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August 2020 Update: Summer Success and Changes Coming for Fall/Winter

Dear YMCA Storer Camps Family,

It's time to celebrate the magic of camp in a child's life. After much work, procedural changes and new program designs, we were able to open for summer overnight camp and safely served nearly 400 campers throughout July.

Positive Feedback from Parents and Campers Alike

After getting their temperature taken, masking up, and before entering Malachi for check-in, many parents smiled at me through their eyes and with gratitude said, "My son/daughter needed this so much" and "thank you for being open."

Likewise, campers were saying, "It was different, but it was fun." One camper shared that he felt he was "more ready for school" in the fall, because he learned to wear his mask and wash his hands more often at camp.

Tons of Activities Enjoyed This Summer

Our campers had campfires distanced by circles drawn in the grass to keep them from getting too close to other cabin groups. They swam and boated on Stony Lake, loved archery, swamp stomped and enjoyed more time with our horses than previous summers.

The teens loved their hammock villages and instead of dancing the Virginia reel at the Hoe Down, they danced and sang six feet from each cabin group with holiday lights to make it festive. The rock wall became a personal challenge for campers who would not normally try that activity.

Our staff snuck in summer learning with campers by teaching Outdoor Education classes in fire and shelter building.

Meal service was cafeteria style, different than our typical family style. Campers still enjoyed the traditional cheers and songs after meals. The "I'm Third" award inspired new generations of campers to care for others.

There were tears of sadness as campers said good-bye to their new and old camp friends.

It will be a summer to remember.

Day Camp, Camp Catch-A-Rainbow and More

YMCA Storer Camps was more than overnight camp in 2020. We hosted our own day camp for 25 young campers each week. They are an adorable and active group of local children who, at young ages, already have a love of camp and the outdoors.

YMCA STORER CAMPS

Traditional Summer Camp | The Storer Outdoor School | Specialty Programs & Group Retreats

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Camp Catch-A-Rainbow, our camp for children with a cancer diagnosis, hosted a camp-in-a-box virtual camp for 100 children. Dozens of volunteers and groups helped with funding, activities, cabin group meetings and songs and skits at our campfire.

We hosted the Jackson YMCA Day Camp on the South Side of camp. This is how we served our community when most of their previous field trip locations closed for the summer. We were privileged to be able to serve.

All of our summer programs were made possible this summer because of a dedicated staff team and incredible camp counselors.

Schools Cancelling Outdoor Ed Require Tough Changes for the Fall + Winter

This has been a year of challenges and changes, but at YMCA Storer Camps, we are skilled in adapting to situations as they arise. We will need to make changes this fall so we will be strong and ready to open as community health stabilizes in 2021.

Because of these uncertain times, most of our schools and groups have cancelled for the fall. With the uncertainty of the direction of the virus, we will be suspending most of our fall and winter programs until there is more clarity with the direction of the pandemic, a vaccination, and increased confidence among families for their child's safety away from home.

Our students and guests will be missed, and we are disappointed they will not have their camp experience this fall.

In the fall and winter, there will be some day programs and opportunities for volunteerism. There will also be fundraising to help sustain camp's operations in the uncertain months ahead.

Stay Tuned for More Details

I will keep you informed through monthly updates on our website and through social media. My thoughts are with each of you. I hope that you will stick with us through this pause in our operations during these unprecedented times and plan to join us again in 2021.

In Camp Spirit,

Becky Spencer
Vice President of Camping
YMCA Storer Camps

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