



SPRING 2019

# MAIL CALL

SKYLAND'S INK-AND-PAPER NEWSLETTER



# Director's Corner

Anxiety, and the pressure that many girls feel to be perfect, is a real problem in today's world. This newsletter includes a review of Lisa Damour's book "Under Pressure," a book we recommend you read for the great reminders it gives on how toxic this stress can be for girls, and for the helpful strategies it offers to combat it. Damour also does a great job of sharing how stress and anxiety aren't *always* bad, and how the right amount of pressure can actually help us grow.

To this day, I still remember my feelings when I heard Potts (Skyland's Riding Director) tell me that Pardner and I were going to canter that day. I was terrified. She knew I was ready, and she also knew that I needed a bit of a push to get out of my comfort zone. I'm sure she ran with me every step of that canter to support me (and possibly ensure I didn't pull on the reins to stop). Afterward, I felt SO accomplished having survived what was "the scariest thing I'd ever done!" And, she didn't care what I looked like doing it; it didn't need to be perfect. Potts just wanted me to take the leap and "just do it".

That type of stress can be so empowering to us, and to campers. Here at Skyland, we employ "challenge by choice" - a concept in which campers are empowered to decide whether or not to try a challenge that is presented to them. While campers are encouraged to try activities they find challenging, we support them if they opt out if it is too scary for them at that moment in time. Skyland staff members are trained to create supportive environments where we all respect an individual's right to watch others try a challenge versus trying it themselves.

We strive to create a culture at camp that normalizes failing. That's something pretty empowering in and of itself in this day and age. If missing the target in archery is just a normal part of learning to shoot archery, there is less pressure on the archers. We also teach that "trying" is as valuable as "succeeding" since "trying" leads to skill building which is the key to accomplishing goals.

We also work hard to communicate and model that failing at something isn't a reflection on who you are, it's just a function of how much time you have practiced and whether you were able to mindfully focus that day on the activity. We aren't always able to "get into the zone" and it's ok ... it doesn't mean we are a failure.

These learnings are critical foundation blocks for girls and young women as they go through school, college, and eventually into places of employment. Alumnae will share with me that it was here, at Skyland, that they tried something for the very first time that gave them enough confidence to propel them toward their next more lofty goal, leading to amazing careers and life accomplishments. (See Susanne Allen's story on page 4-5).

For many of us, it WAS "Skyland Camp ... where it all began".

--Sherry Brown  
Executive Director

2

Director's Corner

3

"S" Is The Way It Begins.....

4-5

Alumnae Spotlight

5

Save the Date!

6

"What We Are Learning"

7

Camperships / 2019 Alumnae Open House!

# "S" Is The Way It Begins ...

If you're a Skyland alumna, you've likely just sung  
"K - and the next letter is ..."

Y - we're singing along

L - we're half through the song

A - and we're filling it in

N - and we're nearing the en - D

S-K-Y-L-A-N-D ... That is the way to spell  
Skyland!

Campers still sing this, and other favorite camp songs, every Sunday nights as they sit criss-cross on the Clubhouse floor. Their voices carry across all of Skyland Hill as their hands and arms do "all the motions" and the piano plays the sweet century-old melodies.

Do you remember Frances playing that piano? Maybe you're a more recent alumna and remember Cindy at the piano. What was your favorite song? And do you remember the hand motions to the songs? Do you remember being a new camper and trying to learn those songs on the first night? And that one super cool camper or counselor who said "c'mon, be my partner, I'll teach you." Skyland's Sunday Song Night is a favorite memory of alumnae, and continues to be a favorite for today's campers.

One of the most striking moments during Skyland's 2017 Centennial Celebration Reunion was song night. The clubhouse was filled with campers and alumnae. And we mean FILLED. On the floor were scores of alumnae sitting in rows and facing each other. All of the benches were filled, as was every inch of the front part of the camp stage. And the piano played ... and we sang.

