



Teaching, Entertaining, Educating and Empowering Children through the Arts

Camp nurtures and develops a community that reflects the world in which children will grow up. While campers benefit from a wide variety of fun and stimulating activities – trapeze, drama, nature hikes, hip-hop dance, and poetry just to name a few -- they also gain an appreciation for differences as they live among children who come from all kinds of backgrounds. It is the Camp's conviction that they can then become the catalysts for social change and have a positive effect on the future.

"This place brings out your talent, it makes better people," says one young camp counselor. *"It's neat seeing kids taking home these talents and skills. If you can stand up in front of 100 people and perform, you can do a whole lot better dealing one on one."*

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The Grace and Joy Scholarship Program

Twenty-five percent of the camp's five sessions with 700 children, ages 7-14 years old, come through this scholarship program. They are economically disadvantaged children - kids from homeless shelters, foster care and group home environments, kids referred to us by social service agencies, kids with a parent in prison, and others - get to come to camp to experience the joys of living in nature, learn new skills and what is most important, to be treated as unique and valuable individuals.

The words on the cover page are from Grace and her sister Joy, who were along first scholarship recipients. The program was named after them. They are both mothers now and pictured among the campers on the cover. Here's Grace's full description:

"Over twenty years ago, I arrived at Camp a very sad, scared, confused, and at times an angry eleven-year-old child. I had been separated from my siblings and placed into foster care three years before and remnants of the physical abuse I endured in my early years still lingered with me. Three years in foster care had only compounded my fears and confusion. I had been placed in a home absent of love - no kisses, no hugs, and no reassurance.

"I will never forget my first day at camp . . . my two sisters and I were reunited not just for a couple of hours, but a time where we would spend a whole month together - day and night."

"In that next month, I stopped expecting the worst and instead, for the first time in my life, I felt free to be a child. Besides learning to swim, stilt walk and juggle, I also picked up life skills without even realizing it . . . how to channel my feelings of frustration and anger into more positive avenues . . . I learned to feel a connection not only to the Earth but to all who live on it . . . from stilt walking, juggling, and African dance classes, I learned about trust and friendship . . . how to let down my protective walls and just be a child having fun."

Most all of the Kid's Camp counselors are former campers. Shobi's roommate on the 2000 Patch Adams' Clown Ambassador Trip to China was a 16 years old and a junior counselor at the camp. A more open and spontaneous teen I've never met, and did we ever have fun in China. She is now on Broadway!

A 19-year-old counselor. comments:

"You can imagine the mix you get when you take ghetto kids, Asian refugees, hippie offsprings, and middle-class suburban children and throw them into a pot like Camp Winnarainbow. You can also imagine the potential for disruptiveness, chaos, and violence, but it just doesn't happen there. That is mainly because of camp philosophy – to de-emphasize violence, and emphasize appreciation of everything you can do."

The "Life Show"

- ♥ We work to create a living environment of love, safety and harmony.
- ♥ Camp life teaches responsibility for one's own behavior, and develops confidence, inner security, and appropriate self expression.
- ♥ We encourage respect for oneself, other beings, and the environment.
- ♥ We value the uniqueness of each individual, within the diversity of racial, cultural, economic, and religious backgrounds that comprise our camp community.
- ♥ Camp Winnarainbow provides a training ground to nurture leaders for a peaceful, harmonious and sustainable culture.

The "Show Show"

- ★ Our performance philosophy emphasizes taking risks in a physically and emotionally safe environment.
- ★ Drawing from the world of circus and theatrical arts, we teach timing, balance and a sense of humor.
- ★ We honor the creative spirit of each child in an atmosphere of approval and mutual encouragement.



“You too can

. . . sleep in a tipi, swim in a fresh water lake after going down a 350 ft water slide, or learn to walk on stills, juggle, try the trapeze or unicycle or take a improvisation or mime class all with the skill instruction of professional staff. Or, as Wavy Gravy is fond of saying, "You, too can be sucked up in the tornado of talent."

The first week of the season is for adults only (Ages 18-99). It is also the time when the young counselor get trained, but except for meal their sessions are somewhere else on the Camp grounds.

. it's Adult Camp for the kid in us all!

Performance philosophy for adults is the same as for children. Performing in front of an audience is presented as a natural and enjoyable part of every day camp and everyone participates. Competition is discouraged. Skills and skits that are created and honed during the Camp session are presented in a show for parents and friends at the end of each two week session and at the end of the Adult week.

