



the RAINBOW CONNECTION

o c t o b e r 2 0 2 6



connect with us!

WINTER ADDRESS

PO Box 70
Lake Bluff, IL 60044
218-556-1805

JASON NELSON

jason@kamaji.com
218-556-1805

SUMMER ADDRESS

32054 Wolf Lake Rd
Cass Lake, MN 56633
218-335-6612

KAT MARTIN NELSON

kat@kamaji.com
218-556-1805

kamaji.com

IN THIS ISSUE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

2-3

KAMAJI'S ASST.
DIRECTOR: LANEY!

4-5

KAMAJI KAPTURED

6

CAMPER CORNER

7-8

PARENTS' BLOCK

9-10

WHO'S ENROLLED?!

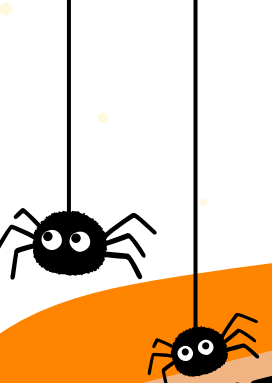
11-12

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

13



ANNOUNCEMENTS



BIG NEWS!!!

KAMAJI KICKSTART!

Do you ever have trouble explaining WHY you love Kamaji so much? Or why camp in northern minnesota is the place for you?!

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS TO COME EXPERIENCE
A WEEKEND OF KAMAJI THEMSELVES!

Families can come learn about Kamaji and girls will have a chance to participate as "day campers"

Share with Friends!! And if they can't make it, they can always just schedule a call with kat so she can try to describe why we love kamaji so much!

 **POPCORN: READY.**
 **VIDEO SCRAPBOOK:
ALMOST READY.**
 **KAMAJI CHICAGO REUNION:
COMING SOON.**

We're working on the Chicago Reunion plans and will share the date as soon as we have it.

Stay tuned, the invite will find its way to your inbox soon!

2027 Staff- Already signed on!

RODOLFO ALVAREZ- 3rd summer
DANNI FARRELL- 4th summer
CASSIE JONES- 2nd summer
RUBY LAST- 3rd summer

Want more Kamaji Swag?!



**YOU CAN ORDER KAMAJI GEAR
ALL YEAR LONG.
VISIT WWW.KAMAJI.COM &
CLICK "KAMAJI GEAR" AT THE
TOP OF THE WEBPAGE**



Content Loading...




Send us your short stories, small world run-ins, pictures, and humble brags to include in future newsletters!

MORE

CHECK IT OUT



ANNOUNCEMENTS

KAMAJI's 2027 Referral Program

You talk about Kamaji all the time...so now, when you tell people about camp AND they enroll for Summer 2027- you will receive your own **LIMITED EDITION Kamaji sweatshirt!**



What to Do:

1. Tell your friends & neighbors & teammates all about Kamaji
2. Encourage them to check out www.kamaji.com and contact Kat (kat@kamaji.com) to set up a Zoom call.
3. Tell your friend to let us know they heard about camp from YOU!
4. Send your friend's contact info & YOUR sweatshirt size to Kat!
5. Wait for a package to arrive with your "thank you" gift from Camp Kamaji!!!
6. Send us a picture of you wearing your new hoodie!

Who Should You tell about Kamaji?!

1. A friend from your sports team, dance class, band, religious school, or the neighborhood.
2. Parents should share with co-workers, paddle tennis team, neighbors, cousins and college friends!

Oh my gosh
I love
Kamaji!

Tell me
More!



HAVE YOU MET LANEY?

An interview with
Kamaji's Assistant Director

NUMBER OF SUMMERS AT KAMAJI:

I just finished my eighth summer!

HOW DID YOU DISCOVER YOU LOVE CAMP?

