

January 2010



Welcome to the new Alonim E-Newsletter!

Dear Alonim Community,

According to a recent article in the American Camping Association's newsletter, children need camp more than ever. "A quality camp experience provides to learn powerful lessons in community, character-building, skill development, and healthy living," writes Peg Smith, the ACA's Chief Executive Officer. "Camp promotes community. It creates this great space that shows kids how to live together and care for one another." [\(Click here to read the article in its entirety.\)](#)

A summer at Alonim not only promotes community and nurtures friendships, but it nourishes Jewish souls and creates future leaders. Join the over 300 campers already enrolled and register your children for Summer 2010.

As always, I welcome your feedback and comments. I can be reached on my direct line at 310-440-1244. I want to wish everyone in our extended Alonim family a happy and healthy 2010.

Best,
Dr. Gady Levy
Dean, Whizin Center
for Continuing Education
Vice President, American Jewish University

2010 Dates

- Spring Family Weekend**
March 5-7
- First Session of Camp Alonim**
June 22-July 4
- Mini-Camp**
June 27-July 4
- Second Session**
July 6-July 25
- Third Session**
July 27-August 15

[To register for camp this summer click here.](#)

Gan Alonim begins June 21 and goes until August 13.

The Gan enrollment form will be available soon, although you can [check 2010 rates and dates by clicking here.](#)

Winter Camp '09 — Hoshech v'Laila

By Rami Raff, Associate Director, Camp Alonim

The temperatures may have been cooler but one look at the smiling faces of campers you would have thought it was summer here at Camp Alonim. This year's winter camp session was a smashing success thanks to the marvelous, hard-working and committed counselors and staff that oversaw the excited group of 119 kids. Campers experienced programs dealing with our theme: Hoshech v'Laila, literally darkness and evening, fitting given how early it gets dark at Alonim in the winter. Campers explored the role of darkness in creation as a metaphor for the unknown and observed nature after the sun goes down. This culminated with a thrilling all-camp program where campers worked to solve a series of light related challenges (using glow in the dark balls, Morse code and glow rings among other devices) to recover our "lost" supply of eco-friendly light bulbs. As always, camp concluded with a peaceful Shabbat which brought everyone together and sent them off excited about what summer was going to bring.

Staff Profile

Mark Shpall,
Director, Brandeis-Bardin Campus Adventure Course

staff profile

name: Mark Shpall
title: Director, Brandeis-Bardin Campus Adventure Course
favorite camp food: Enchiladas and fresh guacamole
favorite camp program: Ropes Course (of course) and any program with Gabe

For Mark Shpall, the connection to Alonim runs deep. Generations deep. Mark's parents, Bob and Bev Shpall met at Alonim when they were on staff together. He has aunts and uncles who also met their spouses at Alonim. And he himself met Tammy, his wife, at Alonim - first when they were CIT Advisors together in 1988, although they didn't begin dating until two years later when they were both back on staff.



Mark started coming to camp as a staff kid (Alonim's first day camper) when his parents were the camp doctor and nurse, and he's been here (more or less) every summer since - now with his own family in tow. His love for the outdoors was sparked when he was a camper on a two-day overnight led by Jim Nadler. He's been at camp almost every summer since he was five and wouldn't want to be anywhere else in the world. He speaks about Alonim with such

commitment and dedication, he seems to be like every other camper who spends the whole year counting down the months until June.

When it's not June, July, or August, Mark can be found teaching at The New Community Jewish High School, where he's been working full time since 2003. He teaches Advanced Placement Government and Politics, Introduction to Economics, is the Upper School Dean, and is the assistant coach of the wrestling team. During the summer, Mark and his staff of five can be found during chugim, leading bunk activities, offering their services during free time, working with Gan Alonim, running special staff programs, and creating unique programs for individual bunks.

When asked why he loves what he does so much, Mark talks excitedly about facilitating growth, for individuals as well as for groups. "I get to teach them that even though there are things they think they can't do, they really can." That life lesson plays itself out on the Adventure Course every day. And Mark gets to watch it happen. "Experiential education is an incredibly powerful tool."

Mark's life was truly changed by Alonim. "I've probably spent more time up at camp than any other place in the world," Mark said. "It's absolutely phenomenal. I get paid to be where I love most. Alonim has been the largest influence on my life - as a person and as a family. I can't imagine my life without camp. It's in my DNA."

