



Journal

Fall/Winter 2022 – 2023

77 Years of Joyful Community, Stewardship, and Nature Connection



Reflecting on Glen Brook’s 77th summer, I am amazed yet again at how personal, how precious, and how brand-new the magic is that happens here each year. People come together for an experience that, in a few short weeks, can change their lives and stay close to their hearts forever. This summer we welcomed more campers than ever to enjoy the magic that happens here on the hill. After the challenges of the past few years, our culture has a renewed enthusiasm for that which is most vital to human thriving, which is what Glen Brook has offered for 77 years.

We’ve had an outpouring of emails and comments from parents whose children camped with us this summer. At the end of the day, what matters most is that children are having experiences like the ones you read about below: experiences of finding care, love, joy, and their own ability to overcome challenges in a new community. Among countless comments, parents wrote:

“The child who returned to me was full of more joy than I can possibly express. She felt such a profound sense of belonging after such a short time, and took risks that I would have never thought possible”

“We chose Glen Brook initially for its connection to Waldorf philosophy. We continue to choose Glen Brook because of the wholesome activities, fun and laid-back community vibe, support for self-challenge and personal growth, and the clear separation from the world outside camp, *letters only* — which is a true gift for kids these days.”

Through these experiences, Camp Glen Brook provides young people with a deep realization that the world is good. Children come here to turn off the news, turn off screens, tune out from conversations about the things over which adults endlessly worry. Campers tune into that which is most vital— an experience of knowing that a group of people can decide that they care about one another, share core values, and come together to create an exciting and growth-filled community. More importantly, they learn how to take this ‘Glen Brook magic’ with them and create that same sense of purpose, belonging, and care for one another back to their homes, their schools, and into their lives as they decide on the kinds of communities that they want to help co-create.

Glen Brook’s magic is created by every single person who comes here; by those who founded Glen Brook, by those who have shaped it over the years, by every parent or alum who spreads the word about this special place or writes us to reemphasize its importance, and by each of you who reads this article and believes in the importance of what Glen Brook does. Thank you for being a part of this place that promotes human flourishing — for loving Glen Brook. We look forward to welcoming you back soon to your home away from home.

 Mark Stehlik • Executive Director

Going Solar

Sustainability is central to so much of Glen Brook: it informs how we create community, activities, and our curriculum. In the field of environmental sustainability, many steps that we have taken over the years form the bedrock of our programming and day-to-day operation.


As a farm, we use the most regenerative and holistic agricultural practices including biodynamics, intensive rotational grazing, and no-till farming because they are good for the health of the land as well as the quality of the food that we harvest and serve. We minimize our waste streams by minimizing what we purchase, feeding food scraps to farm animals, and composting what can't be eaten so that it returns to the soil for new growth. And, perhaps more importantly, we are a place of learning: all of these practices are constantly modeled, discussed, and shared with everybody who comes to spend time at Glen Brook and participate in the work of making this harmonious and sustainable community thrive.