I am so grateful that my parents packed eight-year-old me up and sent me to camp in Southern Oklahoma. And that was it- I spent the next six summers as a camper before joining the staff for another six! Then I graduated from college, became a teacher, and entered "the grown-up world." I quickly realized two things: teaching was exactly where I was supposed to be during the school year, and that I had absolutely no idea what to do with myself during the summers. More than anything, I missed camp. Cue Kamaji.

In 2018, one of my dearest friends, Lauren Moss, referred me to Kamaji. For the 1st three summers, I worked as a nanny for the Nelson kids, Caleb, Felicity, and Ethan. Those summers were filled with running, biking, and some pretty random adventures, but they also gave me something unexpected: a front-row seat to what made Kamaji so special. Almost every evening, after Kat and Jason came home from camp, we would end up talking for way too long about everything that had happened that day. They talked about the campers by name and celebrated their victories. I was struck not only by how much they loved Kamaji, but by how deeply they cared for every single person who was part of it.

WHAT EXPERIENCES/QUALIFICATIONS DO YOU HAVE THAT QUALIFY YOU FOR THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR?

Professionally, I have a bachelor's degree in Education, I am currently working toward my master's in Instruction and Curriculum Development, and am a certified teacher in the state of Oklahoma. For the past thirteen years, I have been teaching secondary Social Studies in both middle & high schools. My camp experience began at a YMCA camp in Southern Oklahoma, as a camper then as a staff member I started as a cabin counselor before becoming an activity director, planning and leading all-camp games and programs. Later, I served as the waterfront director, and also led campers on multi-week backpacking trips in Colorado. After my 1st 3 summers at Kamaji as Kat and Jason's nanny, I transitioned into the role of Staff Coach and Development Director at Kamaji. Now I train & coach counselors and work together with them to create a special summer for campers!

The combination of my background in education and my many years of camp experience at Kamaji and other camps, gives me a unique perspective. I know how important relationships are, but I also appreciate all of the planning, problem-solving, and teamwork that make those relationships possible. 🐱



HAVE YOU MET LANEY?

An interview with
Kamaji's Assistant Director

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT KAMAJI'S CAMPERS?

Kamaji campers are truly some of the funniest people I have ever met! Whether they are making up new beats and songs in the dining hall, practicing for a lip sync, or getting married to any variety of inanimate objects, they never fail to make me smile. They are silly, creative, loyal, and fierce. I especially love how they approach difficult tasks. They don't shy away from a challenge. They barrel straight toward it, and they bring their friends along with them.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT KAMAJI'S PROGRAM?

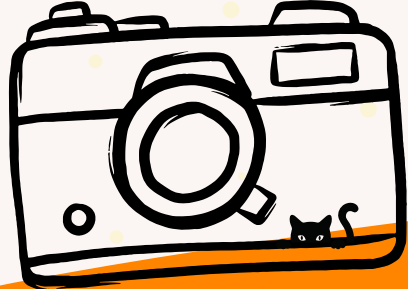
What I love most about our program is that it is about so much more than simply keeping campers busy. Every activity period has a purpose. The girls are constantly building new skills, trying things they might never experience anywhere else, and gaining confidence along the way. I also appreciate that Kamaji gives girls supervised, unstructured time during free periods to simply figure out what they want to do. In a world where every minute is often scheduled, there is something really valuable about giving kids the space to make their own choices.

The cabins are some of my favorite places at camp. They are open, bright, and always full of life. When I first learned that the cabins do not have electricity, I was surprised, but now I think it is one of the best parts of camp. Without the distractions that usually fill our time, the girls naturally turn toward one another. They tell stories, read together by flashlight, and spend time simply talking and laughing. Those moments in the cabins are some of the most meaningful parts of camp, and they remind me that often the simplest experiences are the ones that will stick with them the longest.

IF YOU HAD TO DESCRIBE KAMAJI TO SOMEONE WHO HAD NO PRIOR CAMP EXPERIENCE, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE IT?

