

MAIL CALL

SKYLAND'S INK-AND-PAPER ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

Girls Inspiring Girls

At a Skyland get-together in Florida, a 14-year-old camper named Emma gleefully shared a new achievement: she was the only high school freshman cast in her school musical.

"As a freshman!" She beamed with pride. "I attend an arts school, where everyone is super talented. Lots of freshmen auditioned, and I was so nervous since it was only the first week of high school, but I knew I could totally rock it if I put my mind to it and then it wouldn't matter that I was the youngest cast member among mostly juniors and seniors."

"I mean, if I can ride a horse—" (Emma had avoided the riding ring at Skyland for years, until the previous summer.) "—I can do anything! And I had the best experience with the older cast."

Skyland's mission - **to inspire girls to be curious, creative, confident and connected to each other, and to the world** - guides our work to make sure that session after session, year after year, our campers leave us as more vibrant versions of themselves. And we believe that a big part of what brings out that confidence is that Skyland is *only for girls*.

Psychological research shows that girls in all-girls environments build a stronger sense of self than in co-ed environments. They are less self-conscious, more confident and more likely to take healthy risks - like trying new activities, building new skills, and making new friends. *(Continued on Pg. 4)*

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Save the date!
Skyland's Centennial Celebration
 August 4-6, 2017

"It is up to us to live up to the legacy that was left for us, and to leave a legacy that is worthy of our children and future generations." - Christine Gregoire



Upcoming Events

Skyland offers a variety of programs (for kids and adults!) beyond traditional summer camp. We hope we'll see you at one of these events soon! Find more information and registration at SkylandCamp.com.

Alumnae Work Weekend

May 27-30, 2016

Pitch in to get Skyland Hill ready for summer and reconnect with fellow alumnae. Alumnae and guests (21+) are welcome!



Mother-Daughter Weekend

June 10-12, 2016

A perfect mix of mother-daughter bonding and trying out camp, this weekend is for daughters rising K-6th grades.



Luxe Life Camp

September 16-18, 2016

This design-themed retreat, in partnership with Lisa Sherry Interieurs, brings chic details and luxuries to the camp experience.



What We're Reading: *The Curse of the Good Girl*

We've added Rachel Simmons' *Curse of the Good Girl: Raising Authentic Girls with Courage and Confidence* to our repertoire of resources for Skyland staff. We recommend it to anyone who works with girls, formally or informally, and anyone who wants to better support girls in discovering and living out life as the best versions of their selves.

Simmons explains the modern day pressure to be a "good girl" – to be unerringly nice, polite, modest, and selfless – a paradigm that she argues is too narrowly defined to be achievable. As a result, this pressure can inhibit girls' abilities to act authentically, understand a full range of emotions, navigate conflict, and assert their needs.

The second half of this book is what really hooked us. In it, Simmons provides explanations and exercises to help girls gain a more wholesome understanding of what it means to be a girl. These chapters focus on building emotional intelligence, facing criticism, speaking up for yourself and checking assumptions. They even include a guide for adult women about what we can do to set better examples for girls. The book tops our list because it provides lessons about social skills and relationships that can benefit us all, girl or not.

THE CURSE OF THE GOOD GIRL

Raising Authentic Girls with
Courage and Confidence

RACHEL SIMMONS
Author of *Odd Girl Out*



Skyland Spotlight: Lisa Sheldon

Lisa Sheldon is a major player in Skyland's stellar musical theater team – for the past ten summers she has taught dance, managed the costume attic, and choreographed stage productions for all of the campers on the hill. She is also the mom of two long-term campers at Skyland. She recently shared a little about her life, her passion for dance, and the importance of empowering young women to believe in themselves.

"I started dance lessons when I was three, after I got spinal meningitis, survived, and the doctors suggested that exercise would help me recover. The more I danced, the more I found I loved it and the more time I spent doing it." Over time, Lisa learned ballet, tap, jazz, Polynesian, Hawaiian, Tahitian, Samoan, and Maori dance techniques and traditions. She didn't just practice them in the studio. "In 9th grade, I missed a month of school travelling around the country, performing Polynesian dances that told the stories of their heritage."

