, I have never seen a whole group of campers so entirely unified, happy, and joyous. As more than a dozen parents have reported back in the past two days, campers are saying it was “the best session ever!”

Though this summer required more logistics and careful planning than ever to safely operate during the pandemic, what we accomplished as a Camp Community is truly remarkable. After all the challenges and limitations children faced this past year, to gather here at Glen Brook and have 140 people able to live closely together and sing loudly and harmoniously was incredibly moving. After a year full of stress and worry, Glen Brook campers got to just be children in a carefree and delighted way.

At the end of the session a parent asked me whether we had been disappointed by all the rain. I responded that, although it had rained more than any summer camp we can remember, it truly didn't matter. This community was so excited to be here learning, working, playing, exploring, and simply being together that we didn't let repeated deluges of rain, limitations from COVID protocols, or anything else get in the way of having fun and meaningful experiences.

This readiness to embrace the summer was demonstrated the first week when, during evening activity, a huge rainstorm rolled in. At first, campers ran for cover on the colonnade, but after a few minutes they gleefully ran back out into the rain: playing, splashing, dancing, hugging, and laughing.

I am so proud of the staff and campers who co-created this incredible summer, which is just what these children needed. I am grateful to the wider Glen Brook Community whose support made it possible for us to build our two new cabins just in time for the summer, and whose generosity allowed 52 of our summer campers to be here on scholarship. Glen Brook exists and thrives because our community believes in and supports the powerful growth that takes place in this special place.

Thank you to everyone who helps Glen Brook to thrive!

 Mark Stehlik • Executive Director

THE GLEN BROOK JOURNAL



Farm Update

This year on the farm has seen much growth and offered an abundance of learning opportunities to students, campers, interns, and staff alike. Students and campers have been building new no-till beds in Gabriel's Field by sheet mulching with cardboard and deep compost. Watching our (enormous!) worm population transform cardboard and lawn into a usable garden bed has been very cool. We also filled the high tunnel with tomatoes and learned to prune them and took turns practicing with the broadfork and rolling dibbler—if you don't know what these fun farm tools are, ask the next time you're here! As fall approaches, we are looking forward to building an additional high tunnel to increase our shoulder season growing space, building some new perennial beds for strawberries and asparagus, and filling out the orchard area with a few more fruit trees.

We have pigs in our forest—campers have enthusiastically patrolled the pigs' territory for downed branches after storms, fed them kitchen scraps, and observed them playing and swimming in their watering hole. Young people (and older people!) have also been keeping our unusually friendly sheep company—Bonnie will insistently nudge you if you stop petting her before she's ready! I have often seen someone, or a small group, sitting in the pasture, book in hand, with a sheep or two at their side. Late this year we hope to breed them and increase our flock size slightly with adorable lambs in the spring.

Lastly, everyone was thrilled mid-July when we welcomed 150 adorable fluffy chicks to our farm. These Rhode Island Reds and Easter Eggers will be the friendliest chickens, after being held, cuddled, and talked to multiple times per day by campers! They are inquisitively watching the farm interns prepare their first outdoor yard.

It has been thrilling to watch the cycles of life on the farm, and we look forward to welcoming you to work and eat with us!

🍁 Jen Robinson • Farm Manager



Visit glenbrook.com/news-events for up-to-date info on Camp's happenings!

FALL/WINTER 2021-2022



From Cutting A Straight Line, To Bear Benches—Divine!

This summer we opened up a brand new camper group with two new cabins perched on top of the Glen Brook hill! Bear Camp, as we call it, needed outdoor seating and eating space. The Bear group needed a building project. A perfect match!

How many of us have ever cut a piece of lumber by hand? I'm sure I used a chop saw to cut 2x material as a young carpenter before ever working a hand saw. While machine tools give us precision, they take something else away: we learn more through the challenge and experience of crafting a cut using more of our muscles and eye coordination. It takes concentration to slowly align the saw with the side of the cutting line, feel the pressure points and guide the saw. Cutting by hand is a skill that takes practice, attention, and coordination.

The Bear group had lots of practice hand-cutting 2x4" and 2x6" lumber for their 10x3' picnic table and two separate benches. Other tools used were the tape measure, speed square, bevel gauge, and screw gun. (No, we did not have time to hand screw!) The results are now sitting atop of the hill in Bear Camp—useful to all future Bear groups.

When you look around the Glen Brook campus, there are countless buildings and pieces of furniture with similar origins. These things hold stories of campers and students who learned new skills, worked together, and left a beautiful and long-lasting feature of our campus for years to come. We always love when people return to visit and show us the barn stall they framed, the A-Frame floor they helped to refinish, or the chicken coop they helped to build. We often reference the Khalil Gibran quote, "Work is love made visible"—you only have to visit the Glen Brook campus to see that this is true.

🍁 Grant Butler • Facilities Manager



Camp Glen Brook spaces are available to rent! Visit glenbrook.org/facility-rentals for details.

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School Programs Mentorship in a Time of Uncertainty

In an uncertain time, being skilled at uncertainty comes in handy. How can you be “good” at uncertainty? Isn't that something you feel, not something you do? And isn't that something you don't *want* to feel?

And yet, we urge our young people to be brave, to be confident, and to make strong choices in the world. How can you be brave and confident without all of the information necessary? Upon some reflection, it strikes me that this is precisely what bravery, confidence, and other admirable traits represent: a willingness to make strong choices amidst uncertainty, sometimes profound uncertainty. It takes a certain bravery to step into the unknown, to try something new with no promise of success, and to be willing to make strong choices even when you don't know what the outcome will be. In other words, being skilled at uncertainty.

