

Dear campers,

By now, you have probably heard the news that we will not be running Camp Dark Waters this summer. Tim, Cheska and I, with Camp's Board of Directors, have made this decision to keep everybody safe. This is the most difficult decision I have ever been a part of, but I know it is the right one. We thought about every way we could possibly make camp work without risking the safety of campers, staff and their families. After thinking about it, talking about it and spending months reading everything we could about it, we have realized that it is impossible for us to have camp safely right now. What is most important now, even more important than a summer of magic and memories at camp, is that we keep everybody safe and get through the COVID-19 pandemic together.

At the start of every session, I sit on the stage and talk with everyone about our CDW culture, the Quaker SPICES and camp's values. During this talk, campers will often share what the SPICES - Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship - mean to them. The meanings of some of the SPICES are pretty easy to explain, but there are a couple that people often need to think a little more deeply about. One of those is integrity. For me, integrity is about doing the right thing, even when it is hard, even if you don't want to or other people don't want you to. Even though the decision to cancel camp this year is a sad one that none of us wanted to have to make, I firmly believe it is the right thing to do.

It is okay to be sad, anxious, scared, upset, angry, or whatever else you may be feeling about there being no camp this summer. I have felt all of those things too. It is important that you do what you need to do to process your feelings. I know that your friends, family and your camp family will be there to support you. Please talk to them, ask for help, give them a hug, or do whatever else you need. While we won't see you at camp this year, we want to be there for you too. Over the next few weeks and months, we will be figuring out ways that we can reach out and offer you a little bit of the CDW magic, even though we can't be together at camp.

I imagine a lot of you might have questions. While I cannot anticipate all of them, I have a fairly good idea what the first question on a lot of people's minds might be: "Will I be able to come to camp next year?" The answer is yes. Even though we cannot have summer camp this year, Camp Dark Waters is not closing permanently. We have a wonderful, supportive community around us and we will work together to make sure that we are able to have camp in Summer 2021. Even though we will not be able to have campers here this summer, we will be ready to have camp once we all get through the COVID-19 pandemic. Camp Dark Waters has been around since 1928, and we are not planning on going anywhere anytime soon.

I know that not being able to spend time at camp this summer will be painful for everybody, but especially those of you who were due to have your final summer as a camper, or were enrolled to be a TIC or a TAC. We have thought about ways to give our 14-year-old campers and our TICs and TACs the opportunity to say a proper goodbye to camp. Because of this, we will be extending our age limit for

traditional camp to 15 next year and all our TICs and TACs will be given the opportunity to return for the summer of 2021.

There is a lot that makes our camp special. The love, respect, compassion, empathy, silliness, fun and friendship that we share at camp make an impression on us all that will never fade. Even though we cannot be together at camp this year, we all carry a little of that camp magic within ourselves. Please remember camp's spirit and values while you are away from us, and know that camp will endure, and we will all be together again in the future.

Until then, be safe, be kind to each other. We love you.

Sincerely,
Alex Crompton
Camp Director