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Spring
Break &
Summer
Camps



Friendly Pines Camp Turns 80!

By Lila Baltman

Founded in 1941 by Bud and Isabelle Brown and accredited through the American Camp Association, Friendly Pines Camp is now the longest-running, family-owned summer camp in Arizona.



Arizona's Longest-Running, Family-Owned Sleepaway Camp Celebrates 80 Years This Summer

In just a few short months, hundreds of excited children from across Arizona will hopefully get to do what they were not able to do last summer because of cruel Covid-19. »



They will pack up sleeping bags, pillows, flashlights, and duffel bags filled with their names labeled on everything, give mom and dad a hug goodbye, and then happily board a bus that will take them up to Friendly Pines Camp in Prescott. Located in the cool pines of the beautiful Bradshaw Mountains, Friendly Pines Camp has become a favorite sleepaway camp tradition for thousands of Arizona families.

"We're now seeing a fourth generation of campers," says Kevin Nissen, the long-time Co-Director who has worked full-time with the camp for 30 years. "Many of our former campers, who are now the parents and even grandparents of current campers, tell us that they love the fact that we're still teaching the same, classic camp songs and square dances, still cooking Dutch oven biscuits over a campfire, and offering many of the same outdoor sports, activities, and camp traditions that they remember doing."

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The founders' great-granddaughter, Megan May, is now the camp's other Co-Director.

Designed for ages 6 through 14, this co-ed sleepaway camp offers more than 30 traditional camp activities: Horseback riding, swimming, waterskiing, ball sports, rock climbing, performing arts, fine arts, pet care, fencing, hiking, canoeing, kayaking, dancing, sewing, and more. With so many different sports and activities to choose from, the words "I'm bored" are never uttered among the friendly pines.

According to Nissen, "Sleepaway camp is the ideal training ground for developing resilience, or grit. At sleepaway camp, boys and girls are encouraged to try new things like riding a horse, or waterskiing, or scale the climbing wall...Camp is also a place

where children can discover their own inner strength. They learn that maybe - for the first time - they can make their own way in the world. And isn't that what we really want our kids to know?"

Being "unplugged" and away from so much screen time is another big reason why parents today choose to send their children to Friendly Pines for a couple of weeks every summer. Nissen says that he hears from more parents every year that they simply want their children to enjoy socializing and playing with other kids face-to-face, not on social media, and they want their kids to enjoy being outside in nature. Every afternoon during "Siesta" kids can be found reading and relaxing in the hammocks that swing between the trees.

This summer, Friendly Pines is scheduled to operate from May 29 through July 24. There are 1-week, 2-week, 4-week, and 6-week sessions available. All the new Covid-19 safety

protocols that the camp plans to implement this summer are available to read on the camp's website.

"We will continue to communicate with the state and county health departments and maintain our high level of communication with our camp families regarding changes in status for Summer 2021," says Nissen. "We are currently enrolling for this summer and all families have until May 1 to cancel without any penalty, less a \$100 administration fee."

Parents should also know that while many of the camp's activities and traditions have remained the same over 80 years, all the main buildings and cabins have been remodeled and upgraded. Each cabin now comes equipped with its own bathroom



and shower. Plus, while many of the same classic camp foods continue to be served, the kitchen staff today is very willing and able to accommodate any child who is vegan, gluten-free, and lactose-intolerant.

"What we really try to offer kids - in addition to lots of new experiences and learning - is just a great deal of fun," adds Nissen. "Unlike a school setting, summer camp is primarily designed to be fun. In fact, most former campers will recall their time at camp as being the most singularly fun time of their lives."

After so many stressful, Zoom-filled, distance-learning school days our kids have endured this year, the summertime fun of sleepaway camp can't get here fast enough. ■

Save the Dates:



March 28: Friendly Pines will host a Facebook Live 'Information Night' from 7 to 8:30 pm
May 22: FREE Open House from 11 am to 2 pm Families are invited to visit in person for camp tours, wagon rides, toasting marshmallows, zip line rides, drawings for prizes, and a special 80th birthday celebration.
For more information: (928) 445-2128 or visit www.friendlypines.com

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