Lisa remembers her strong connection to her teacher, and how empowering it was. "My dance teacher growing up, Vicky, was a really strong woman. I've been so lucky to have so many strong women in my life. Looking back, she was one of many women who gave me the opportunity to find the power of my own voice. She believed in me, both as an encouraging teacher on the dance floor, and as an employer." She gave Lisa the opportunity to build her responsibility and teaching skills at a young age.

"On Saturdays, when I was 13, Vicky couldn't be at the studio, so she would give me the keys and have me open it up for students. I would teach three or four classes, close up the studio, then ride my bike home. She trusted me with her whole business. Those experiences gave me a good foundation to feel empowered that I could do anything I set my mind to. And so I did. Vicky empowered me to run a dance studio for one day a week, so I did."

Lisa went on to teach tap, jazz, and ballet for many more years. She also trained new instructors, planned yearly recitals for hundreds of students, and managed music for productions.



Lisa and her daughters, Emma & Melanie, home in Michigan

Lisa chose dance as her outlet for creativity and leadership, and she is hopeful that every girl finds her own passion. "I believe everyone can be empowered if they meet people who believe in them. Sometimes all that we need in order to be brave is for someone to tell us it's okay to be who we are. I want to help as many young people find the power of their voices as possible. I want to help girls and young women see that their own self is valuable and special simply because they are who they are."

Lisa says she keeps coming back to Skyland because it is a place where she knows young women grow and find confidence. "At Skyland, girls can find that magic space for connection and creativity and curiosity -- all of those things help us understand ourselves. And as we understand ourselves, we feel more courageous to do what we love, to truly be ourselves and allow other people to be themselves."

What a gift Lisa's teaching has been to so many campers and counselors over the years. Thank you, Lisa, for sharing your voice and investing your talents in Skyland.

Girls Inspiring Girls



Emma sits with Big House campers Stephanie, Eden, and Charlotte before watching fireworks on the 4th of July.

Emma's story is about the way campers encourage each other and find the confidence that they carry all year 'round. She was never one to shy away from a challenge, but horses made her hesitate. She tried riding when she first arrived to Skyland at age 8, but never really enjoyed it.

"I'm not *afraid* of horses," she told her cabin counselor at the beginning of the summer, "but it's just not something I grew up doing, and now it seems too late to start."

Before she could even finish her sentence one of her cabin mates, a bold 15-year-old riding team captain, jumped in. "First of all, you're never too old to start. It's not like the horses are going to ask for your birth certificate. Second, you just have to find the horse that you get along with the best. The counselors can totally help. Third, are you afraid that we'll laugh at you? We would be screaming with joy for you if it wouldn't spook the horses!"

The rest of Emma's cabin mates nodded in enthusiastic agreement, and it became a collective cabin mission that this summer would be "the summer Emma rides." For the next week, the cabin strategized about how to get the riding staff in on the effort and consulted with the head counselor about logistics.

When the big day arrived, the head riding counselor radioed to the other counselors to ask permission for Emma to arrive late to her next activity. "Riding to archery, I have camper Emma here who is about to ride a horse after many years out of the saddle. May she be excused?"

There was a long pause before the archery counselor replied. Emma's cabin-mates huddled around the walkie-talkie, waiting, basically holding their breaths, for the reply.

"Archery to riding..." Static filled the radio waves as the archery counselor extended the pause, for dramatic effect. One camper squealed with nerves.

"...I fully support that decision." The whole group erupted in cheers, which resounded all over camp through every counselor's radio (and didn't spook the horses).

After the event, Emma was met with high fives and curious questions from campers and staff alike. A small crowd gathered around her in the library as she shared about her experience with fizzy excitement. The Big House girls listened with bright eyes. Supper buzzed with an air of triumph.

