



July 23, 2013

DEAR ECHO HILL FAMILIES AND FRIENDS,

We've just completed a wonderful summer that we believe your children enjoyed and greatly benefited from, and that we and our staff are very proud of.

Our dream, ten years ago when Roz and I began running the camp, was to create a wholesome, caring community where your kids were free to play, learn about themselves and others, come to love the natural world, and develop skills and friendships that would last them a life time. We want to thank you, the wonderful parents, who have entrusted your children with us over these years, and given us the opportunity to live our dream.

Now with a heavy heart we need to let you know that throughout the past year we've been involved in lengthy discussions as well as family business mediation regarding the future of the camp with our business partners, Kinky and Marcie Friedman. Though the camp has been successful in the areas that matter most to us, our business partners do not share our desire to continue the camp. Their viewpoint, combined with the increasing effort that it takes, at our age, to maintain an excellent, small private camp, has led us in the past few weeks to the painful decision to not re-open Echo Hill in 2014.

We are sending this email directly to you, the parents, because we hope you will be the ones to tell your kids, and over time, be able to comfort them about their loss. As we've found, sharing this decision with counselors over the last few days, the sadness we all feel only underscores the reality that nothing lasts forever, not even in the Little Green Valley. As long as there are memories and stories to tell, and camp friends to cry and laugh with, Echo Hill remains alive.

We know this information will come as a shock to you and your children. We expect they may feel heartbroken, and angry because they were not told earlier, didn't have a voice in whether camp continued, and their plans to return as a camper next summer or a counselor in the future will not be realized.

Here are a few suggestions to help in the task of sharing this information with your kids: grieving is a slow process that will take weeks and months not days; why the camp is closing will not make much sense to your kids and the best that you can probably do is to console them, help them enjoy their memories, keep them connected with their camp friends and help them find ways to build on skills and interests they developed at Echo Hill. If you'd like to talk please contact us by email at ehbranch@aol.com. We will stay in touch.

From our friendship circle to yours,

Roger and Roz