Classes are taught in an atmosphere of encouragement and appreciation for campers in all phases of learning new skills. Among the activities Campers can choose from are: improvisational acting, clowning, mime, juggling, stilt walking, unicycling, trapeze, cloud swing, music, dance, arts and crafts, magic, swimming, team sports, nature walks, or meditative walks on the maze.

I [Shobi] first went to Adult Camp in 1996. I remember looking up at a camper on the trapeze and thinking, "Wow, I wonder what that feels like." The instructor came up to me "You want to give it a try?" I said, "I'd never be able to get up there." Her response was, "We'll help you." So before I could object there were three of them lifting me up to the trapeze. "I'm going to fall out," I said anxiously. "We'll catch you," was their reply! I now have a trapeze hanging in a tree in my backyard and still love to hang upside down like a bat. (It's great for your back) Of course, I was in my 50's then. But years later I wore out a bathing suit going down the water slide. Clowning allows me to be my child self and that's what I love about Camp - even playing dress-up out of the costume tent.

So participants from my workshops in Japan decided to come to camp too. What a surprise they were for the staff. They have such a wonder-filled eagerness to try anything and everything. What a joy. Language was an experience for everyone to resolve. Here are some comments about camp from the Japanese.

From Hatsuko Yamao 'Aerials'

"The camp was full of so many first time experiences. And the sky, the woods, the rocks, the wind and I, all existed there together. Not one was different from the others. . . It was all the same, human or not, alive or dead. I realized that I had always been trying to live in top gear, to be good, to be better. Now I feel, why not just be me, it's all OK. . . I am so grateful."

Megumi Kusunoki "Closing Ceremony"

"Closing ceremony was held on the East Bay stage. All participants, including the instructors gathered in a circle. With incense burning, in the ceremonious atmosphere, people took turns and shared their insights of their camp experiences.

"For some it was the first time at camp, and there were repeaters and the instructors. Each came with different backgrounds and expectations, met with so many people, touched in mind and body and felt with heart. There were tears, burst of feelings unable to put into words, and great appreciation. We all shared the feelings and visions that were never there inside, before we came to camp."

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The Japanese who attended Camp Winnarainbow 2007 are counter clockwise from left. Their clown names or titles appear in brackets:

Setsuko Hagiwara (Hagie), Misao Nakamura, Miyu Konoe (Miyu), Chikoto Skaomoto (Chico), Wavy Gravy (Camp Director), Megumi Kusunoki (Megu), Yoshiko Takada (Group Facilitator), Hatsuko Yamao (Yamachan), Reiko Arakawa (Ray), Shobi Dobi, Hiromi Imaizumi (Kero), Txi Whizz (Co Camp Director), Misako Inoue (Mantis), Michido Hayash, Atsuko Yasuhara (Atsugon), Gohsuke Hamamoto (Go)

These are the campers shown below in a mask performance photo. See the video at www.winnarainbow.org

Japanese Campers from 2008 please see page two.

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After sharing we went to the maze. Just like the second night, Wavy was sitting in the entrance and incense was burning. We each followed the person walking in front of us and returned the same way, once you reached the center.

Unlike the first time which was under the moon light, I could see better in the daylight. The first time, I felt very uncomfortable hugging strangers in the dark, and with my limited English vocabulary, not knowing what was happening and why, I was crying the whole time.

But this second experience was different. I didn't care if I didn't understand English. All I wanted to do was to show my gratitude to all I met here. Since the start of the camp, I was always so much concerned with my English ability. I thought I would never be able to communicate with others and understand their emotions with such little vocabulary. But now I know, after the closing ceremony and the maze, that you can express your feelings, thoughts and mind, without language and beyond borders. It is my treasure, that I was able to feel this way and that I shared that moment with all the members.

..... "I thank the sky, the woods, the sun, and all the friends, for giving me such a treasure of life."

~ Megumi Kusunoki

Mask Performance ~ Hiromi Imaizumi

We each picked one mask and a hat to go with it. So, how do we want the stage to be? No ideas. Shobi said "Come on, it's your stage," but we were all worn out and still not enough ideas. So Shobi helped us organize most of the stage plan.

Is it my experience of the drama club that I feel the urge and excitement on stage? We all wore black shirts and had the clown make-up under the masks. No one could tell who was under the mask. Robert Graygrass played the Native American flute for us and I felt like swimming with the melody.

ll of us in masks, separate in the beginning, slowly gathered as one huge creature. We held our heart as one and breathed deep. Very slowly we took off the masks and showed our clown-selves and laughed!

