



Dear Camp Natoma Families,

The Sticky S'more is back! But this time, its the Stick-E S'more!

The Amotan, ever the environmentalist, thought we should ditch the paper newsletter to save some trees while bringing back some of the fun for campers!

If you are getting this email, you are either a Camp Natoma alumni, a parent of a camper, or have been involved as a staff member or volunteer. Needless to say, you are connected to camp.

So you know what camp is all about: Fun!

Yes, yes, camp is also a great place to learn valuable life skills, develop resilience, and nurture teamwork and leadership.

But how exactly do we learn these things at camp?

Simple. We make these things fun!

School is back in session, which means kids are learning and growing and developing important skills. But some things you can't teach in a classroom.

During staff training, we educate the counselors on what they will be teaching at camp. These are big picture lessons: how do you live respectfully in community with others, how do you become resilient in the face of difficulties and change, how do you learn to communicate your needs, etc. etc... There is a whole training on this.

But what makes me chuckle at the end of each camp season is that the staff never really remember doing this training!

The reason for this lapse in memory, I believe, is that these lessons are so integrated into camp culture that the staff are teaching the campers these things without even knowing it.

For example, the staff promote campsite pride by asking campers to keep their cots tidy for clean tent awards, but are really reflecting the importance of accountability in one's private space within a larger community. They work together to have fun *saweeeeeeping* the steps to the dining hall during morning kapers (aka chores) which instills a sense of joy when it comes to household chores. They use restorative justice during conflict resolution to model how living together in small groups requires open communication and respect.

These are really, REALLY important life skills that will help these kids down the line as adults to live in community as respectful roommates or partners!

The campers, and even the staff, see some of these camp activities as just goofy fun, but us camp professionals in charge see them as invaluable lessons that can't be taught in a classroom.

We are so lucky to be able to help kids grow in this way all while having silly fun that nourishes our need for joy.

Some of my favorite moments of fun this summer included a return to theme days, which was a big part of my childhood at camp. Campers walked the plank and avoided treacherous mermaid-infested waters during Pirate week. They self-organized a dance circle to show off their moves during Natoma Prom. They worked together to build sleighs made of cardboard and duct tape to race across the pool during the Holidays in July.

It was truly magical to see them having so much fun.

I hope to see you and your families at camp next summer to have even more theme day fun and to celebrate 85 years of Camp Natoma!

In the meantime, please share this [activity page](#) with your camper so they can have fun coloring or searching the woodland to find the Camp Natoma acorn! There is a bonus \$5 Trading Post script for summer 2026 available to those of you who can identify 10 species of animals that inhabit the forest of camp and share it with us by replying to this email!

With Kindness,
Carl

PS - If you haven't registered yet, here is a [link to our registration portal](#)!



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