ZAHH Z-Camp 2021 – A WEEKEND TO REMEMBER!

ZAH PRESENTS THE 9TH ANNUAL

Z-CAMP 2021

JULY 31ST – AUGUST 1ST

MANASHNI
SPECIAL EDITION

By Z-Camp 2021 Team
WELCOME

SAFETY PROTOCOLS AND GUIDELINES

DAY 1 - JULY 31ST

DAY 2 - AUGUST 1ST

SS TEACHERS THANK YOU VIDEO

SOME MEMORABLE IMPRESSIONS

SEE Y’ALL NEXT YEAR
WELCOME
TO
Z-CAMP 2021
SAFETY PROTOCOLS AND GUIDELINES

As all would agree, the past 18 months have been the most unprecedented period in our lives with extreme stress and unmatched frustration. Considering having the Z-Camp again in person this year was a major decision after a completely virtual one last year. Although after careful thinking, months of hard work and with great teamwork as always, we delivered another very successful Z-Camp.

Z-Camp 2021 was held on July 31st and August 1st at our ZHCC. It was attended by 33 campers and completely planned, organized, and accomplished by 13 of our young adults (former campers) aged between 22 and 27. Most of our sessions were conducted and judged by young experts (25-40 yrs.) in their respective professions.

Besides the regular planning activities, due to the pandemic, we had to think about the COVID-19 safety protocols and guidelines as well. As the two new variants DELTA and LAMBDA are currently wreaking havoc in North America, the entire Z-Camp 2021 team was very determined to put in place all the safety protocols we could to protect our community, particularly our under 12s and adults who aren't vaccinated.

After discussions within the team and with the mentors we came up with a very solid plan so we could confidently go ahead with the planning process and keep our kids and parents assured of their safety and well-being. We put in place a four-step process during check-in which was to Mask-up when inside the ZHCC, temperature check, CDC questionnaire and produce vaccination record or negative test results 2 days prior to the event.
The apprehension of the kids not being able to wear masks during the night besides not being able to monitor them at night led us to cancel the sleepover part of the camp for the first time since its inception. Although we knew that the kids would be disappointed, their health and safety was paramount for us and we made it our priority with no exceptions.

**JULY 31st, 2021 – DAY ONE**

As the Friday night component was cancelled, we started check-in and conducting safety protocols around 9 am on Saturday, July 31st. Once the campers went through their checks, they had some delicious breakfast tacos, milk and cereal, juice, etc. and we opened the Z-Camp at 10 am sharp with a benediction by our Ervads and housekeeping announcements for the campers divided into 3 teams.

The Zoro Zebras, the Coco Puffs and the Ghela Gaadas were excited and energized and started with some team building activities besides making their DIY (do it yourself) Masks which they wore on top of theirs. They also selected Mascots for their teams to be presented during the after-dinner activities.
This was followed by a session on Yoga by Frannie Engineer and Meditation by Tenaz Sunavala where most of the campers were introduced to these physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines that originated in ancient India, for the first time. Some of the adult volunteers looked more enthused than the campers as they performed various asanas (exercises) along with the campers, fortunately keeping all their brittle bones intact.

The kids group had some very interesting group activities including making Solar ovens to bake some cookies and cakes and probably get them patented through ZAH for future use.
After a sumptuous Chinese lunch from Alings, it was time for the UN Sustainability session hosted by the WZCC, Houston Chapter. It was led by Sharmeen Irani where the campers were exposed to the 18 UN Sustainability initiatives followed with a very interesting presentation by our own camper, Natasha Dungor related to the FEZANA Ava Project currently underway.

Once she finished, three of our respected community members Kaemerz Dotiwala, Khodi Irani and Tirandaz Kasnavia gave a short synopsis of their companies’ contribution in the sustainability area and how they have been assisting with preserving and conserving our Mother Earth. On completion of the session the kids were given an activity to pick one initiative and prepare a business idea which they did by showing tremendous business acumen.
Concurrently, the kids' group had activities like “fun with the sun” + “where in the world” and finished the session with a very important concept of preserving a healthy ocean life.

As the clock neared 3 pm, it was time for the much awaited ZAH Iron Chef session under our Yasmin Medhora's tutelage.

This year, due to the pandemic we had a scaled down version for the cooking part of the session. It was preceded by a fitness session by our own fitness guru Vispi Katrak as well as an interesting demo of Persian dishes by Benafsheh Mondegarian.
Once the demo was over the 3 teams were divided into respective age groups and sent to their working stations to prepare a 3 course Brunch to be presented to the judges.

The middle group kids made some terrific pancakes, the youth group campers prepared some mouthwatering breakfast dishes with eggs and the over 18s made some exotic non-alcoholic mocktails. By the end of the session some of the adults felt a bit awkward and embarrassed to be in the same room as these genius chefs who came up with some genius creations.

The kids group campers were given the task to prepare Sundaes (Feels like Sundae) and boy o boy, they did that with such great finesse. The presentation of the teams was so good that two of the campers could not resist eating their own creations even before the judges could view and give their scores 😊.

