



May 25, 2020
RE: Camp Thoreau COVID-19 Response

Dear Camp Thoreau Parents and Campers,

I hope this note finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe.

It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that we announce Camp Thoreau will not open for Summer 2020 due to COVID-19. This was by no means an easy decision as our family has been servicing the camping community for the past 69 years. We know that this news will truly be disappointing and sad for Camp Thoreau campers and families.

We approached this decision first and foremost with the safety and care of our campers and staff, reflecting on the true spirit of our Camp Thoreau Character Constellation. After participating in countless hours of webinars, consulting with other camp directors, medical professionals and the Environmental Health & Engineering, Inc.'s Field Guide for Camps on Implementation of CDC Guidance prepared for the American Camp Association, Inc., Y-USA, Inc., and thinking about the impact these new regulations would have on camp programming and activities, it became clear we would not be able to provide the camp experience you have come to appreciate and expect from Camp Thoreau.

We thank you for your patience and support as we researched how we might be able to carry on a summer camp program without compromising the social interaction and meaningful relationships which are the fundamental core components of Camp Thoreau.

Friendship... Camp is about seeing campers and staffs smiling faces. It is about spending our days being closely connected with everyone in our camp community. It is about playing together, learning together and laughing together. The very nature of camp is incompatible with the imposed strict form of social and physical distancing and current health restrictions. We cannot imagine a summer that requires us to limit the normal socializing that occurs at camp and potentially causes young campers to live in fear.

Responsibility... When families send their child to Camp Thoreau, they are trusting us to build a community that takes responsibility for everyone's emotional and physical safety. The physical distancing required of all of us during the COVID-19 Pandemic to keep our staff and campers safe requires so many modifications that we would not be able to offer a program that resembles the camp that your campers have been looking forward to all winter.

Risk Taking... Camp is about the support of our staff and fellow campers as we challenge ourselves to move outside our comfort zone to try new things. We know Camp Thoreau Campers appreciate that we focus on creating an emotionally and physically safe environment so that they can take comfortable, healthy risks. Campers and staff returning home every day and arriving the next increases the mixing of cohort groups which escalates the potential transmission and spread of infection. We had to be honest with ourselves, while this is a hard decision for the business, for our small year-round staff, it was an easy decision when it comes to protecting yours.

Teamwork... Camp is a community based on hugs. It's about high 5's and pats on the backs. It is tag games, singing songs at opening council and making smores around the campfire. It is relationships and togetherness and caring. With social distancing limitations and cohort restrictions, none of this will be possible.

Respect... We want nothing more than to hear the happy noise of campers cheering on their friends as they navigate the climbing wall for the first time, happen upon a thoughtfully designed fairy or hobbit houses on our way to archery and celebrate successes together in small and large groups. It is sad that we will not be able to have these moments. It makes all of us who love Camp Thoreau sad as well. It is important to allow your child to feel that sadness. We all will overcome the pandemic with respect, love, and a strength we never imagined.

You campers are automatically enrolled for next summer. Later this week you will receive a letter outlining our rollover options. If this is not an option for you, there will be information on how to request a full refund.

We realize our news may leave you with a pit in your stomach. When appropriate, we will bring our camp community together again. Thank you for your ongoing support and trust in Camp Thoreau.

Sincerely,

Faith Pulis

Faith Pulis
President
Camp Thoreau