Alumnae were singing the familiar songs as though they had never left Skyland Hill. In an instant the energy shifted. That night, in that Clubhouse, generations of Skyland campers became ONE SKYLAND as we sang our familiar and beloved Skyland songs. Scores of women ranging in age from 9 to 93, with many different life experiences, were all sharing one common experience that connects all of us at the heart and soul level. What happened - by the simple striking of the first chords on the piano, was complete and utter magic.

We are Skyland because we began our journeys of self-discovery on Skyland Hill. During that precious window of time, we found our voice and developed our confidence. We connected with our own creativity and personal power. We became who we are because of our experience on Skyland Hill. And in doing so, we became part of a much bigger collective. A 10-year old camper can immediately connect with an 80-year old alumna over a camp song, or a funny Skyland Hill story. Skyland is an invisible bond that holds us all together, and makes us ready to love and support each other in ways that only Skyland campers can do.



So that song ... S - is the way it begins ... really IS the truth. Skyland is the way it begins.

Skyland is the way it began ... for each of us as we embarked on our individual life journeys in this big crazy world. We now walk through our lives knowing that we are connected to something bigger than ourselves ... something that cannot be described in words, in writing, or in verse. It can't be described ... because it's a feeling. It's the heartfelt love for a place where we all started as young curious, strong girls ... and where we sang camp songs on Sunday nights.

# Alumna Spotlight: “An Extension of Family”: Four Generations of Skyland Campers

Skyland Camp for Girls has been a tradition in many families since the camp’s early days. Today, we’re highlighting one of those families, one that has had four generations of Skyland campers—Susanne (Brown) Rice, Susanne (Rice) Allen, Susanne (Allen) Heartsill, and Emily and Georgia Heartsill. Their camp experiences influenced their lives and the world around them and extended far beyond the summers they spent on Skyland Hill.

It all started in the 1920s, when young Susanne Brown rode the train from Tampa, Florida to Clyde, North Carolina and Skyland. She returned for a total of 13 seasons. Her daughter Susanne (Rice) Allen describes her mother, a contemporary of Hempy and Francis Harris, as “the ultimate Skyland camper,” and it was Brown who designed the first rendition of the Skyland shield. So intertwined was Brown’s life with Skyland that “when she died, we buried her with a Skyland Camp sweatshirt,” Allen says. So it was little surprise that Allen would follow in her mother’s footsteps.



Susanne (Brown) Rice ready for swimming .



Susanne (Rice) Allen and her granddaughters Georgia and Emily Heartsill



Susanne and friend on the porch of the Big House!



Susanne (Brown) Rice, Hempy and Lizzie Poole on the tennis court.

Allen attended Skyland from 1955-1959 and, she says, “it just opened up a whole new world for me.” In fact, Allen developed a lifelong passion while at Skyland: the craft of weaving: “When I was at camp, during arts and crafts, I remember weaving a basket . . . and, ever since then, I’ve been fascinated by weaving. I became a weaver 25 years ago, and I think that’s where my love of weaving came from.” Allen later served as President of Weavers Guild, just one of several leadership roles she’s held. She credits her time at Skyland with instilling her with the confidence to do so. “I became more of a leader from things I learned there rather than in my little home town. I did a lot of civic things . . . I kind of blossomed,” Allen says. Skyland also fostered Allen’s lifetime passion for horses. “That’s where I began my love affair with horses,” she says. “The last year I was there, in 1959, I won the horse show. I didn’t have opportunities to compete growing up; that was the highlight.”

When it came time for Allen’s daughter, Susanne (Allen) Heartsill, to attend camp, there was little question where she would go. For their family, Heartsill says, going to Skyland “was like breathing. It was just what we did.”

Heartsill attended from 1980 to 1994—eventually serving as a counselor and teaching horseback riding. “I started going when I was 9 years old and never stopped until I had to,” she says. Although she was initially nervous about camp, once she arrived, “it took about two seconds to get integrated,” Heartsill recalls. “I loved everything about it.” Heartsill went from camper to Counselor-in-Training (CIT) to staff and especially remembers the special “sisterhood” she formed with the other counselors. She credits her time at Skyland with instilling in her the confidence to pursue her profession as a veterinarian. “It taught me how to be a leader in a career field full of men at that time,” she says. Without Skyland, she believes, “I don’t know that I would’ve had the confidence or the spirit to get past that.”