We had invited three judges to evaluate the culinary skills of the 3 competing teams although when they were asked to taste the dishes, they heard “finish the dishes” so they gorged on them and almost finished before giving their judgments. The judges were very impressed with the extremely creative, ingenuous, and bold ideas and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.
Yasmin Medhora, with assistance from our adult volunteers set up a very well equipped and meticulous “Market Place” with various ingredients like spices, condiments, a variety of veggies and fruits, carb accompaniments, decor and all cooking supplies to prepare the various dishes. The adult volunteers faced some unrelenting pressure from all directions as the campers kept coming for various ingredients. We caught some volunteers on candid camera, chugging some veggies & fruits when (they thought) no one was watching.

Once the Iron Chef session was over, the campers prepared for their after-dinner evening session and after some snack time the youth group kids and the over 18s got engaged in a very intense closed-door session on current relevant topics like social injustice, etc. In parallel, the middle and kids’ group (and later the rest) campers were treated with some enjoyable minute-to-win-it games and activities.
Once those sessions ended the campers went to the ZHCC grounds behind the Center to match their soccer skills in a spell bounding high voltage session scoring and saving some terrific goals. This was followed by the ever popular and much-loved Tug-o-War competition.

The parents and guests started trickling in around 6.30 pm and got their safety protocols completed. After some chips and BYOB, dinner was served around 8.15 pm and the guests were
treated to a very hearty delicious “Mediterranean Meal” with some tasty lamb, chicken and the signature sauce, followed by tea and some desserts.

Once the guests had dinner to their hearts content, the campers were ready to present their Mascot along with some funny acts. All the guests were treated to some fun and we could hear intermittent laughter along with “look at my son” and “Waah, su mari dikri Naachech” from some proud parents.

Everyone was stunned with the creativity and innovation the teams brought forward at such short notice. While the judges were trying to figure out the neck-to-neck competition, the entire audience danced to the tunes of Y.M.C.A. with great precision (yeah sure!) Once the results were announced, the first day of the camp was brought to an eventful close with kids refusing to go home. Well, we don't blame them as the volunteers didn't want to either...
AUGUST 1st, 2021 – DAY TWO

As there was no sleepover the kids came back the next day, Sunday Aug 1st around 9 am and had some yummy kolaches and donuts along with cereal/milk and OJ for breakfast.

Once they had filled their tummies, they started with the impossible engineering session where the campers had to build a Skyscraper with a whale in it on the top floor that could withstand a hurricane. The teams got down to business right away and developed some unique and innovative ideas.

Once the teams had built their “Skyscrapers” the judges tested their sturdiness and resistance against the hurricane winds as well as their height and balance. It was a lot of fun for all including the judges and a great learning experience for the campers. In fact, one of the judges tried to bribe an organizer to be asked to judge again next year (wink, wink).
Around the same time, the kids group built their “Secret Garden” with some very creative ideas and designs under the stewardship of Vehishta and her volunteers.

During lunch the campers and volunteers were treated to some yummy Popeye's Chicken and our world famous Cillie's sandwiches, wraps and nibbles by our own Naushad Mehta.
After some preparations and using tons of paper towels and various dollar store artifacts, our final session, the ZAH Fashion show began in right earnest and the teams did an amazing job enthralling the audience with the gorgeous designer dresses and costume jewelry made from pure pearls and diamonds from Paris and South Africa (or should we say Sugar Land and Houston).

After those performances we are more than certain that we would be seeing some of our ZAH Zoros in Hollywood soon.


Whilst waiting for the results our Sunday School Teachers were felicitated for their tremendous service and contributions to the Z-Camp from 2013 (its inception) thru 2019 in various capacities as volunteers, presenters, judges, etc. and we would like to whole heartedly thank them. Here is a short video prepared by the organizing committee (hold Ctrl key and click on the link) - Sunday School Teachers – Thank You Video
Finally, it was time for the coveted results and the top prize of $10Mil (we wish) was up for grabs, where the Zoro Zebras stole the honors and was awarded the first place but for us everyone who participated was a true winner.

The day was capped off with a few words from our FEZANA President, Arzan Sam Wadia who had specially flown down from New York to attend this event. He applauded ZAH’s efforts of promoting and developing future rising stars and leaders in Houston and would like to propose this model to other FEZANA Associations. He also thanked all at ZAH for our Houston-style hospitality and encouraged us to continue our pioneer spirit and ingenuity of always leading from the front. He signed off by inviting us all to the next World Zoroastrian Congress in New York City next year from July 1st to 4th 2022.

This Z-Camp was a great relief and almost a new start for our kids under the new normal, as after 18 long months, they could all be together in person making new friends and long-lasting relationships, acquiring skills and getting ready to face challenges in their future endeavors.

For all those in Houston and out of towners who missed the camp this year, we hope to see you all next year.
SOME MEMORABLE IMPRESSIONS
Despite the adjustments made from the previous Z-Camps of no sleepover, mask mandate and other safety protocols in place, the Z-Camp 2021 was a tremendous success due to the commitment and determination of everyone on the team. WE DELIVERED AGAIN!

Finally, a huge amount of gratitude and appreciation to all the donors, youth and adult volunteers, presenters, judges, panelists, parents, and our campers without whom this camp would not have been possible.

Hope to see you all in 2022!

**Z-Camp 2021 Team** – Zenia Sunavala, Alyssa Tamboli, Rhea Engineer, Friyana Sidhwa, Nikita Engineer, Rayhan Nariman, Katie Master, Vispi Katrak, Danielle Dubash, Kyrus Buchia, Kyle Jensen, Natalya Haveliwala, Freya Daroga