I can proudly say myself, that it was a wonderful stage experience. I cannot recall the last time I felt such sense of accomplishment.

The next morning, we all received compliments from the audience. I then realized that it was not only us on stage that united as one, but with the audience we were all together as one - how wonderful!



Everyone's Clown and Nobody's Fool

Sure, I could of done it different... put my clown in a closet and dressed up in straight clothing. I could of compromised my essence, and swallowed my soul. – Wavy Gravy



Wavy Gravy, Director of Camp Winnarainbow is known for his work at benefit events and for his "comic consciousness" as a clown and M.C. especially at all three "Woodstocks!" Born Hugh Romney, he was dubbed "Wavy Gravy" by B.B. King in the 60's.

Wavy taught improvisation at Columbia pictures (while teaching the same class for the neurologically disabled at California State University). Wavy studied with Viola Spolin and acted with The San Francisco Committee.

Wavy as a child growing up in Princeton, New Jersey, took walks around the park with Albert Einstein. When he was poetry director at the Gaslight Café on MacDougal Street in New York City during the early 1960s, introducing "jazz and poetry" to Greenwich Village, Marlene Dietrich gave him a book of Rilke poems, and Bob Dylan shared his room upstairs, writing the first draft of "A Hard Rain Is Gonna Fall" on his typewriter.

When, still calling himself Hugh Romney, he became a traveling monologist, "talking about weird stuff that had happened to me," he opened shows for John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, Peter, Paul & Mary, and Ian & Sylvia, and organized the Phantom Cabaret with Tiny Tim and Moondog. He also earned a part in the San Francisco Improv Group – The Committee.

There are more Wavy stories on his website: www.wavygravy.net If you want to read about the founding of the Pig Farm, and the many other activities that the hippie generation is noted for. To this day, Wavy is still doing his running monologue on Hippie History. He travels extensively abroad. They love him in Japan, hence all the Japanese who have been coming to Camp Winnarainbow in the past couple of years.

This March 2009 marks the World Premiere of "Saint Misbehavin' – The Life & Time of Wavy Gravy" at the SXSW Film & Music Festival.

Wavy's even got a Ben & Jerry Ice Cream named after him. (Shobi's favorite too) He uses his take of the ice cream sales, and fun-raising power from his connections with the Grateful Dead and so many others from the 70's to fund Camp Winnarainbow and is the FUN-d Raiser for the Seva Foundation and has served on its board since its inception. www.seva.org

Camp Winnarainbow was founded in Laytonville, CA in 1974 by Wavy and his wife Jahanara Romney in 1974.

Jahanara Romney has been camp administrative director since 1983. She also serves on the board of the Seva Foundation and helps to develop its Central American projects. You know the saying, "Behind every great man there is a great woman." Well, Shobi describes Jahanara as **Super Jah!** She was a professional actress for ten years, and now manages a full complement of super circus and performing artists, as well as, adult counselors and teen staff members at Camp Winnarainbow.

Shobi first met Wavy Gravy at his 60th birthday party. Being a new clown, I took the opportunity to clown wherever I could. Not for networking or notoriety, but because clowning is so much fun. So I called Wavy "Can I come and clown in the lobby?"

I think Wavy was a little stunned as he didn't know this clown. He said, "Of course," because that is the way of Wavy – "Yes to life!" So there I was in full clown - circus style. Geezzz! I was a little out of place with all the hippie fans, but only one person commented, "I hate Clowns!" What happened inside the Berkeley High Theater, where the party was held, was wonderful. I had been hospital clowning for a couple of years, so when I saw an elderly woman on a wheel chair gurney in the middle of the theater, I went right over to her and connected. This made me feel right at home.

A couple of years later I had the money saved for Adult Camp. One day someone came to find me saying, "There is someone up at the house who is asking to see you." It was Jahanara's mother whom I had met at Wavy's party. I gave her a copy of my newsletter and she gave me a copy of her life stories. Jahanara had taken her mother's stories and made them into a booklet for her to give to friends. I wrote that up in the newsletter as it is such a great idea to do for nursing home residents. So this is another story of Super Jah.

Now, besides being at Camp, we all meet several times a week in Aqua Aerobics at the Berkeley YMCA!



Jahanara above with Wavy and below some other wildlife at Camp