As Summer and School Programs Director, I wanted the students and campers who came to Glen Brook last year to get to exercise their Uncertainty muscle—to practice this skill. So we provided programming where students of all ages encountered things that they may have been “bad” at. We created opportunities for them to settle into situations that are unfamiliar—even something as foundational as sleeping in a new place. We encouraged them to make relationships with themselves and each other that included the capacity for mistakes, errors, and corrections.

After a long year of COVID uncertainties, we are not quite done with the fog of confusion, the health risks, and social mores formed in haste and borne along by necessity. I'm proud of the way that Glen Brook staff have modeled care and compassion in the face of this fog. Young people certainly feel the stress and anxiety of our times, but throughout this year the students have met a gentle, steady poise from our staff, even amidst unfamiliar protocols and changes. Our commitment to mentorship has not wavered.

The world in which these students are growing up is different in so many ways from that of my youth. Mentorship includes being humbled by that difference, trying to apprentice myself to it. Alongside all that we do for work or play, our greater aim is to model a kind of mentorship that they might one day mirror—that one day, when other young people are looking up to today's young people for mentorship in a different time of uncertainty, they will bring a gentle, steady poise, a confidence in the face of the unknown; that they will enjoy good work and spirited play, will hold to high standards, and will make profound connections in the world around them.

🍁 Jake Lewis • Gap Director



Registration for Summer Camp is now open at glenbrook.org/sign-up.

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Gap at Glen Brook Interdependence: An Antidote to Isolation

When speaking with prospective gappers or their parents, I often hear them say something akin to, “I’m looking to gain more independence.” I think I know what people mean when they say this: I imagine it includes the desire to be happy on their own, without needing anyone or anything else. But when I hear “independence” these days, I hear a word that further separates an already divided world. “Not depending on others,” “a law unto oneself”—these are some of the common meanings for this word.

To repurpose a bit of common slang: if no one relies on you, then who needs you?

At Gap at Glen Brook, we are going the other way. We are saying that a life of satisfaction and fulfillment grows out of a web of dependent relationships—a healthy dependence that allows for exchange in both directions—and that, from such a life, happiness might appear as a consequence. “Self-reliant” is not necessarily reliable, and we want people to be rely-able: to be able to be relied upon. “Responsible” means response-able: able to respond. An independent person might only respond to themselves—and there’s plenty of that going around.

Haven’t we had enough of independence these last many months, cut off from most of the connections that give our lives the steady meaning of daily interaction? An *interdependent* person can be response-able to everything upon which they depend, and that which depends on them. *Dependence* is not a dirty word around here. We are dependent in so many ways: on the earth for nourishment in myriad forms, on a clean atmosphere, on the skills and scholarship of countless humans across time and space to bring us our ten thousand... The more I learn to craft or grow or create, the more I realize just how dependent I really am.

There is joy in leaning on others, in being leaned on, in bridging the islands of our isolated selves to connect with people, places, things. If it is true that no one is an island, as the old saying goes, then we might look to gain more interdependence as a path to fulfillment and meaning in our lives.

🍁 Jake Lewis • Gap Director

Jake has returned to run the Gap Program, which he founded 7 years ago, after serving as the School Program Director for the past two years.



Visit facebook.com/GapatGlenBrook for the most up-to-date photos and news!

THE GLEN BROOK JOURNAL

Alumni Spotlight

I've been "Nurse Katy" at Camp Glen Brook every winter and summer camp since 2005 when James Madsen first contacted me. Over the years, my responsibilities have grown to include leading singing, country dancing, managing homesickness, teaching farm classes, filling in as chef for one Winter Camp (unexpectedly), serving as Summer Camp Director for one summer, and being Assistant Camp Director. It has been a privilege and joy to work closely with old friends and alumni, as well as to become part of a team of outstanding human beings. Over the years, there have been many people associated with Glen Brook who have helped to shape who I am today. A special acknowledgment to Grant Butler ('85) and Keith Worthy ('82) who have been friends since childhood and now are coworkers. I have been incredibly lucky to know these two people and to count them among my friends.



My love for Camp Glen Brook began in 1976 when my class of '84 began coming for our annual trip in fourth grade. It was where my class came to deepen our connections with one another, expand our learning through rites of passage—such as climbing Mt. Monadnock and getting dropped off in the woods during our orienteering block, washing dishes, raking leaves, cutting wood, painting bedrooms, making apple cider and so much more. This all strengthened the bonds we already had with each other as Glen Brook nurtured a sense of responsibility for the world around us.

After high school graduation, and even until a few years ago, my class from The Waldorf School of Garden City loved to have reunions at Camp Glen Brook. Despite decades of living our lives separate from each other, returning to Glen Brook and cleaning up after meals together was second nature and brought a renewed sense of connection. The trees are taller, the buildings have been modified, and staff have changed, but the traditions and customs are mostly still the same. It feels like coming home and back to a part of ourselves that we don't want to forget.



Katy started this fall as our Youth Program Director, running all our school programs and taking an increased leadership role for Summer Camp. We're delighted to have her on our year-round team!

Working at Glen Brook has been a gift for me and my family: my husband, Tim, my children, Jacob, Rose, Jera and Sam, and the shaggy dog, Isabella, who spent all of her 14 summers at Glen Brook. We became part of a greater community and a way of thinking which guides much of what we do today: to aim to leave the world a little better than we found it. Camp Glen Brook is a shining example of how community can be, how intention can be guided by mission and followed by action, and how people can strive to be their best selves on a small farm, on a hill in southern New Hampshire.

 Katy Gibney



If you'd like to be featured in a future Alumni Spotlight, email us at office@glenbrook.org.

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