



Tawonga Leadership Continuity, Growth and Change

Letter from Executive Director Ken Kramarz

October 13, 2015

Dear Fellow Tawongans,

This is the most fun I've ever had writing about Camp Tawonga, because I get to brag about my amazing colleagues, our outstanding board, and a strategic plan that is catapulting us into a transformative future!

In that future, you will see Camp Tawonga continue to be a premier mountain camp experience, serving an ever-broadening spectrum of children and families. In addition, new age groups will find a place at Camp, beginning with the launch of Kibbutz Tawonga. This will be an at-camp fellowship for 21–35 year olds, living Jewish values on a daily basis as they tend our organic garden, replant the fire-ravaged forest, and create beautiful wood-crafts from Rim Fire rescued trees.

At the same time, we will vastly expand your opportunities to connect with each other through Jewish festivals and life-cycle events at locations close to home. This will begin next year as we open our first Bar and Bat Mitzvah classes. Imagine children traversing this deeply meaningful rite of passage, infused with Tawonga values and led by Tawonga staff. I can hardly wait for the first aliyah!

To accomplish all this (and more) we have chosen the very best professionals to lead us. Our next Executive Director will be our very own Jamie Simon-Harris. I've worked side by side with Jamie for many years, and she is a truly amazing leader. Jamie is smart, fun, funny, and fiercely committed to the Tawonga Mission – and staff love working for her. She will be the best Exec we've ever had. But before that, Jamie will serve as Associate Executive Director, working closely with me to ensure a seamless transition of authority in 2017. After that, I get to be one of those staff who love working for Jamie, directing our Master Plan of capital construction at Camp, and teaching Tawonga methodologies to schools, synagogues and community centers through our rapidly expanding Tawonga Institute program.

Becca, our new Camp Director, is a visionary leader with 20 years of experience working with children and young adults. She is brilliant, with a Harvard degree in Religious Studies; a great outdoorswoman, with a deep reverence for nature; and an award-winning teacher and coach who inspires everyone around her to be their best selves. Becca is a powerful spiritual leader and storyteller, and when she leads the Torah service at Makom Shalom, my tallis is tear-stained with joy. Like Jamie, Becca is also a loving parent and profoundly

sensitive to the needs of children. Under the leadership of Jamie and Becca – along with the rest of the full-time staff you know and love – Tawonga will continue to be the place we'd all rather be!

Last week, Jamie, Becca and I shared this news with Tawonga's Presidents Council, whose board service spans from the 1970's to this moment. They were all so gracious and supportive, just as the current Board of Directors has been. It was a wonderful reminder that we who are blessed with the opportunity to work at Tawonga are but temporary stewards for a culture of values that goes back generations. Please feel free to reach out to Jamie (jamie@tawonga.org) Becca (becca@tawonga.org), or me (ken@tawonga.org). We would love to hear from you!

I am so grateful for the work I have been able to do at Tawonga and so excited about the new work to come.

In the bond of Tawongans,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Kramarz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Ken Kramarz
Executive Director, Camp Tawonga

P.S. Check out Jamie's [blog post](#) for her thoughts.