

Results from 2009 Alkulana Camper Surveys

Completed during Older Boys and Older Girls Sessions

Who did we survey?

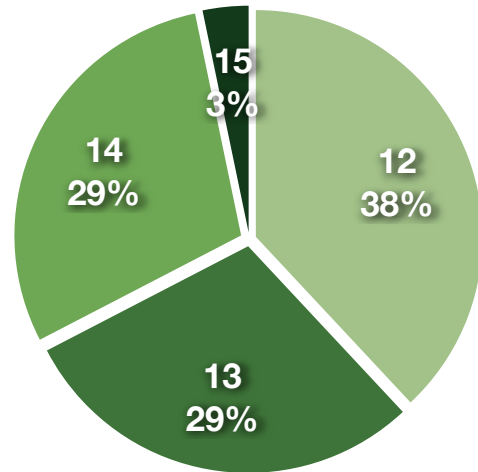
All campers during the 12-day sessions for girls (June 29 – July 10) and boys (July 27 – August 7) aged 12-15 years. The surveys were administered on the 11th day of camp during rest hour in the cabins and were completely voluntary.

2009 Older Camper Population:

Girls 41 (compared to 34 in 2008)
 Boys 51 (compared to 37 in 2008)
 Total 92 (compared to 71 in 2008)

Ages of Older Campers

Age	Girls	Boys	Total
12	18	17	35
13	11	16	27
14	11	16	27
15	1	2	3



Number of years Older Campers have attended Alkulana

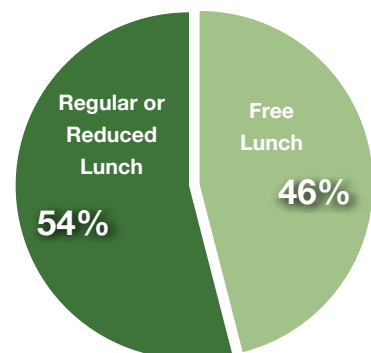
Years	Girls	Boys	Total
1	8	10	18
2	12	10	22
3	12	18	30
4	4	5	9
5	2	5	7
6+	3	3	6

* 80% of older campers attended camp at Alkulana at least one summer prior to 2009.

* Over 50% of older campers have attended Alkulana for three summers or more.

Number of Older Campers receiving free lunch:

- * At Alkulana our target demographic is low-income and at-risk children and youth in Central Virginia.
- * One of the ways that we measure whether or not we are reaching this demographic is by checking free lunch eligibility. Free lunch eligibility is set by the USDA and acts as an indicator of a family's income needs.
- * This summer, 46% of our older campers received free lunches. Taking all of the sessions into account (older and younger campers), 52% of our campers were eligible for free lunch. This number is up from last summer's 39%.



Survey questions: Our camper survey was updated for 2009. These questions were developed collaboratively by Beth Wright and Paul Brasler.

Campers responses: Below you will find campers' answers to the questions they were asked on the survey. Common responses were categorized, and you will see the number of times that they were listed in parenthesis next to that response. Responses that were unique or exceptionally compelling are listed in quotation marks.

1. What do you like most about camp?

- High Adventure (18)ⁱ
- Free time (14)
- Making new friends/Seeing friends (12)
- My counselors (12)
- The food (8)
- Fun Activities (6)
- Rappelling/climbing tower (5)ⁱⁱ
- My cabin/sleeping in cabins (5)
- Campfire time (4)
- Interest groups (4)ⁱⁱⁱ
- Fishing (3)
- Learning about God/Bible study (3)^{iv}
- All of it! (3)
- Adventure groups (3)^v
- Rest hour (siesta) (3)
- The books (2)
- Making crafts (2)
- Caving
- Swimming
- Being outdoors
- Going to Alkulana North^{vi}
- Camper Lodge^{vii}
- Field Games
- Creek Walking
- The store^{viii}
- "Helping other girls with problems back home"
- "Being away from home"
- "The leadership the counselors show"
- "Being able to go to a counselor whenever you need help."
- "If I'm having trouble I know somebody will help."

