

To the Jewish Community that I grew up in,

At Camp Achva, we've always seen Jewish life unfolding in many different circles — synagogue circles, preschool circles, camp circles, youth group circles, school circles, family circles — each meaningful in its own way. But we are starting to understand something deeper by choosing to look at these circles, not as many, but as one. The way my parents did when I was growing up here.

For me, growing up in Northern Virginia, the JCC and my synagogue (Olam Tikvah) were the twin pillars that shaped my childhood -- not because of buildings or programs, but because of the people who filled them. My friends were in both places. The staff who guided us as kids at Camp Achva became our youth group advisors as teenagers. Then they became the adults we worked for at camp and at religious school. And now, luckily, we get to do the same for their children.

That's the thing about this community: the circles may have *felt* separate, but they were never truly apart. They've always brushed up against one another in ways that feel like home, and now, we're choosing to intentionally bring them together.

That's why beginning in Summer 2026, **families who are members of our local synagogues will qualify for Camp Achva's member pricing.**

It's a straightforward change, but it carries a much deeper hope.

Because I know how heavy it can feel to “pay to play” in Jewish life. To hold the responsibility of raising Jewish children while juggling memberships, fees, and the quiet worry of, “*Do we belong here, too?*”

You do.

You always have.

This policy is simply catching up to that truth.

Camp Achva has always been, in the ecosystem of Northern Virginia Jewish life, a kind of vacation home — the place where you exhale, where your kids run free, where friendships are made in under seven minutes, and where Jewish joy shows up in friendship bracelets, color-war energy, water-slide races, and the occasional off-key song yelled at full volume.

And like any good vacation home, it only works because the whole neighborhood makes it possible.

Our synagogues, youth groups, havurahs and spaces to be Jewish nurture community all year long. Achva holds the summer piece of that same story, and families carry those threads between us.

When a child brings a Hebrew-school melody into Friday Ruach...

When families who once crossed paths at a preschool playdate reconnect in the Achva pickup line...

When a synagogue buddy becomes a bunkmate — and then a lifelong friend...

That's the Circle of Connection in motion: the many becoming one, and the one growing stronger because of the many.

We're not creating something new. We are simply honoring something that's always been true.

To our synagogue partners: thank you for the sacred work you do.

To our families: thank you for trusting us with your kids' summers and with the pieces of identity that bloom there.

Together, we're widening the Circle of Connection -- from synagogue to summer and back again.

And if you've never been part of Camp Achva before, I hope this is the year your family steps inside the circle. There's more than enough room.

Yours in camping and community,



Greg Feitel

Director of School Age Services

Pozez JCC of Northern Virginia