It was a big day for Emma, who credits the feat to the support of her cabin mates. Being surrounded by encouraging girls helped her to overcome the insecurity that held her back from taking on that new challenge - and it gave her the courage to dance and sing on the big high school stage. Now a "seasoned stage veteran," Emma's confidence is in an inspiration to everyone on Skyland Hill.



Emma posts in the horse show later that summer.

Director's Corner

This year the American Camp Association's national conference was a jam-packed week of sessions, many of which focused on leadership, youth development and personal growth. While there were the expected seminars on training, marketing and operations, the biggest focus was on what camps do so well: change the world, one camper at a time.

Employers and college admissions counselors nationwide are looking for people who are creative, flexible, and adaptable. Successful people today need to have the ability to use their imaginations as they think critically and work together with teams to solve problems. These are skills that are strengthened in everything we do at camp.

In an era of testing and reduced funding for programs that support creativity and teamwork, Skyland plays an important role in providing young women opportunities to cultivate skills for success. More now than ever, these skills are essential to the development of our youth.

I love my job because through Skyland we get to influence so many girls and young women every year, from our littlest in the Big House to our head counselor. With each summer we enrich the community that is the Skyland network of empowered women. Still, I think we can do more.

Every year there are families who have to make the choice not to send their daughter to Skyland because of a harsh reality: camp is a major financial commitment. The good news, though, is that we have a system to bridge these gaps for families who need it.

Help us invest in more girls by making a donation to the Campership Fund. With your help, we can reach more girls that will grow into successful women. Any donation is an investment in the bright future of our world.



- Sherry Brown, Director



We are so grateful for these recent donors to the Skyland Camp for Girls Campership Fund. Your generous gifts have made a world of difference in the lives of the young women you've helped send to Skyland.

Anonymous
Sue Bailey
Cameron Bertron
William and Annette Boling
Sari Brown
Megan and Tracey Burnette
Arthur and Marjorie Canaday
Lindsay Canaday
Katie Chase and Family

Susan Davis
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Ann and Ed Rosen
Isabella Smythe
Susan Threlkel
Kimberly Whicker

To donate or learn more about
The Skyland Camp for Girls Campership Fund,
please visit SkylandCamp.com/donate

The Best Valentines

There's a magical time at camp that all Skyland girls know and love. After all the bags are unpacked and the new names are learned, everyone settles in – and they hit their strides. Giggles are frequent. Spontaneous dance parties are likely. Costumes become regular clothing

Campers get back into sync with the cadence of their favorite horse, or finally hit that bullseye in archery; they hit all the right moves in musical theater, sing songs on Sunday night, and resist bedtime just a little longer because the fun can't be over yet.

This special feeling has long been known as “the Spirit of Skyland.”

When campers feel the Spirit of Skyland, they are confident to truly be who they are. They can be silly and not fear judgment. They can be curious and brave enough to trying new things – they might discover a new art form or take up a new hobby. They could swim in a waterfall, sign up for the tennis tournament, or choreograph a dance for the talent show and perform it for the entire camp.

No matter what they choose to do, campers are surrounded by supportive friends who are also in that confident zone. And for that time, until long after the last camper leaves, Skyland Hill glows.

Some years ago, we began a new tradition on Skyland Hill. When this feeling is at its most powerful, each camper captures her Skyland spirit in a letter to her future self.

In this letter, campers write about the lessons they're learning at camp. They reflect on how they feel, share goals they're working toward and achievements they've made, and offer advice that they want to hold on to once they leave camp. They address the envelopes to their winter homes and maybe seal them with a kiss.

Some years ago, Skyland made an agreement with Cupid to pick the letters up at camp for safekeeping until the week of Valentine's Day, when she delivers them to each camper's mailbox.



Camper Sarah writes letters during Rest Hour.