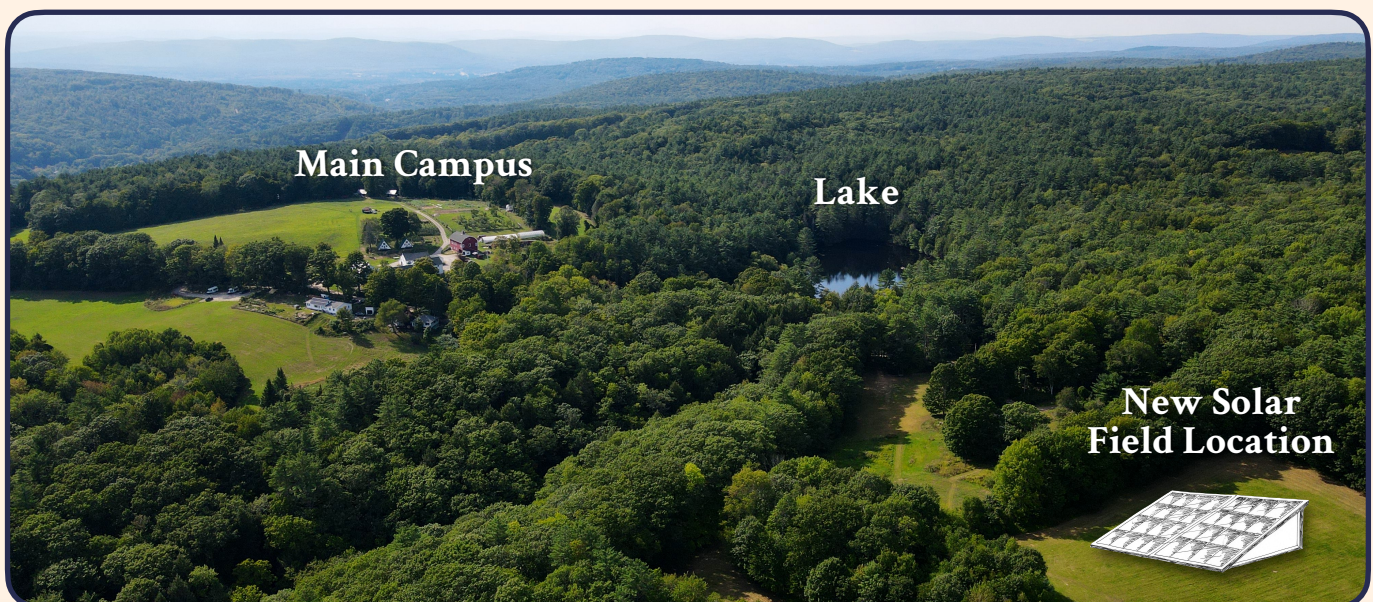
As a facility and a home to many, we are always thinking about energy use in our buildings. Living in New Hampshire, our highest energy need is heat through the cold, blustery winters. We have reduced our consumption by increasing the insulation in our buildings and removed our dependence on oil by heating entirely with wood. Our forestry practices allow us to use locally-sourced wood in our stoves and some building projects, while keeping our forests intact for the continued health of our local ecosystem and the larger biosphere.

We are excited to share our plans to install a solar array that will produce as much electricity as we use in a year.

Our planned solar field, sited in the White Meadows hay fields, will produce all this electricity, and we are excited about the prospect of exploring integrated systems, such as grazing sheep in the shade of the panels. This plan is estimated to offset our carbon emissions by 130,000 pounds per year and save over \$20,000 in annual electric bills. This will significantly reduce our carbon footprint as an organization, and in the future we can use this solar electricity to power our vehicles as well.

We often hear talk about being carbon neutral; Glen Brook's goal is to be carbon *negative*, through agricultural and forestry practices that act as a carbon sink, by minimizing our consumption and energy use, and by producing our own electricity through renewable sources. This is an important and exciting direction. As campers and students come to us throughout the year, we are excited to share with them all the countless ways that Glen Brook works to leave the world better than the way we found it, and inspire them to do the same. We are counting on our community's support to help fund this major project, and will be sharing more specifics in the months to come!

 Mark Stehlik • Executive Director





A Box in Time!

The founder of Camp Glen Brook, William Harrer, loved woodworking. He built a workshop in his house for woodworking, and he hired a seasoned teacher named Harry Kretz to teach summer camp woodshop. One of the early conversions for a Glen Brook space was to make a woodshop out of the back room of our old beloved Recreation Hall.

Teaching woodshop here comes with some history. It also comes with a lot of enthusiasm from campers for making something from scratch to take home. This summer I got to work with the lynx campers who chose to have a concentration in woodshop.

We embarked on making a small wooden box with simple joinery: finger jointed, or box jointed corners. The project started with measuring out the four lengths of our boxes - in most cases 8"x4". This provided a good chance to relearn or learn the utility of tape measures. We used scrap plywood for practicing our cross cuts before cutting the actual wood.

The wood we chose to use was locally sourced — though not from our own trees. For many years now, falcon campers have been using 5/4" poplar lumber for making paddles which they take on their canoe trips. The offcuts from those paddles leave us with 5/4" pieces 2 to 3 feet long by 4 to 5 inches wide. By ripping the 5/4 pieces in half I made usable 1/2" thick stock for boxes.