What makes Kamaji special is the way it helps girls discover what they are capable of. They spend the summer trying things that are hard, cheering each other on, laughing until their stomachs hurt, and building friendships that are incredibly genuine. Without the distractions of everyday life, they learn to be fully present with each other and with themselves. To me, Kamaji feels like a second home.

Over the past eight summers, it has challenged me, stretched me, and helped me grow into a better leader and a better person. It is where I feel most like myself, and I cannot imagine spending my summers anywhere else.



KAMAJI KAPTURED



ALUMNA, JULIE HESS, JENN HESS (HIMMEL) & JENNA SACHS (KASTNER) WITH THEIR FAMILIES MEET UP TOGETHER WITH CURRENT AND FUTURE KAMAJI CAMPERS IN TOW!

KAT & JASON RAN INTO THE WHOLE STORINO FAMILY WHILE OUT FOR DINNER IN CHICAGO!



HENRI SAIBE & BEA KASTNER, BOTH CURRENT CAMPERS WHO ATTEND DIFFERENT SESSIONS BECAME CAMP FRIENDS AT KAMAJI'S FAMILY CAMP IN 2026 AND REUNITED THIS FALL IN WISCONSIN!

SPOTTED IN THE WILD: KAT & EVIE BASS FOUND EACH OTHER AT A RIB FEST AND LINCOLN OERTEL SAW SPORTY  DURING A WIFFLE BALL TOURNAMENT!

DID YOU KNOW?

You have your very own CampInTouch account! Use this to access things like pictures from last summer and contact info for all your Kamaji friends!

Log in to
CampInTouch
HERE!





Did You Know?!

- The first jack-o'-lanterns weren't pumpkins—they were TURNIPS! The tradition came from Ireland and Britain; pumpkins became popular after the custom made its way to North America.
- Fall leaves aren't "turning" yellow and orange as much as revealing colors that were already there. As chlorophyll—the green pigment—breaks down in fall, other pigments become visible.
- Shorter fall days actually tell animals that winter is coming. Changes in daylight help trigger behaviors like migration, gathering food and preparing for winter.
- Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight. Their nocturnal habits are also one reason they became associated with spooky Halloween imagery.



FALL THIS-OR-THAT

RAPID-FIRE CHOICES:

APPLE CIDER OR HOT CHOCOLATE?
SCARY MOVIE OR FUNNY MOVIE?
PUMPKIN PATCH OR HAUNTED HOUSE?
CANDY CORN: YES OR ABSOLUTELY NOT?
SUMMER FOREVER OR BRING ON THE SNOW?



HOW MANY 

CAN YOU FIND IN THIS NEWSLETTER?

ANSWER ON LAST PAGE!

JOKES WITH JASON

Q: WHY ARE GHOSTS SO BAD
AT TELLING LIES?



A: BECAUSE YOU CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH THEM!

A BUCKET LIST FOR FALL!

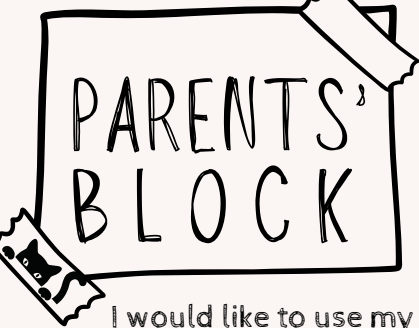
- ☐ MAKE A FRIENDSHIP BRACELET TO GIVE TO SOMEONE ELSE
- ☐ GO OUTSIDE AFTER DARK AND FIND A CONSTELLATION (WITH AN ADULT)
- ☐ MAKE THE WORLD'S BEST S'MORE
- ☐ CALL/FACETIME A CAMP FRIEND INSTEAD OF TEXTING HER
- ☐ TAKE A HIKE SOMEWHERE YOU'VE NEVER BEEN
- ☐ TEACH SOMEONE AT HOME A CAMP SONG
- ☐ DO SOMETHING OUTSIDE EVEN THOUGH IT'S COLD
- ☐ WRITE A LETTER TO SOMEONE FROM CAMP OR A FAMILY MEMBER WHO LIVES FAR AWAY
- ☐ HAVE A DANCE PARTY- INVITE YOUR FAMILY TO JOIN!
- ☐ WATCH "PARENT TRAP" WITH YOUR FAMILY



TAKE A PICTURE OF YOURSELF DOING A BUCKET LIST ITEM AND SEND TO KAT@KAMAJI.COM !

always a good day to dress up at camp!