Life during the school year can be stressful and each year offers new challenges. As students in school, campers face deadlines, standardized tests, and peer pressures that simply don't exist at camp. When the sun goes down earlier (and there's still homework to finish), it can be tough to stay connected to the Spirit of Skyland. By the time Valentine's Day rolls around, the glow of a Skyland summer can feel pretty dim.

Then, the camper receives an (almost) surprise from Skyland! A letter from herself, written when she was ablaze with the Spirit of Skyland, reminds her about all that she is capable of and shares wise words from her Skyland self.

In an era of instant messages and fleeting SnapChats, a handwritten letter on real paper is a special treat. Campers often find that the letter is exactly what they needed, and sometimes the letters include wisdom that they forgot they had.

The letter does more than brighten a winter day. It reminds her, in her own words, that she is always the vibrant person who wrote the letter. She may have felt that glow for the first time in on Skyland Hill, but once a girl ignites the Spirit of Skyland, it never truly goes out. It is the best Valentine a girl could get.

Lessons Learned on Skyland Hill

While some of the lessons that campers learn at camp are clear – how to shoot a bow and arrow or how to ride a horse – often the most important lessons we learn are not as obvious. Here's what Skyland alumnae had to say when we asked about the most important lessons they learned on Skyland Hill over the years.

"To be a kind, loving and giving person. To be grateful for nature and to work toward achieving goals."
– Anna Hugli Knowles ('72-'84)

"How to get along with others. And that girls can do anything." – Elizabeth Cowart ('79-'83)

"The importance of teamwork, good sportsmanship and friendship. Skyland helped define the woman I am today." – Lisa Robinson Alessandro ('81-'84)

"The importance of showing kindness...to others and to myself." – Karen Holifield Barker ('84-'87)

"I knew this already, but my belief was strengthened that friendship is one of the most important relationships you can have." – Lil Eubanks ('84-'02)

"How to be a leader. And that being a woman doesn't mean that you can't be brave, capable, and intelligent." – Kat Grilli ('97-'04)

"At Skyland, we learn not only to better ourselves to our fullest potential, but we also learn to love and embrace every aspect of our own personalities. We learn to be independent, but we also learn the value of true friendship. We learn how to expand our comfort zones. We also learn how to be proud of ourselves and of our convictions." – Emma Krulick ('02-'15)

Got Memories?

Share your own memories, updates, and lessons learned when you update your alumnae record.
Update online at SkylandCamp.com/alumnae

Alumnae Updates



Skyland's Kay Anderson with Skyland parents at an October Florida Forum event in Jacksonville.

Annette King ('63-'68) celebrated her 40th anniversary as an employee of Navy Federal Credit Union in November of 2015.

Beth (Eley) Zimmerman ('79-'85) is completing her master's degree in Philanthropic Leadership at the University of Denver. She is also working full-time at Texas Christian University as the Director of Regional Development for Dallas/Fort Worth. Meanwhile, daughter and former camper **Eryn Zimmerman ('11-'15)** is preparing to compete in the Arabian Horse Association Nationals in late July, showing the reigning U.S. Arabian/Saddlebred Champion, Blazing Knight, in the youth halter class. Both Beth and Eryn look forward to the 100th reunion in 2017!

Hannah Rago ('04-'10, '13) is attending the University of South Florida and studying broadcast news. She is a new sister of Zeta Tau Alpha.



Shannon (Jones) McCall ('86) and daughter, Anna Grace, get excited for summer!

Come as
you are.

Leave
better than
you could
ever
imagine.



Traditional Sessions

June 25 - July 12
July 13 - July 30

Starter Camp

June 25 - July 3
July 13 - July 21

**Mother-Daughter
Weekend**

June 10-12

Register Today! • SkylandCamp.com

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SKYLAND CAMP FOR GIRLS

P.O. Box 128 - Clyde, North Carolina - 28721

Ph: (828) 627-2470 - Fax: (888) 298-5711

www.skylandcamp.com - mailbox@skylandcamp.com

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