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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CAMP RAMAH DAROM LAUNCHES NEW TIKVAH PROGRAM  
 FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

ATLANTA, GA (November 13, 2014)—Ramah Darom is excited to announce the launch of a new Tikvah Program for summer 2015 and the addition of Dr. Audra Kaplan to its professional staff. The Tikvah Program will offer a four-week summer experience for children 12 to 17 years old diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Dr. Kaplan, who will direct this new program, is a Clinical Psychologist with extensive experience in Jewish camp and in working with children with disabilities.

Geoffrey Menkowitz, Director of Camp Ramah Darom, says, “We are thrilled to be able to open our doors wider and give more children the opportunity to experience the magic of our camp. The Tikvah program will enhance the entire camp, enabling us to teach our campers by experience what a truly inclusive Jewish community can look like and inspire them to bring that model home to their schools and synagogues.”

Debra Michaud, President of the Board of Directors of Ramah Darom adds, “As we celebrate the 18th anniversary of Ramah Darom, this is a significant milestone for our organization. We are proud to build upon our commitment to being an inclusive community, which began with Camp Yofi and will continue with this exciting program.”

With this new program, Ramah Darom will build upon the expertise gained from 10 years of running its nationally recognized [Camp Yofi](http://ramahdarom.org/programs/camp-yofi)—a 5-day camp for families of children with ASD. Ramah Darom will also expand the reach of the [National Ramah Tikvah Network](http://campramah.org/content/specialneeds.php) of programs in the Ramah overnight and day camps across North America that serve Jewish children, teens, and young adults with a variety of disabilities.

Camp Ramah Darom’s Tikvah Program will be the first program in the Southeast focused on providing a traditional, immersive, Jewish summer camping experience to Jewish teenagers with autism spectrum disorder. The program will be fully integrated into a community that is steeped in Jewish celebration, learning, and ritual.

Tikvah Director, Dr. Kaplan, received her doctorate of psychology from The Illinois School of Professional Psychology in 1996 and has decades of experience in day and residential camp programs as a camper, counselor, educator, director, and consultant. She is the mother of four children and has a private practice in clinical psychology. Since 2010, she has served as the Director of Camp Firefly, a residential summer camp program for children with social disorders.

**Applications**

Applications for Ramah Darom’s Tikvah Program will open on December 1, 2014 at [www.campramahdarom.org](http://www.campramahdarom.org).

**About Ramah Darom**

[Ramah Darom](file:///C:/Users/gmenkowitz/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.Outlook/YCUG8JBD/ramahdarom.org) (Ramah of the South) is a world-class Jewish overnight camp and retreat center in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Ramah Darom’s mission is to offer exceptional experiences in Jewish living and learning to youth, adults, families and communities year-round. Nestled on 122 beautiful acres of Appalachian Valley; crystal-clear mountain brooks feed our picturesque lake, and an inspiring 100-foot waterfall caps the view. The site is further enhanced by more than 10,000 acres of wilderness and hiking trails in the adjacent Chattahoochee National Forest.

[Camp Ramah Darom](http://www.campramahdarom.org) is an award-winning, ACA-accredited program which integrates experiential Jewish living and learning with an atmosphere of friendship and fun. In addition to top-notch sports and arts programs, campers find a caring approach to social, intellectual, and spiritual growth.

**About the Ramah Camping Movement and the National Ramah Tikvah Network**

[Ramah](http://www.campramah.org) is the camping arm of Conservative Judaism. Together, our programs provide Ramah experiences for more than 10,000 children, teens, and young adults annually.

The [Ramah Camping Movement](file:///C:/Dropbox%20(NRC)/Special%20Needs/PR/www.campramah.org) is a pioneer in the field of inclusion for Jewish campers with a wide range of disabilities. Tikvah, Breira B'Ramah, and Camp Yofi comprise the [National Ramah Tikvah Network](http://www.campramah.org/content/specialneeds.php) of programs. Since the first Ramah Tikvah program opened in 1970, a variety of programs for campers with disabilities—overnight and day camp programs, vocational education programs, and family camps—now operate in Ramah camps across North America. Regardless of their geographic location, families are directed to the regional Ramah camp that best suits their child's needs.

The National Ramah Commission of The Jewish Theological Seminary provides oversight, educational planning, and coordination on behalf of the network of Ramah camps throughout North America and Ramah Programs in Israel.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT**:

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