



# 2025 IMPACT REPORT

Rooted in Camp. Growing the Jewish Future – Together.





## “WELCOME HOME!”

At Kalsman, this greeting is so much more than a phrase on a doormat: home means warmth; home means soulful; home means *heimish*; home means creativity, fun and belonging.

For 19 summers, Kalsman has been the summer home for Jewish children and young adults from across the Pacific Northwest. Increasingly, we are the year-round home for congregations and Jewish organizations seeking warm, yet elevated hospitality and a space to connect more deeply in pursuit of a shared mission: a strong, proud and inclusive Jewish community.

In the past few years, Kalsman has been recognized as a leader in immersive Jewish education and awarded grants to help us scale-up and increase the impact of programs focused on restorative justice, MESSH (mental, emotional, social, spiritual health) support for campers and professional development for our staff.

### Over the next five years, we are poised to expand our impact:

- to more campers each summer when we expand our camper and adult/family housing capacity
- to more communal organizations who see Kalsman as an extension of their work
- to more families, many of whom will begin their Jewish journeys with us, through meaningful, immersive retreat weekends.

The groundswell of communal support and investment in our work is a testament to how vital Kalsman is in shaping the Jewish communal ecosystem of the Pacific Northwest, now and into the future. **I hope you'll join us to celebrate the first 20 years of Camp Kalsman on November 5, 2026 — save the date!**

In the following pages, our work comes to life through stories, pictures and lives touched, painting a picture of the world as it could be. A world that feels more like home. I'm so proud and grateful for the incredible support and hard work of our year-round team, our Camp Commission, volunteers, summer staff, community partners and generous supporters who make it all possible.

So, when we say, “Welcome home!” we mean YOU belong here, in our creative, soulful, *heimish* Jewish community. And together, we are creating a world that is more kind, more inclusive and more whole.

*R. Ilana Mills*

**Rabbi Ilana Mills**  
Camp Director



# THE KALSMAN IMPACT

## Top 5 Reasons Families Choose Kalsman\*



fun



develop social skills



unplug



self-growth, independence



Jewish learning



## Top 3 Impacts of spending a summer at URJ Camp Kalsman according to camper parents:



made new friends



increased independence



deepened connection to Judaism

\*according to end-of-summer survey

“My camper couldn’t stop listing the fun—wilderness survival, art options, canoeing on Butterfly Lake, Maccabiah! She tried things she couldn’t do anywhere else and connected with nature.”

2025 Summer Camp Parent



“Camp is where I feel at home. I felt trusted and supported, surrounded by people invested in my growth as both a leader and person. I like who I am at camp.”

2025 Summer Staff Member

**93%**

of staff said they are likely to recommend working at Kalsman

## SUMMER BY THE NUMBERS

This summer, our little slice of heaven down Jordan Road was **home to nearly 1,000 souls**, 3 goats, 2 sheep and several families of deer.

This included:

**598**

campers, including 172 first-time campers

**43**

home-grown counselors & specialists

**50**

international staff from 7 countries, including 15 Israelis

**250**

visitors at two Community Shabbatot



“My camper’s experience at Kalsman was extraordinary—each year better than the last. He bonded deeply with his community, played guitar constantly, and discovered the joy of leading music. It was so transformative he’s now prioritizing community in his college search.”

2025 Summer Camp Parent

“Although my daughters have always liked their counselors, this year’s bunk counselors were really special. With time spent in smaller [cabin] groups, they had the chance to form deeper connections with the girls.”

2025 Summer Camp Parent



# SUMMER IMPACT

This summer, we infused each moment at camp with an effervescent combination of our 7 core values: **fun, belonging, leadership, health & wellness, connection, Jewish identity** and **community**. These values were felt everywhere: from structured activities and intentional encounters to casual conversations between campers.

## Building Friendships, Resilience and Trust

At camp, we create an environment where everyone can be their **most authentic self** and foster a space where **growth is celebrated** and **mistakes are expected**.

This summer we continued restorative justice work through our *Trail to Teshuva*, providing a framework for navigating conflict and repairing harm with compassion. One parent reflected that camp was “**able to help [my camper] accept responsibility for her action, give her tools to improve interactions and give her space to grow!**” In a world that is increasingly divided, Camp Kalsman is giving children the tools, language and skills to build bridges of understanding, collaboration, empathy and respect.



94%

of parents said camp is great at fostering relationships between their child and other campers.

(9% increase from 2024 end-of-session survey results)

“The staff at camp that provided additional behavioral support were a game changer for my camper!”

2025 Summer Camp Parent



FUN



BELONGING



LEADERSHIP



HEALTH & WELLNESS



CONNECTION



JEWISH IDENTITY



COMMUNITY

## Supporting the Whole Child

In our final year of the *Yedid Nefesh* grant, provided by the Foundation for Jewish Camp, **we have further expanded the way we provide holistic MESSH (mental, emotional, social and spiritual health) support for our community during the summer**, creating a Wellness Team that included two additional mental health professionals and experienced in-cabin behavioral specialists.