I've only been a parent for 11 years. But I have been working alongside, with and for children since 2001. It is the 25 years of camp, the 11 years of being a mom and the fact that my own self-published monthly newsletter is sent out to hundreds of parents that I am now referring to myself as an "Expert". And I would encourage you to refer to me similarly.

I would like to use my status as a (Capital "e") Expert to share my thoughts about parenting, about kids, about camp, about community and maybe I'll insert a funny anecdote or two for you. But unlike other real parenting experts and legitimately trained psychologists, I am here simply to share the things I know from my own personal experiences and hopefully, frankly, to validate your own parenting decisions. I reserve the right to make glaring generalizations, to misquote statistics and to deny having said something you might find controversial, despite it being in print. And, unlike the algorithm on my Instagram feed, I will never, ever, make you feel guilty about what you're not doing or what you should be doing to raise happy children. With that, I proceed with my KAT talk (like TED, but so not):



One of my kids came home the other day and showed me a rock they had painted.

"What do you think of my rock?"

"It's nice," I said. "Good work."

"I KNEW IT!" they yelled. "I knew parents just say everything is good, even when it's not. I didn't even try to make that a good one."

Yeesh.

Now, they were right. The rock was totally unimpressive. But in my defense, was I supposed to say that?! ("You know what is awesome? NOT that rock!") I'm not sure that would have gone over particularly well either.

So now what?

Kids can sniff out authenticity. And I think, ultimately, that's what they're looking for. Of course kids need encouragement. But maybe encouragement doesn't always have to sound like praise. Sometimes the most encouraging thing we can do is simply show them that we're paying attention. I see this all the time at camp.

When we are teaching a new waterskier, the goal is typically to, y' know, actually get up on the skis. But the reality, at least at first, is usually falling down. A lot. So if a camper is struggling to get her balance, we aren't shouting "GOOD JOB!" every time she face-plants into the lake. We're saying, "Lean back. Put your weight on your heels. Try again."



And guess what? She isn't upset that we didn't tell her she was amazing. What she hears is: I'm watching. You're getting closer. I think you can do this.

The same thing happens when a camper is shooting at archery and every arrow lands on the ground in front of the target. We don't say, "Wow, that was impressive!" We say, "Let's raise the bow a little and see if that gets you closer."

It's honest. It's useful. And, maybe most importantly, it lets her know that someone is actually paying attention.

As parents, and really, as adults, I think sometimes we confuse broad compliments with support. When what our kids may really want from us is something much simpler: sincerity. They want to know that we see them.

As a mom of three, I have been in the audience for many a painful elementary school sporting event. We all know the ones...the kids are in one giant scrum chasing the ball, no one appears entirely sure which direction they're going, and we're all cheering anyway. It is EASY when they come off the field to say, "Great game!"

And maybe it was!

But lately I've been trying to summon my camp director self and resist the automatic response. Instead, I'll say, "That was fun to watch. What was your favorite part?" Or I'll point out something I actually noticed: "You know what I thought was great? When you went after that rebound." Or, "I saw you use the backboard on that shot, that's what you said you were going to try to do."

It's a small difference, but I think it matters. I'm not just telling them they did a good job. I'm telling them I was watching.

And maybe that's what my kid was really asking about the rock.

Not, "Is this a good rock?"

But, "Are you actually looking?"

Parenting is weird. It's hard. And I try not to overthink my every move. "Try" being the operative word.