Our first challenge was to lay out the dimensions of our square box joints. With the height of our box walls at 3-1/2 inches, each wall had either three or four 1/2" teeth. After some measuring and marking, we began using a template to trace out the teeth. The template of choice was a 1/2" groove trowel from the local home center.

The tools we used were backsaws for vertical tooth cuts, and coping saws for horizontal cuts between the bases of the teeth. Then we used files to smooth out the tooth openings so they would fit snugly. A little sanding on the corners made them smooth and even, and by using different shades of stain the beauty of the corners really stood out!

The challenges were great, as patience and determination were called into practice. By the same token, the rewards of completion and accomplishment were felt all the more. I think William Harrer and Harry Kretz would have been pleased to see a familiar energy and enthusiasm in the midst of a busy summer camp season!

🍁 Grant Butler • Facilities & Community Engagement Manager

Stewardship at Gap at Glen Brook

We're three weeks into the semester at Gap at Glen Brook, and I'm already seeing some of the indicators of success I always look out for. The firewood pile is stocked, farm produce is abundant in the outdoor kitchen, the trash has been taken out, and Gappers are offering help to one another. It might seem trivial, but these small things speak to one of Glen Brook's core values that I deeply believe in, especially for emerging adults: the idea of stewardship. It's often talked about at Glen Brook, but how do we know when it's happening?

In starting my first year as the Gap Program Director, I've made it one of my goals to weave this value of stewardship into every part of the program that I can. Gappers aren't just learning how to cook from the farm, they're also taking kitchen inventory, planning menus, and grocery shopping. On our next wilderness trip they'll each take a role as a leader of a different part of the trip: food, shelter, water, and more. Gappers have taken on twice daily animal chores, writing a weekly blog, and cooking for one another. The group this semester also started creating their own chore and cooking rotation for the weekends when we left these tasks unstructured - another indicator of success!

In my years of working with teens and young adults, I have frequently heard that "young people just don't want to work these days." This contrasts with my experience! I think teens and young adults want a different way of working: one that is more connected to the things they believe in, one that values spaciousness and slowness in addition to progress and productivity, and one that values their autonomy. That's why the work of Gap is so meaningful: it gives these young adults a chance to practice real and experiential stewardship, where work is balanced with rest and connection, where working with their hands directly impacts their daily life, and where they can experience the consequences of contributing (or not contributing!) to a community. Don't turn the composting toilets every other day? Well, you might be dealing with a smelly outhouse! Forgot to collect eggs from the chickens? Breakfast for the whole crew might be late! There is a kind of joy in this sort of work, and I'm starting to see it on Gappers' faces.

Stewardship not only means caring for the spaces we're in, but also for one another. On our backpacking trip during orientation week, we had a long hike day over Mount Monadnock, and some members of the group were struggling with heavier packs than they had ever carried. We encouraged the group to practice asking for help ("can you carry this tent for a while?") and giving help ("I'm feeling okay - I can take more weight!"). Ever since then, I've watched the group practice this in both small and large ways - offering support, and asking for help. This is stewardship at heart as well.

Poet and writer Khalil Gibran puts this sentiment beautifully in his 1923 book *The Prophet*: "To love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret... Work is love made visible." My hope is that every Gapper leaves with this experience of stewardship to step more clearly and powerfully into the next stage of their adult lives, and to move towards this kind of intimacy, service, and meaning.

🍁 Tori Heller • Gap Program Director



School Programs

The Fall school trips at Glen Brook are in full swing, engaging all the senses. The changing colors, the smell of ripening Concord grapes and basil, the beyond delicious tomatoes and beans out of the garden, the sound of voices in the Rec Hall and hammers on the gazebo roof, and the sensation of the cool air on the skin in the mornings... With the colder weather approaching, there is much to do to prepare the camp and a great willingness from the students.

Orientation welcomed the 9th and 12th grade for the annual tradition of stewarding in the new high school students by the seniors. The focus was on building connections and trust while working and playing side by side. Mountain climbing afforded clear views of the peaks beyond as well as a spot to rest and explore our identities together. The weather was warm enough for time at the waterfront, and we raised our voices in song every evening. Students departed feeling new and strengthened bonds, giving them a strong foundation for supporting each other this coming year.