### Jewish Expression: Art and Music at Camp

We were honored this year to host Jacob “Spike” Kraus (song-leading and music), Judy Shupak (mosaics) and Jennifer Levine (murals). The impact of the time campers spent with these artists spans beyond the four beautiful murals and multiple mosaic

installations around camp; it is **the gift of exploring personal and Jewish identity through creations that will last a lifetime.**

## From Camp to Congregation and Back Again

This summer, 30 rabbis, Jewish educators and youth professionals spent time with us at camp, helping to lead *tefilah*, support and mentor staff, create engaging activities and learning opportunities, and fortify the bridges between congregation and camp that create a beautiful cycle of year-round Jewish living. **Kalsman’s deep and long-standing partnerships with URJ congregations are remarkable and unique among Jewish camps in the region.** These faculty members enrich the camp experience exponentially, inspiring campers and staff alike to connect to their own Jewish identities through creation and self-expression.



“After our son became a bar mitzvah, he decided to go to camp for the first time. He returned loving the ritual and music and asked to attend services at our synagogue — in addition to our usual home celebration of Shabbat.”

2025 Summer Camp Parent

97%

of parents said the relationship between their child and their child’s counselor was great.\*

(4pts higher than the national average)

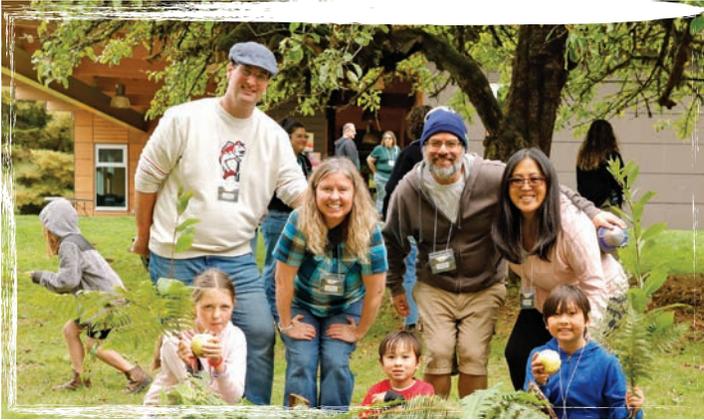
96%

of families report that camp is great at connecting their child to the Jewish people and broader Jewish community.

(4 points higher than the national average)

\*Summation Research, End of Summer Survey





**“Sharing Camp Kalsman with our family means sharing a new part of ourselves with our kids. Seeing them dancing, singing, and playing at Family Camp brought all of us such joy. They have a rich association with their Jewish identities and experienced delight in their Judaism.”**

Lisa Bridge, Camp Alum and Family Camp attendee

# CAMP IS AN EXTENSION OF JEWISH COMMUNAL LIFE

**“We are so grateful for the support of the Kalsman team as we planned our retreat — for their availability in the weeks leading up to the retreat — and their willingness to anticipate our needs while we were at camp!”**

Lexi Jason, Holocaust Center for Humanity, Seattle

Camp Kalsman’s deep partnerships with families, URJ congregations and other Jewish organizations across the PNW have led to increased enrollment in immersive Family Camps and more experiential school-year retreat programming modeled after our summer offerings.

## Pathways into Jewish Life

Over the past few years, enrollment in our family programs has increased 400% and our 2025 Spring Family Camp sold out! This fall, we proudly partnered with The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle and PJ Library for the third year in a row, offering a family overnight experience for families to explore camp together. Families seek out our weekend retreats because they are fun and meaningful—we are dedicated to making it easy for families to spend time away from home!

## Camp as the X-Factor

We are a catalyst for deeper impact for Jewish organizations, providing space, time and hospitality to create immersive, community-strengthening retreat experiences. Reform congregations, trans-denominational communities, Jewish day schools and community institutions see us as so much more than a retreat site; Camp Kalsman is the x-factor!



**“I plan to talk to my congregation about doing a retreat at camp. There are so many incredible camp activities, and great spaces for small groups and large gatherings. And, the kitchen went above and beyond.”**

2025 WRJ Pacific District Retreat Attendee

When an organization holds a retreat or a family plans a life-cycle event at camp, participants and guests come away more deeply connected to each other, and to our shared Jewish history, which further amplifies the long-term impact of such gatherings.

# WITH GRATITUDE



## FOUNDING CHAI SOCIETY MEMBERS

Donors who have contributed \$1,800 + between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2025

- |                                  |                                 |                                   |                                |
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For more information or to join the Chai Society, please contact Rachel Slaton, Director of Advancement, at [rslaton@urj.org](mailto:rslaton@urj.org).

**“Camp taught my three children independence, leadership and so many skills they now use in their adult lives. In today’s world, camp is even more important. Kalsman gives campers and staff a place to learn who they are, to live a Jewish life and to learn new skills. Our family believes strongly in the impact of camp for everyone — of all ages and stages — whether during a family camp, summer camp or a retreats. Camp Kalsman is essential to the Jewish community of the PNW and beyond.”**

Elizabeth Goertzel, Camp Commission Chair

\*Camp Commission Members | ^Capital Campaign

As with any human endeavor, errors sometimes occur. Please accept our sincere apology for any names which have been incorrectly spelled or accidentally omitted.





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