So I am certainly not suggesting that any of us need one more parenting strategy to remember. Maybe it's actually the opposite. Less searching for exactly the right encouraging thing to say. Less feeling like we need to convince our kids that everything they do is wonderful.

More paying attention. More being specific. More being sincere.

Because I don't think my kid really needed me to tell them the rock was good.

They just wanted to know whether I had actually looked at it. Message received.



2027 CAMPER ENROLLMENT!

1st SESSION

NAME	Grade	Hometown
EVERY	7TH	FRANKLIN TN
EVY	2ND	FRANKLIN TN
MARGAUX	7TH	FOREST
CAIT	9TH	ENGLEWOOD CO
ZAHARA	6TH	SAINT LOUIS MO
ZAYLA	2ND	SAINT LOUIS MO
ADDIE	8TH	EL CAJON CA
OLIVIA	4TH	CHICAGO IL
LIA	9TH	CHEVY CHASE MD
ELODIE	7TH	BANNOCKBURN IL
JOSIE	6TH	BANNOCKBURN IL
BRYNN	7TH	CHICAGO IL
MARGARET	4TH	LAKE BLUFF IL
LAILAH	4TH	HUMBLE TX
ALICE	4TH	INDIANAPOLIS IN
NOA	8TH	CHICAGO IL
BEA	6TH	BEMIDJI MN
LETTY	8TH	BEMIDJI MN
ELLIE	8TH	CHICAGO IL
JULIA	6TH	CHICAGO IL
FLO	9TH	WASHINGTON DC
BROOKE	2ND	CHICAGO IL
EVA	4TH	CHICAGO IL
MOLLY	6TH	STEAMBOAT SPRINGS CO
ALESSIA	3RD	LIBERTYVILLE IL
LJ	5TH	FOX POINT WI
AUDREY	9TH	DECATUR GA
MARGOT	6TH	DECATUR GA
JOSLYN	6TH	LAKE BLUFF IL
EMMA	8TH	SPRINGFIELD VA
JO	8TH	DES MOINES IA
JUJU	7TH	LAKE BLUFF IL
JULIA	8TH	TULSA OK
SOPHIE	1ST	DENVER CO
RANDI	2ND	SAINT LOUIS MO
FERRIS	5TH	STEAMBOAT SPRINGS CO
KALLIE	5TH	GALENA OH
MARGARET	4TH	OAK PARK IL
BROOKE	9TH	ALBUQUERQUE NM
GENEVIEVE	5TH	CHICAGO IL
LORELEI	8TH	CHICAGO IL

ENROLL
HERE!!!

8 WEEKERS

FRANCES
BADROL
2nd
Minneapolis,
MN

CELESTE
BELMONTI
6th
Chicago, IL

MARA
BERNSTEIN
3rd
St. Louis, MO

KALEESI
GREENE
7th
Minnetrista, MN

LILLY
GREENE
5th
Minnetrista, MN

MADDIE
HERNANDEZ
9th
Northbrook,
IL

EVE
JACKSON
9th
Kansas City,
MO

MILLIE
JACKSON
9th
Kansas City,
MO

SERENA
MEYERS-BAER
5th
Brooklyn, NY

FELICITY
NELSON
3rd
Lake Bluff,
IL

IVY
SWARTZ
9th
Chicago, IL

*NEW TO
CAMP
KAMAJI
FOR
SUMMER
2027!



