

# 2025 CAMP SENECA LAKE IMPACT REPORT





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Dear CSL community,

As we reflect on Summer 2025, we are filled with gratitude and excitement for Camp Seneca Lake's future. This summer was a powerful affirmation of what makes CSL special, a joyful Jewish environment where campers and staff grow, connect, and thrive.

We're thrilled to report another year of strong enrollment and even stronger impact. In just two years, we have grown enrollment by more than 35%. Feedback from campers, parents, and staff shows that CSL continues to deliver a transformational summer experience. Our programming deepened, our Jewish and Israel education evolved in meaningful ways, and camper wellbeing remained central to everything we did.

This summer also tested us in unexpected ways. In April, a microburst, the most destructive windstorm in CSL's recent memory, tore through the camp property, toppling hundreds of trees and damaging several buildings. In the face of this challenge, our community rallied. Alumni, families, staff, and supporters stepped up with their time, expertise, and donations, helping us clear debris, fix damaged spaces, and restore camp to be safe and fully operational before Opening Day. It was a powerful reminder of the resilience of the CSL community and how deeply people believe in CSL's mission.

This report highlights key milestones from the past year, including the launch and early implementation of our Strategic Plan and the first summer of the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation's Project Campfire initiative, which brought even more campers to CSL and helped us take significant steps toward greater financial accessibility.

None of this would be possible without the collective energy of the CSL community. Whether you joined us as a camper, staff member, parent, donor, or leader, your role in CSL's success is deeply valued. Together, we are strengthening our community, one that ensures Camp Seneca Lake remains a home for Jewish connection, identity, and leadership for generations to come.



Marissa Klegman  
Executive Director



Marty Friedman  
Advisory Council Co-Chair



Emily Rittenberg  
Advisory Council Co-Chair



Support CSL!

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# Summer **Highlights**



## We accelerated camper enrollment growth

- 🚣 352 camper session **enrollments**
- 🚣 136 **new campers**, compared to 108 in 2024 and 66 in 2023
- 🚣 **37% increase** in overall camper enrollment over the last 2 years

While enrollment numbers were already on the rise, the trend was accelerated by the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation's transformative [Project Campfire](#) initiative. This initiative made one session at camp tuition-free to families from the Rochester area. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, CSL was able to distribute over \$100,000 of internal financial aid to families from our other communities. This was supported by our scholarship funds at the JCC, as well as the Mike Nozik Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Chance at Camp Fund at the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester.



## We improved our program around key focus areas

- 🚣 We enhanced our **Jewish arts programming** thanks to the generous support of the Sharon Norry Hiddur Mitzvah Fund, and brought famed Israeli artist Hanoach Piven to camp for a series of workshops with campers, with the support of the Foundation for Jewish Camp.
- 🚣 A streamlined and simplified **summer schedule** reduced the number of arrival and departure dates and returned our Senior Camper program to a full summer program.
- 🚣 Campers built skills and confidence through **enhanced Hobby offerings** such as Kitchen Confidential (cooking), Podcast Journalism, Ceramics, Sailing.
- 🚣 Our new **Taste of CSL** program, a one-week option for rising third and fourth graders, allowed 30 first-time campers to experience the best of camp in a highly curated, abbreviated session, that left them excited to become lifelong campers!



# What we're hearing from **our families...**

CSL participates annually in the Camper Satisfaction Index survey which benchmarks our camp against 60+ other Jewish camps nationally. We scored above the national average in nearly every category measured!

**96%** of our families say they are likely to recommend CSL to other families.

**90%** of families are likely or extremely likely to return to CSL.

**97%** of families say the camp environment helped their child grow.

**95%** of families expressed positivity about CSL's programming.

**95%** of families said that CSL helped their child build character.

***"Our family has definitely become a camp family after our two kids attended CSL this past summer. Both kids had the time of their lives, trying all kinds of new things, learning new songs, and creating memories. My kids learned to be responsible, to be good friends, and to be proud of their Judaism. They can't wait for next summer."*** - 2025 CSL parent