Open House Dates!

- February 7, 2010
- March 7, 2010
- April 11, 2010
- May 16, 2010

Are you interested in a whole weekend of Israeli dancing?

Come join Erica Goldman, Alonim's Dance Director, at Camp Ramah's Rikkudiah, January 15-17, 2010. If you'd like to join Erica's official Alonim group, please let her know! Contact her at www.ericagoldman.com.

Discover Yourself at BCI

The summer of a lifetime (for anyone ages 18-26)
<http://bci.ajula.edu>

Part-time Recruiter

The Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) is looking for a part-time recruiter.

If you or someone you know is interested, [click here check out the posting.](#)

Alumni Profile

Jonathan (Jonny) Powell (JCIT Advisor '03),
Deputy Speechwriter to the Speaker of the House

alumni profile

name: Mark Shpall
alonim: JCIT Advisor '03
current position: Deputy Speechwriter to the Speaker of the House
favorite camp food: BBQ Beef
favorite camp memory: Song sessions on Friday night

Jonny's career at Alonim began at the age of two when he came to camp as a "staff brat" with his parents, Bruce and Debby Powell. His own life as an Alonim camper began when he was 9 and continued until he was a JCIT Advisor in the summer of 2003.



Jonny graduated from Northwestern University in 2005 with a degree in Political Science and International Studies. He spent 1 year in DC and 1 year in Chicago working on various political campaigns. He moved back to Los Angeles in 2007 to become the Director of Speechwriting for Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the mayor of Los Angeles. Working in the Mayor's office was incredibly rewarding, and Jonny enjoyed the challenge of the fast pace of the office as well as the Mayor's passionate dedication to the city. After

2 1/2 years of working in the Mayor's Communications Office, he was ready for a change. The change he was seeking came in the form of a new position in Washington, DC as the Deputy Speechwriter for Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Jonny and the other speechwriter typically look over Speaker Pelosi's schedule, divide up the speeches to come in the weeks ahead, and get to work. Their goal is to finish 2-3 days before the speech needs to be given so there is time to rewrite and revise. Jonny's typical day involves quite a bit of reading, writing, research, and talking with various policy advisors. Speeches can be written for a variety of events and venues, including speeches on legislation, press conferences, special events, visiting groups, internal events, etc. In order to prepare, Jonny does quite a bit of research and reads a lot. In addition, he says it helps to have seen her speak a number of times so he knows how the speech will be delivered and can hear her voice in his head as he writes.

Jonny credits Alonim for providing his inspiration to pursue politics from the Jewish values he was surrounded by at camp and growing up. "If it hadn't been for the relationships I built at Alonim, or the experiences I had there, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Sports Director position

Camp Alonim is looking for an experienced summer Sports Director. Do you or someone you know have experience in coaching team and individual sports or is a PE teacher? Alonim needs a fun, experienced coach to be in charge of camp's summer sports program. Contact Terry at twunder@ajula.edu for more information.



Alonim 2009 Camper Profiles

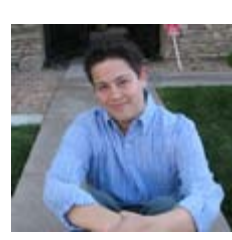
Megan Mone
(12, Moorpark)
Kochavim '09 (2nd session)



Favorite Food: Quesadillas
Favorite activity: Horseback riding!
Favorite daily activity: Israeli dancing
1 word to describe Alonim: Memorable
1 sentence to convince friends to come to Alonim:

"Camp Alonim is the place to go to make life-long friendships and have the best summer ever!"

Nate Diamond
(12, Henderson, Nevada)
Kochavim '09 (2nd session)



Favorite Food: Pita Pizza
Favorite activity: Sports
Favorite daily activity: Israeli Dance
1 word to describe Alonim: Awesome!
1 sentence to convince friends to come to Alonim:

"Once you come to camp you'll never want to leave."

Miriam Pottebaum
(5 1/2, Los Angeles)
Nitzanim '09 (Gan Alonim)



Favorite Food: Ice cream sandwiches
Favorite activity: Sports
Favorite daily activity: Swimming
1 word to describe Alonim: Fun!
1 sentence to convince friends to come to Alonim:

"I think you should go to Gan Alonim because you make friends there."