2027 CAMPER ENROLLMENT!

2nd SESSION

NAME		Grade	Hometown
LOUISE	ANDERSON	5TH	LAKE FOREST IL
MATILDA	ASARCH	7TH	DENVER CO
OLIVE	BERRA	5TH	SAINT LOUIS MO
ELIANA	BROWN	9TH	SHAKER HEIGHTS OH
DYLAN	DITTO	7TH	CHICAGO IL
BRIDEY	EBERHART	6TH	ST. PAUL MN
BLAKE	ELDRIDGE	7TH	HIGHLAND PARK IL
CHLOE	FLEISCHER	5TH	CHEVY CHASE MD
ORLY	GARFIELD	6TH	NEW YORK NY
LILY	GENSER	7TH	HIGHLAND PARK IL
MADELINE	HANNES	5TH	LAKE FOREST IL
ABIGAIL	HART 🌈	3RD	TOWSON MD
OLIVIA	KANSUPADA	5TH	CHICAGO IL
EVELYN	KRAS	6TH	KENILWORTH IL
CLAIRE	LAUFER 🌈	4TH	DEERFIELD IL
VIVIENNE	LAUFER	8TH	DEERFIELD IL
AKARI	LEMA	9TH	TOKYO MINATO-KU
HAZEL	LIMBERT	4TH	BERKELEY CA
WILLA	LIMBERT	8TH	BERKELEY CA
EVE	MASON	8TH	DEERFIELD IL
ELLA	MENDELSON	3RD	MADISON CT
GRACIE	MERVIS	7TH	ARLINGTON VA
KATE	MERVIS	5TH	ARLINGTON VA
ABBY	MILLINGTON	8TH	SKOKIE IL
EVA	MORAN	5TH	MIAMI FL
EMERY	NEISEWANDER	9TH	WINNETKA IL
OLIVIA	NEISEWANDER	7TH	WINNETKA IL
MADDIE	PAINE	6TH	KENILWORTH IL
ELLIOTT	REDBORG	4TH	CHEHALIS WA



NAME		Grade	Hometown
SCARLETT	RISSMAN	7TH	HIGHLAND PARK IL
VIOLET	RISSMAN	8TH	BERKELEY CA
EVIE	ROGALA	4TH	BIG SKY MT
OLIVIA	RUBENSTEIN	7TH	GLENCOE IL
HENRI	SAIPE	5TH	ST. LOUIS MO
AVA	SALAZAR 🌈	3RD	LEAWOOD KS
SERENITY	SANCHEZ	8TH	DEERFIELD IL
BROOKE	SCHIEBER	7TH	HINSDALE IL
ROSE	SCHIEBER	4TH	HINSDALE IL
EILEEN	SCHIMPF	4TH	PARK RIDGE IL
WILDER	SEVERN-HARDING	5TH	LEES SUMMIT MO
MARY ELIZABETH	STEWART	9TH	AUSTIN TX
JULIET	TRUEGER	8TH	CHICAGO IL
ELLIE	VOLLER	7TH	SAN DIEGO CA
LEXI	YOUNG	9TH	DEERFIELD IL



*NEW TO CAMP KAMAJI FOR
SUMMER 2027!

HOW MANY CATS DID YOU FIND?

ANSWER 18!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

OCTOBER

STAFF

MADDY	GRANT	4
MEG	THOMAS	11
NAI	BENITEZ YZA	12
OLIVIA	BRADY	16
AOIFE	MCGOVERN	23
DANNI	FARRELL	25
ATTY	SHERWOOD	27
LAURA	SCHNAUER	28
LANEY	MAGUIRE	29

CAMPERS

JULIA	BIZHKO	6
GRACIE	MERVIS	12
AVERY	LIPSCHULTZ	14
ROSIE	RISSMAN	14
GISELLE	FONG	19
EVE	JACKSON	19
MILLIE	JACKSON	19
SYLVIA	RONTAL	19
SOPHIA	STORINO	19
MATILDA	ASARCH	22
SERENA	MEYERS-BAER	22
ELLA	TADESSE	22
ADDIE	CRONK-GEBBIA	25
ERIN	KING	25
ELLA	RUBENSTEIN	26
ZOEY	HUMPHREY	28
GRACE	CLINTON	29
EILEEN	SCHRIMPF	29
VIVIAN	VANDERSLUIS	30



WISH YOUR PALS A HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
 Log in to CAMPINTOUCH For
 CONTACT INFORMATION! :)