Heartsill's daughters, Emily and Georgia, both attend Skyland. "They are bigger Skyland fans than I am," Heartsill says. "It's become exponentially larger with every generation. They both wear their Skyland t-shirts all year round and about every week Georgia wants to know how long until Skyland. This starts about September."

Emily, now a teenager, has attended since she was eight years old. She says Skyland is "like a family tradition. My great grandma went, my grandma went, my mom went, some of my aunts went." Like the other women in her family, she believes Skyland has increased her self-confidence. The people at camp, she says, "accept you for who you are and it makes you feel really good about yourself. And that definitely helped me be more confident in school and back home."

Georgia is the youngest of this four-generation legacy. Georgia began her Skyland adventure as a seven-year-old, and is counting down the days until her next Opening Day!



Georgia, Susanne and Emily Heartsill sporting Skyland shirts!

All the women in the family describe Skyland as a home away from home. Says Allen, "When you go back there, that's home to me. It's a magical place." To Heartsill, "It's like an extension of family. . . . For me, Skyland was a constant. It was my home, and it still feels that way."

And when a fifth generation Brown/Rice/Allen/Heartsill camper comes along, Skyland will be right here where we've always been, ready to welcome her "home."

2019

# SAVE THE DATE

**ALUMNAE VOLUNTEER  
WORK WEEKEND**  
MAY 24 - 27

Join us for volunteer work weekend to ready Skyland for the summer. Reconnect with fellow alumnae. Guests (21+) are welcome!

[skylandcamp.com/alumnae-volunteer-work-weekend/](http://skylandcamp.com/alumnae-volunteer-work-weekend/)

**MOTHER-DAUGHTER  
WEEKEND (FILLED)**  
June 7 - 9

This popular weekend of mother-daughter bonding and trying out camp is ideal for moms and their K-6th grade daughters.

[skylandcamp.com/mother-daughter-weekend/](http://skylandcamp.com/mother-daughter-weekend/)

**TRADITIONAL AND  
STARTER CAMP SESSIONS**

Session 1: June 23 - July 12  
Session 2: July 14 - August 2  
Skyland's traditional summer camp sessions are for girls entering K - 10th grades.

[skylandcamp.com/dates-and-rates/](http://skylandcamp.com/dates-and-rates/)

# What We Are Learning

## Under Pressure

## Skyland's review of Lisa Damour's book

Stress and anxiety have been on the rise in adolescents in recent years, with increased pressure to succeed academically, professionally and socially. This pressure is impacting boys and girls differently. Girls, when under stress, are more likely to collapse inward, while boys are more likely to act out behaviorally. This gender differentiated reaction is a long-recognized principle in developmental psychology and is related to how society teaches boys and girls to react to their emotions. Lisa Damour, author of *Untangled*, as well as a columnist for the New York Times on adolescent behavior, and director of the Laurel School's Center for Research on Girls, writes about this issue in her recent book *Under Pressure*, using cases from her private clinical psychology practice, and pulling from her work with adolescent girls.

Damour identifies specific areas where girls may be feeling pressure, such as home, school, in relationships with peers, with boys, and within our culture and society. In a recent interview, Damour addressed the stressors that are unique for girls. "Girls face more stress at school than boys do, frankly because they work harder, they're dealing with sexual harassment at levels adults have yet to really confront, they are held to standards in our culture that are different from the standards for boys, and as we've continued to put more on girls' plates, we've taken nothing off. So, girls are now achieving at rates we've never seen, but they are still told by our culture they should be cute if not hot, whereas I do think it's true that when boys are achieving a great deal they're not spending quite as much time worrying that they're also very good-looking."

