

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AT CAMP KINDERLAND

As many of you may know, I have been involved with Amnesty International for many years. When I am in New Jersey I am the Area Coordinator for Amnesty International, USA. However, when I am at camp I, along with the guidance of campers and staff, post each week what we call our AMNESTY ACTION, in the lobby of the dining room. I am merely the facilitator of this. It's the kids who shape the direction. Alongside these petitions and letters is information pertaining to each case. Therefore, it's not just a matter of signing a petition it can also be a learning experience.

During Olympics week I facilitate the Amnesty International inter-team presentation for the closing ceremony. The direction taken for this presentation is entirely shaped by campers and each and every year I am always overwhelmed, sometimes emotionally, at the passion they show for this project.

Usually, the dining room petition/letters are sent to the President of, or senior official in a foreign government. There are times when we address domestic issues too which, as I'm sure you will agree, are become increasingly dire.

The issues addressed this year included:

- The forced separation of families on our southern border. This petition was delivered to members of congress,
- Letters to senior officials in Russia addressing the ill-treatment of numerous human rights defenders there,
- Letters to officials in China asking for the release of a human rights defender there, Ilham Tohti,
- A petition to Iranian representatives at the UN calling for the release of a lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh who has dedicated her life to fighting for human rights in Iran,
- A petition to the Sudanese Ambassador in Washington asking for the release of Husham Ali Mohamed Ali, a human rights defender in Sudan.
- A solidarity card to LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, an activist on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota, fighting the oil company building a pipeline there.

In late October one of our councilors, Henley Childress, will be assisting with a presentation at the Amnesty Northeast regional conference at Boston University. For a number of years I have been stressing upon Amnesty staff how there is an opportunity to address pressing human rights issues at summer camps nationwide. Our intrepid Henley is helping shape this endeavor.

Each summer hundred of names are added to petitions and letters by campers to help in the mutual fight to improve human rights worldwide. Kudos to campers and staff alike for this effort.

*If you would like to learn more about Amnesty please contact me at: [newjerseyaiusa@gmail.com](mailto:newjerseyaiusa@gmail.com)*

- Dave Rendell