***"CSL is where my daughter truly comes alive. Her confidence, independence, and connection to her Jewish identity have flourished there. She'll carry the friendships she's made and the leadership skills she's gained for life. There's no place she'd rather be."*** - 2025 CSL parent

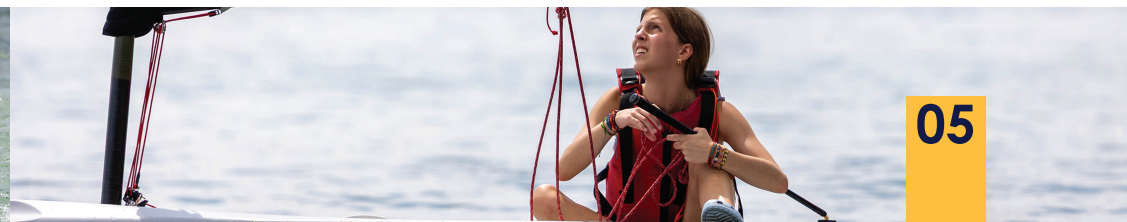
**97%** of staff said that working at camp increased their leadership skills.

**90%** of our staff said that working at camp increased their ability to work as a part of a team.

**92%** of staff said they had opportunities to develop new skills.

***"My favorite part about camp is that no matter what stage of life you're in, growth is inevitable. Whether or not you notice it during the chaos of the summer, you will leave CSL a better version of yourself. I am so grateful that I was in a role this summer in which I witnessed so much growth in so many areas of camp, and even more so in the people I had the opportunity to support."***

**- 2025 CSL Leadership Team Member**





# Jewish Experience and Israel Engagement

CSL continued to center Jewish joy and provide a safe space where it was great to be Jewish—whatever that means or looks like to each member of our community. Shabbat services and Havdalah at our lakefront Fire Circle remained quintessential parts of the CSL experience. A generous gift from the Miller family bolstered our Jewish music program, allowing our songleaders to engage in pre-summer training at Hava Nashira and return with the skills to take CSL's Jewish music to another level. Community partners were integrated into the Jewish life program, with rabbis and educators from many of our local communities engaging with campers throughout the summer. **Take a peak at Jewish life at CSL in 2025!**

**96%** of families said that CSL created an appreciation for the celebration of Shabbat.

**95%** of our families said CSL created an atmosphere where their child was proud to be Jewish.

**94%** of families said that CSL created an inclusive and protective space free from antisemitism.

## WELCOMING OUR ISRAELI CAMPERS AND STAFF

33 Israeli campers joined us at CSL, our largest delegation ever. In addition, we had 17 Israeli staff members, including 3 returning Israeli staff on our Leadership Team. In integrating the Israeli campers and staff into day-to-day life at camp, CSL helped our American campers and staff build real, human connections to Israel. Supported by the JCC Association's Yamim grant, our Israeli staff led Yom Yisrael (Israel Day) in both sessions, with Israel-themed programming, Israeli food at every meal, and Israeli dance parties to end the day. Thanks to the Foundation for Jewish Camp's Teaching Israel at Camp grant, the Israeli staff were guided by a Head of Israel Education, who helped infuse Israeli culture into regular Hobby periods.

**95%** of families said that CSL strengthened their child's relationships with Israelis.

*"We deeply recognize and appreciate the tremendous effort, dedication, and care that go into making this experience possible. Each day truly felt like a dream. [ . . . ] The kindness, patience and generosity you showed us made the whole journey so much easier, and our appreciation for that is immense." - Parents of a 2025 CSL camper from Israel*

*"Being an Israeli staff member at CSL is such an empowering experience. It's an honor to bring Israel to camp and help campers deepen their connection with Israel. It's an incredible feeling to have a home away from home where I can be my absolute self, and that's exactly what CSL is to me. I miss camp every day!" – 2025 CSL Leadership Staff member from Israel*

**91%** of our staff, the majority of whom return to college campuses in the fall, said that working at camp had an overall positive impact on their Jewish identity.





## Arts at CSL

The CSL Arts program reached new heights in 2025. The support of the Sharon Norry Hiddur Mitzvah Fund allowed the hiring of a specialist in Jewish arts from Israel. She joined a team which already featured 4 experienced arts specialists, each with at least 3 years on CSL's staff. Each village created a special Jewish art project, in addition to our existing opportunities to engage in ceramics and other visual arts.

