

# BERKSHIRES - GLEN SPEY

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**T**his is a story I have wanted to share for a long time, but I knew that it would be understood only by those who have been touched by the magic of a Camp Ramah experience. After all, when you try to explain how beautiful the sounds of an entire camp coming together to celebrate in the joy of Shabbat can be, or talk of the thrill of many voices singing together during *zimriyyah*, you are most certainly looked upon as slightly odd. These are not your typical stories of summer camp. Yet this is some of what has remained with me all these years after my wonderful time spent at *maḥaneh* Ramah.

Mine is a story of a wandering Jew. My family moved around quite a lot during my childhood. My parents were committed to Eretz Yisra'el and took us to live in Israel for four years when I was very young. We moved back to the United States and what remained with me were memories of a very happy time. I spoke Hebrew, went to *gan*, had friends, and fell in love with Israel. Our connection and ties remained strong. But my experience was unique and not shared by many I met. It was rare that I found others with similar feelings and knowledge about Israel. And then, the summer immediately following my bat mitzvah, I went to Camp Ramah. I attended Camp Ramah in Glen Spey for two years and then Ramah Berkshires for two more years. And it was then that I found that I had finally come to a place where it felt like home, where I belonged. I wasn't the only thirteen-year-old who spoke Hebrew, who had been to Israel, and who was proud to be Jewish. I no longer felt like a stranger in a strange land. I made a deep connection that has since guided me on my Jewish journey.