2. Name some things that you tried for the first time this year:

- Climbing/Rappelling the tower (12)
- Rock climbing/Rappelling at the cliffs (12)
- Caving (10)
- Camping out (7)
- Tubing (7)
- High Adventure (6)
- Fishing/Caught my first fish (6)
- Everything! (5)
- Hiking (5)
- Hiking Douthat (4)
- Snorkeling (4)
- Hiking Sarabotchi (3)

- Canoeing the Greenbriar River (3)
- Making new friends (3)
- Learning about horses (3)
- Putting on the banquet (2)
- Doing a scavenger hunt (2)
- Film interest group (2)
- Creek walking (2)
- Swam/Swam in deep water (2)
- Played frisbee (2)
- Tried to catch a crayfish
- Cooking interest group
- Playing basketball
- Coming to camp!
- Going to Alkulana North
- Prayed more
- S'mores
- Coming to the older campers' session
- Sleeping on the bottom bunk
- Passing the distance swimming test
- Played board games
- Going to Lake Moomaw
- Using the camp library^{ix}
- Playing the pirate game
- "Being nicer to the staff."
- "Holding a bass by his lip."
- "I beat my counselor at Connect 4!"

3. What would like to be different about your camp experience next year?

- Nothing/It's good the way it is (14)
- Get a real pool/Make the swim hole warmer (5)^x
- More/new activity options (4)
- Offer new High Adventures (4)
- More free time (3)^{xi}
- I want to have more fun (3)
- More sports activities (3)
- Need new songs (3)
- Stay up later/Wake up later (3)
- Fix up the cabins/bunk beds (2)^{xii}
- More/better Basketball courts (2)
- Camp should be longer (2)
- Play Capture the Flag more (2)
- Have a two night High Adventure (2)
- Get more books
- Bring girls here during boys sessions
- Not get so dirty
- More choices for High Adventure
- Have a one night High Adventure
- Less drama among campers
- "Be able to make up for adventure groups that were missed due to rain."

4. What relationships important to you at camp, and why?

- God (Because God will always be there) (14)
- Counselors (Because they help you with problems/You can trust them.) (30)
- New friends/Other campers (34)
- The nurse (1)
- Dogs (1)
- “People that are nice and don’t complain all the time and take the time to get to know you.”
- “My relationship with God! Why? Because he helps me through everything I do here.”
- “You can make new friends every year you come here!”
- “Counselors because they are our mentors.”
- “Counselors, because they’re role models for me to become a counselor too.”
- “Relationships here are important because it feels like a home away from home.”
- “Almost everybody here is like my relative.”
- “The relationship with God, because that will help your entire life.”

5. If you had to tell someone back home about Alkulana, what would you say?

- It’s a great/fun place to be! (40)
- You should come here! (14)
- It’s a place to learn about God (9)
- There are lots of adventures (4)
- I was homesick/missed my family (3)
- You can make new friends here. (1)
- “Camp Alkulana is awesome and you will learn some amazing stuff about God while on an adventure!”
- “It’s not just a camp.”
- “If you want to go somewhere that you can really experience how nature feels, come to Camp Alkulana.”
- “It’s the best camp and you just pay ten dollars!”^{xiii}
- “The best camp I’ve ever been to. You learn a lot about Jesus and do a lot of fun things.”
- “Alkulana is the most awesome place in the world.”
- “You have to go to this amazing place!”
- “It was one of the best experiences of my life.”
- “I got homesick, but I tried my best and had fun.”
- “You can really feel God’s love here.”
- “I love it. I get sadder going home than I do homesick.”
- “Camp feels like you are at home and its like one happy family...oh and all the counselors are great!”
- “This is a great place to get closer to God and it’s not like boring like a church.”
- “It’s a good break from the real world.”
- “It’s a place to go where you can think and don’t have to worry about what others think of you.”
- “You should come to camp with me because it is fun and it will help you understand God more.”
- “You should come to this camp because they don’t let anything happen to you.”

