

Camp Alkulana 2021 Report

We were thrilled to have our traditional overnight summer camp again this summer! Since COVID-19 forced us to take a year off from our regular summer camp activities in 2020, campers and counselors were very excited to return.

We spent months preparing for camp by considering the health and safety recommendations and requirements of the Centers for Disease Control, Virginia Department of Health, and the American Camp Association. Here are a few of the ways we adjusted our summer program:

- We moved as many of our activities outdoors as possible. For instance, meals were eaten outside on newly made picnic tables.
- We wore masks when we were inside and in close proximity.
- Campers played in the same groups all week to reduce potential for spread.
- We hosted fewer campers this year to allow them to spread out in their cabins.
- At the beginning of each session, we tested everyone in camp for COVID-19.
- We shortened all our sessions to eight days and cancelled our beloved High Adventure camping trips that our older campers usually enjoy.

Despite managing all these changes, camp still very much felt like a normal summer at camp! Campers played and explored outdoors. They built confidence while navigating new adventures. After over a year of virtual school for many of our campers, they got to socialize in person with other children. Here are some of our favorite quotes from campers:

- "This is a place to be free. When you come here, you're happy."
- "I learned that God is home, and since God follows you everywhere, you can always be home."
- "I feel like myself here."
- "When I come to Camp Alkulana I can forget everything about the outside world."
- "It's the most fun place I've ever been."

We are proud to have provided this meaningful experience for so many children this summer, and we're blessed to have the staff and volunteers on-site to run the camp. This summer we had:

- **146 campers** attended Camp Alkulana, including 27 Counselors in Training.
 - 76% of campers were eligible for free or reduced lunch at school.
- **25 summer camp counselors** served, 72% of whom were former campers at Camp Alkulana.
- **21 additional volunteers** serving in the kitchen, infirmary, facilities, or crafts areas this summer.
Over 50% of these were former campers or counselors.

Now that summer is over, we turn our attention to our school year programs that offer supports to our campers and their families even after summer is over.

- Alkulana RVA is Camp Alkulana's main school-year program in Richmond. We meet monthly (in-person or virtually) to continue friendships from the summer and to have fun together! Participation is open to those ages 9-13 who are Alkulana campers or are interested in becoming campers. There is no cost for participation.
- The Alkulana Peer Program (APP) is Camp Alkulana's school-year program for former campers ages 14-18. We meet monthly (in person or virtually) to continue camp friendships and offer opportunities for leadership development and mentorship.
- Our Family Liaison, SaraAnne Burgess works closely with our families to provide connections to resources like food and other material supports.

We are thankful to the supports our camp enjoys from our RCFN churches and other individuals and organizations who believe in the work of the camp. We are able to do this work because of these strong partnerships working together in love for Richmond's children.