Damour reminds readers that some stress and anxiety is actually healthy, as it pushes individuals out of their comfort zones, forcing them to reach new levels of development, as well as learn coping strategies. It is when stress increases out of proportion, and healthy coping skills are not being learned, that the pressure can get out of control. Damour suggests, "When adults talk about anxiety and stress as normal and healthy functions, we provide great service because the problem we have right now is that we have a lot of girls and boys who feel anxious about even being anxious, and stressed about even being stressed. We can cut the problem in half by embracing that these are normal and healthy functions." Damour explains how to build healthy downtime into girls' hectic schedules, so they can recharge themselves. Chronic stress results when an individual has no opportunity for relief and no chance to restore their equilibrium. Throughout her book, Damour looks at the stressors that girls are facing currently, and provides practical solutions backed by solid research that parents can use to help girls overcome high levels of stress and anxiety. Using the information shared by Damour in *Under Pressure*, readers learn steps they can take to protect girls from the sometimes-toxic pressures our culture places on them, and how to help girls recognize healthy stress as opposed to chronic stress.

At Skyland, campers have the opportunity to experience healthy stress by challenging themselves in camp activities of their choice. These opportunities for "challenge by choice" are self-initiated by girls and come with the support and encouragement of camp staff. Counselors mentor girls in setting goals, achieving them, and yes, even coping with disappointment if they don't reach their goals. In addition to providing opportunities for personal growth, Skyland builds in daily "downtime" so that every camper has the opportunity to relax and recharge. Girls can even choose how they want to recharge. Whether it's relaxing with friends on the cabin porch, reading a book on their bunk, or catching fireflies outside the Lodge, girls experience a variety of ways to relax, recharge, and re-connect with their inner strength. This combination of personal growth and care for self results in stronger, more resilient girls ready to navigate any challenge.

# Skyland's Campership Fund Makes Summer Camp Dreams Come True



Thanks to alumnae and friends of Skyland, several campers have once again been given the gift of camp this summer.

Skyland's Campership Fund, created and launched five years ago, exists for the purpose of funding a Skyland experience for girls whose families are unable to pay for camp. The application process is similar to applying for financial aid at a college and includes a requirement that each girl writes an essay or send a video of "What I will bring to the Skyland community and how camp will benefit me."

In past years, recipients have included:

- Longtime campers whose parents, because of job loss or medical expenses, experienced a temporary financial setback that prohibited them from sending their daughter back to camp.
- Girls whose mom or dad may have a strong desire to send their daughter to camp, but who need extra help to make it a reality.
- Girls who, through no fault of their own, are in splintered families with limited resources, and desire the "stability" of summer camp friendships.

Camperships open Skyland's doors to girls from across the country and from all backgrounds. Financial gifts directly underwrite a portion of camp tuition so that girls may discover the potential within herself - just like you did on Skyland Hill.

Learn more and donate at [SkylandCamp.com/The-Campership-Fund](http://SkylandCamp.com/The-Campership-Fund)



## NEW to Skyland's 2019 Schedule! Alumnae Open House

Attention Skyland Hill! Join us this summer for Skyland's 2019 Alumnae Open House!

Come and join us for this special one-day event! Enjoy many of your favorite Skyland activities like horseback riding, swimming (but this time in a heated pool!), archery, and of course - T&T games! Explore Skyland's Tranquility Trail or pick up some Skyland swag at the Camp Store. The costume attic will be open for photo ops, or just grab a rocking chair on the porch and sip lemonade while you reconnect with old friends.

Date: July 13, 2019

Time: 10am - 4pm

Cost: \$35

Picnic lunch provided

All ages invited

**Register now and make sure you save your seat on the porch!**

You can register on the Skyland website at [skylandcamp.com/alumnae/](http://skylandcamp.com/alumnae/)

# SKYLAND

• CAMP FOR GIRLS •

SINCE 1917

P.O. BOX 128 • CLYDE, NC 28721

---

Changing the world one  
conversation...one experience...one  
camper at a time

---

**JOIN US  
AT SKYLAND FOR  
SUMMER 2019**

---

Registration Open

[Skylandcamp.com](http://Skylandcamp.com)