6. Do you feel differently about yourself at camp? Tell how.

- No (32)
- My attitude is better/I’m a nicer person here. (14)
- I feel I can be myself/I’m more confident in myself. (11)
- I feel closer to God. (4)
- I feel happier here. (3)
- I feel safer here. (3)
- I am more active/energetic here. (3)

- Yes, because I'm around different kinds of people here. (2)
- Less stress here/I'm more relaxed. (2)
- I'm willing to try new things here. (2)
- I can let myself have fun here. (2)
- I feel more free. (2)
- I feel like a leader here.
- "No, because camp is my home."
- "I have been worshiping God more."
- "Sometimes, because at my house I don't make friends and here I've made a lot."
- "Yes, because I have learned that I can fix the dirty stuff in my life and feel good."
- "Yes, I feel like I don't have to try so hard to be what a girl 'should be.' I feel like I can just be me."
- "Yes, because I feel closer to God than anywhere else."
- "Yes because my counselors treat me like I want to be treated."
- "I have never felt so alive."
- "I feel like I have no freedom."
- "No, I feel at home."
- "I feel like a better man."

7. If you have been to Alkulana before, why did you come back this year?

- Because it's fun! (25)
- I like it here/I love Camp Alkulana! (14)
- To see friends/counselors (12)
- Because I get to be away from home. (4)
- Someone else wanted me to. (4)
- So I could experience more. (4)
- To see what an older session was like (4)
- To become a CIT (3)
- I learn a lot here. (3)
- To grow closer to God. (2)
- It feels like home here. (2)
- "I made a promise with myself that I would come back."
- "Because it gets better and better!"
- "Because I look forward to it almost everyday after it is over--no joke, I love it here!"
- "Long story short...IT'S THE BEST CAMP EVER!"

Conclusions:

The vast majority of our older campers gave us very positive feedback about their experiences at Camp in 2009. Campers tell us that they have fun here, feel safe, build healthy relationships with peers and counselors, and grow closer to God. Over all, these results underline what we already feel: Alkulana works.

For more information about Camp Alkulana's summer and year round ministries, visit www.alkulana.org.

i High Adventure is a 2-3 day adventure out of camp where campers and counselors sleep in tents and master activities like rock climbing and rappelling and local cliffs, canoeing and tubing on nearby rivers, and hiking at Douthat State Park, among other activities.

ii Alkulana has a 40 foot tower with a rappelling platform at 20 feet and 40 feet.

iii Interest groups are a time each day that campers can choose a certain activity they are interested in learning more about. This summer our interest groups ranged from basketball skills to writing poetry, from film making to snorkeling in the nearby river at Goshen Pass.

iv Campers are involved in an interactive Bible Study each morning, the main focus of which is to teach them that they are loved unconditionally by God.

v Adventure groups also occur daily, and include nearby activities like hiking, tower rappelling, low ropes course, cooking out, and caving.

vi Alkulana North refers to an area that was made available to us for the first time in 2009 for specialized activities provided by wonderful neighbors! These included caving exploring in a “new” cave, learning about blacksmithing, practicing horsemanship, and visiting a local dairy.

vii “Camper Lodge” is a cabin that campers can visit during their free time. It has boardgames, books, and other activities available.

viii Campers can visit our “Camp Store” during their free time to buy snacks and check out books from Camp’s new library.

ix The Camp Alkulana Library was launched in 2009 with the help of generous donors who gave money and time towards building shelves and buying books. The campers each checked out at least one book during their time at camp, and many came back for more.

x Camp Alkulana has a swimming hole that is spring fed. For many of our campers this is the first time they’ve experienced swimming in fresh water, and it takes time for the cold spring water with a natural creek bottom to grow on them!

xi Many of our campers come from highly unstructured environments. We believe that structure helps kids thrive, and so we limit the amount of free time campers are given in a day to two hours.

xii Alkulana’s cabins are “rustic” in that they have exposed beams, are not insulated, and don’t have indoor plumbing. Some campers would prefer we upgrade them, but we think it’s quaint!

xiii Nearly half of our campers only pay the \$10 registration fee, because they meet our targeted income level. (See graph above about income level of campers.)