NEWSLETTER

THE LINDLEY LEDGER



FALL 2026

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

New Jersey 4-H Camp

L.G. Cook 4-H Youth Center
for Outdoor Education

Summer 2026

Summer 2026 marked Summer #76 at Rutgers New Jersey 4-H Camp. 708 individual campers attended our overnight camp program, for a combined total of 1041 “camper weeks”. The 52 members of summer staff and 40 volunteer counselors adapted admirably to various weather challenges to ensure that neither rain, nor heat, nor storm, nor air quality issues kept the classic 4-H Camp experience from being delivered to the campers

In July’s one-week camp sessions, 4-H Camp’s spirit of creative play was on full display with the themes:

ROBOT TAKEOVER



SPY WEEK



CHAOS WEEK



MOUNT OLYMPUS



Inspired by the first sessions’ theme, “Mr. Roboto” became the reoccurring anthem of 4-H Camp’s tech-free experience for the 2026 summer season.

Summer 2026

BIG Session

During August's Big Session at Overnight Camp, campers spent 18-days building a community here together in the woods. In "Big" Classes, campers created their own communal art showcase, immersed themselves in building skills at the waterfront, developed toward mastery in pottery, and hiked over 50 cumulative miles throughout the region's forest trails (to detail just a few of the many Big Class options.) During our Chaos morning, the appearance of hundreds of pairs of Groucho Marx glasses forced our campers to go incognito until the situation was rectified by covering the counselors in ice cream. 4-H Camp's closing ceremonies of candlelit wish boats, campfires, speeches, songs and celebrations brought out all the bittersweet emotions that are hallmark to the end of a successful summer season.







4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens

July also marked the fourth summer of the 4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens program. 94 individual campers attended the program, many returning multiple sessions for a total of 177 camper weeks. Each session had a different environmental education focus where campers had the opportunity to learn about the flora and fauna at Rutgers Gardens, and how to be better environmental stewards. Campers also participated in teamwork and leadership activities, community building, and simple, zany fun where they built lasting camp memories

SUMMER 2027

Registration for Summer 2027 opens on November 16th!



As we enjoy the tradition and culture of our three-quarters-of-a-century of 4-H Camp history, we also endeavor to follow the 4-H motto by making the best better. For many years now, we have been actively engaged in upgrading and improving our seventy-five-year-old infrastructure to ensure our program will be here to benefit our campers for another seventy-five years (and beyond.) As we work with Rutgers University Institutional Planning and Operations toward renovation and expansion of our central camper bathrooms (and other desired facility improvements), it has become clear that a complete overhaul of 4-H Camp's original septic system will be required. As this work proceeds, 4-H Camp will be operating under a reduced capacity for the 2027 summer season.

For this summer, 4-H Camp will host **110 campers per session (62.5% of previous full capacity.)** To accommodate as many campers within the summer season as possible, we are adding a fifth one-week session to our camping schedule. We will be **limiting campers to attending just one single session** of 4-H Camp for the 2027 season. For campers who enjoy extended time at 4-H Camp, we recommend our BIG Session (August 4th-21st.)

When challenges arrive at 4-H Camp, a primary approach we instill in our campers is to make the best out of whatever situation we happen to be in. Taking these given circumstances, we are excited to redesign our summer program and tailor it to a reduced population, take advantage to form an even more tight-knit community, and create some Camp magic wholly unique to 2027.

THEMES FOR 2027!

- **Session #1: Pirates of Lake Shawanni – Monday, June 28th–Saturday, July 3rd**
- **Session #2: WhoDunnit? – Monday, July 5th– Saturday, July 10th**
- **Session #3: Broken Time Machine – Monday, July 12th– Saturday, July 17th**
- **Session #4: CamPandemonium – Monday, July 19th– Saturday, July 24th**
- **Session #5: MYSTERY BOX – Monday, July 26th– Saturday, July 31st**
- **The BIG Session – Wednesday, August 4th– Saturday, August 21st**

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Well, when you do a multi-calendar-year, multi-summer-celebration you almost want to mark the anniversary of when we all started to celebrate the anniversary.

Yes, Summer 2026 marked the close of our incessant commemorations we set out on to properly acknowledge, investigate and share all that has been created and accomplished in 75 years of summer here at 4-H Camp. Special thanks to the Campfire Council for all their organizing and passionate volunteerism, to alumni throughout the generations who came out of the woodwork, and to our current campers who displayed a magnificent curiosity in this place they call home.

And now we turn our eyes to the next 75 years of summer. Summer 2026 (#76) was a wonderful culmination of what our post-2020 summer camp program had become. All summer long, everywhere you looked, you'd see a community of campers taking care of each other and enjoying playing outside and creating the type of world they'd like to live in. You'd see counselors who grew up here and counselors who never set foot here before giving their all to giving our campers the greatest day possible. You'd see a tech-free space based on simple kindness and an ethos of positivity, a place creating experiences and memories utterly unique and forever connected to the fleeting summer days spent here at 4-H Camp.

As you can read elsewhere in this newsletter, our next step forward will lead us back a bit. Next summer will see us running a condensed program, experimenting with the opportunity to make our Camp community a little smaller and even more intentional.

It is our belief that summer camp is even more vital now than it was ten years ago, and it stands to reason that in another ten more years it will continue to grow even that much more vital still. This period of infrastructure work and investment will pay dividends, and ensure that whatever faces the youth of tomorrow, they'll be able spend their summers reveling in the benefits of a classic 4-H Camp experience.

Or, as the 4-H motto already puts it, we're doing that hard work "to make the best better."

-Ben

COMPLETION OF 75TH



RIGHT NOW AT SUMMER CAMP

Fourth Annual Campership Campaign!



The New Jersey 4-H Camp, with the support of the 4-H Campfire Council alumni group, is pleased to launch its fourth annual Campership Campaign, to raise funds for Summer 2027 and continue to help provide the summer camp experience to kids who might not afford it otherwise.

Last year, for Summer 2026, 4-H Camp gave out over $75,000 in campership support to 83 campers for sessions at overnight camp in Stokes Forest and 4-H Camp at Rutgers Gardens. The funds raised in last year's Campership Campaign went a long way to making these 83 summer camp experiences a reality.

For Summer 2027, a generous matching donor is matching EVERY GIFT in this campaign, dollar for dollar. If we hit our $12,500 goal, it will result in a total of $25,000 in campership support.100% of every donation will go to the 4-H Camp Gift Fund, where it will support 4-H Camp's ability to award youth Camperships to attend Summer 2027 at 4-H Camp.

Please help spread the word. The campaign will run through our Winter Gathering event.



2027 Winter Gathering

Decmber 5th from 2:00PM-6:00PM

Join us for our cold-weather summer reunion, December open house and Camp Family holiday party. You'll get to catch up with some counselors and campers alike, and participate in some wintry crafts and campy activities. As always, this event is free of charge.

Capacity will be limited for Winter Gathering 2027!

INTO THE WOODS WITH WOODROW



A Tour Through Autumn









STAYING IN TOUCH

Submit an entry to Vesper Voices

If you have a camp story to share, pictures from your time at camp, a creative piece, or a question for camp you can submit that here to be included in our Winter issue. Alumni and current camper submissions welcome. Submit here.

Staff Check Ins

If you would be interested in being featured as one of our staff on our staff check-ins sections, please reach out, or fill out this form.

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Photo of the Fall



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

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RUTGERS UNIVERSITY New Jersey 4-H Camp L.G. Cook 4-H Youth Center for Outdoor Education

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