Thanks to the 8th grade, much work was done preparing for the winter. Blacksmithing, carpentry, cooking and farm work filled their days as well as some games to strengthen communication and cooperation. We went on a hike out to Babbidge Reservoir and made a visit to an old quarry where we explored and ate our lunch. At our closing gratitude circle this group remembered getting to spend time with the chickens, sheep and pigs as well as some well-deserved free time in the meadow and many remarks about the delicious food they helped prepare with Chef Robyn.

The 10th grade trip was a hiking trip into the White Mountains where we climbed Mount Lafayette and studied meteorology at varying altitudes. Such a challenge, successfully met, invites students to grow confidence in themselves in other areas of their lives. Much of what we do at Glen Brook is based on that premise, and we see it proven true over and over again. What a gift Glen Brook gives us by offering us a chance to strive towards our potential through collaboration and community.

October brings the 4th grade for an exploration of senses and life in the changing season, as well as cooking in a cauldron. Fifth grade studies botany and climbs Mount Monadnock together, and processes food from the farm into delicious meals. The 6th grade learns canoeing, archery and fire building skills as the weather grows colder and the days shorter. There is so much to do to prepare the farm for winter, and all classes will participate in stewardship projects to ensure that we have wood for our fires and food to eat until Spring returns again.

🍁 Katy Gibney • Youth Program Director



THE GLEN BROOK JOURNAL

Dear Glen Brook,

Thank you for giving me the Falcon experience. Thank you for pushing me to do things I never imagined doing, for teaching me lessons I can carry with me throughout my life at home, and for making me feel truly proud of myself for what I accomplished. Thank you for enabling me to form connections with people that could never have been made outside of this setting, people who I still talk to on a daily basis. Thank you for exceeding my expectations of what it meant to be a Falcon.

Every year I was at Glen Brook since I started as a camper when I was nine as a Fox, I always looked up to the Falcons and waited for the day that I could come back into the dining hall after a four-day hiking trip and everyone would cheer for me. A major part of what made this experience what it was were the people we had to lead us on our journeys. Thank you for giving us Emily and Joseph, who were mentors and secondary parents but also like older siblings who we could talk to about anything. They were humble and steady, pushing us to where they knew our limits were and encouraging us to keep going when we thought we could not. Thank you for making it so that when I look back at this summer, all I remember are the incredibly special moments I shared with these nine other people.

I remember the moment when we made it across the wavy lake after sixteen miles of canoeing and landed on the beach. It was the last leg of our trip and everyone cheered until each canoe had pulled onto shore. We hugged each other and spent the night eating ramen and s'mores on the beach under the stars. I remember when we reached the summit of South Twin after what felt like a vertical upward climb. Each person cheered the next person on, not complaining that people were going too slow or taking too long but instead supporting them. When we got to the summit, the view was incredible, and the long-awaited sun-butter and jelly tortillas never tasted so good. I remember the next day when we woke up early and hiked Mt. Guyot to see the sunrise. Huddled together for warmth, we ate burnt oatmeal and watched the sun rise over the White Mountains.

I remember getting back from our 24-hour solos and seeing each other after a day in solitude. We walked back to camp where Joseph and Emily were waiting for us. They had our Falcon pendants, each one with a different symbol to represent our strengths and mark the completion of our Falcon journey. We sat around the table eating pancakes and sharing all of the details of our individual experiences. I felt at home around that table and could live in that moment forever. When Joseph and Emily gave us our pendants, they also read an essay outlining all of the lessons we could take with us into the world. The essay ended by saying "You don't need the mountains to live simply." Sometimes when life gets complicated and overwhelming, I feel like I do, in fact, need the mountains. In these instances, I am able to remind myself that I will come out of it on the other side; that there is a beach on the other side of that lake; that South Twin, though it may seem endless, is really only 0.8 miles at the steepest part and the views at the top are completely worth it; that 24 hours is a long time to be by yourself in the woods, but if I did that, I can do anything.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn things about myself. Thank you for showing me what it meant to wake up even when I did not want to. Thank you for teaching me that the world is bigger than just me and that there are people who rely on me. Thank you for always being my home away from home. Thank you for giving me the Falcon experience.

With love,
🍁 Louella Whitaker



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