***"The arts program is more than just teaching techniques. It's about giving kids a new language to express their inner world. Every day, we cultivate a space where creativity and fun can grow. Following along their journeys and witnessing the personal growth that comes from it is the most meaningful part of my summers." - Male Mazzoni, 2025 Arts Program Area Leader***

Performing arts also expanded in 2025. More campers performed in Campstock, had the opportunity to lead a song at Shabbat services, and participate in Theater Hobby Group to put on a special play.





## Athletics at CSL

Athletics at CSL benefitted from a stronger emphasis on skill-building, and a highly experienced team, including a credentialed, full-time Physical Education teacher running the program. Campers received helpful and effective instruction in their sports of choice.

*"The Athletics program this past summer was an extremely successful beginning to a new form of programming at CSL. Doing more skills-based instruction led to direct results in camper ability and enjoyment. The bonds created between campers at Athletics will be bonds that can never be broken. As a Physical Education teacher, I can only hope that my curriculum is as successful as CSL's."*

- Noah Block, 2025 CSL Athletics Director

89%

of families recognized the quality of our sports programming, a significant increase from previous years.





# Camper Wellbeing and Safety

The **physical and mental health** of campers is always a top priority at CSL.

*"I had the pleasure of returning this past summer - 22 years after my last summer at camp. Parents, campers and staff were gracious and kind as we worked together to keep kids safe, healthy, and in good spirits. I thought my years of having a transformative summer at CSL were long gone, but I was mistaken. It turns out you can go 'home' again."*

– Member of CSL's 2025 medical team

Em's Place remained the hub of mental health and wellness, including 52 yoga periods, relaxation space for campers or cabins having a tough day, and space for campers and staff to take 65 private telehealth therapy calls. The daily use of the space proved critical to the mental wellbeing of our campers and staff. Em's Place was staffed by Camper Care Director Rhonda Korn, in her 13th summer on CSL's Camper Care Team, supported by a Camper Care Specialist.



**95%** of families said CSL provided a safe, healthy, and secure environment for their child.

Various **security upgrades** were made in the past year, including investment in our communications infrastructure to aid in emergency response. The property was guarded overnight, as we continued to invest in camp's security.

**96%** of parents said CSL provided their child with a sense of safety and belonging.




# Alumni Engagement

**130+** participants in [Family Camp](#).

**70+** alumni attended [Alumni Weekend](#).

 **100%** of participants are likely to recommend Alumni Weekend to a friend.

 **100%** enjoyed the overall experience of Alumni Weekend.

*"Being at camp and experiencing a camp Shabbat was a highlight of my summer. It was so cool to see so many of the traditions I remember from when I was a camper continuing on with our new generations!"*

- 2025 Alumni Weekend attendee

**50+** people contributed to summer 2025 through work at [Mitzvah Day](#).

**90+** alumni joined us for a Community Shabbat.

**200+** alumni engaged in their communities, with local events in Buffalo, Chicago, D.C., New York, and Rochester.




Register to join our alumni database!

## Long-term impact

 **97%** of alumni feel a strong connection to their Jewish identity.

 **96%** of alumni credit CSL with strengthening their ties to the Jewish community.

 **98%** of alumni felt a sense of belonging at CSL.

 **95%** of alumni felt included and valued at CSL.

View the [CSL Alumni Evaluation](#) from June 2025, supported by the Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation, for more key findings on our alumni community.



# Thank you for your support

We thank the following people and organizations for their support in the past camp year (October 2024-September 2025). Thanks to you, CSL was able to address its most immediate and pressing needs while ensuring the magic of our Jewish leadership experiences continues for countless summers ahead. Your contribution played a pivotal role in the successes detailed in this report.

Elaine Alexander	Holly & Aharon Boker	Joan Clar
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Lisa & Daniel Tellem

Third Plateau

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## Get in touch with us!

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Alex Rubin, Assistant Director  
Tony Satryan, Assistant Director of Development  
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## Watch camp in action!

