

Hello Former and Current Camp Families,

It is with a heavy heart that I inform you that I have decided to close Wild About Nature summer day camp for 2020. North Shore Nature Programs' mission is to get children outside and connect them to the wonders of nature. As we all know, kids need this opportunity now more than ever. This decision did not come easily. I have spent weeks consulting with medical professionals, fellow camp directors, legal counsel, and public officials. There have been countless sleepless nights spent agonizing and formulating plans in which children could attend camp and remain safe and healthy. Ultimately, I have determined that I cannot guarantee the health and safety of campers and staff this summer. And therefore, we must close. Please know that all deposits that have been paid will be refunded in full.

As I stated in a prior email to you, this decision was based on three factors: maintaining camper and staff health and safety, our ability to provide a positive camp experience, and financial viability. Here is what I determined:

- Given the age of our campers, it would be almost impossible to maintain the mandated 6 feet of social distancing. Campers will be seeing their friends for the first time in months. It would have been nearly impossible to keep them safely apart to reduce the risk of infection. I also do not want my staff to spend their summer enforcing social distancing rules; that would not be fair to them and would not make for an enjoyable camp experience.
- Counselors developing relationships with campers is an important part of camp. Distancing and facial coverings would have made this extremely difficult. Children take many cues from facial expressions and need to be able to see their counselors smile, frown, and make silly faces.
- We train our staff to be responsive to the needs of our campers. If a camper is crying, we offer comfort. Should a camper injure themselves, we are quickly attending to that injury. Should a camper need someone in which to confide, our counselors provide a listening ear. The risk of infection would have made each of these interactions potentially dangerous; I would never ask a member of my staff to risk their health in order to do their job.
- As a day camp, children and staff go home every night. They come in contact with family members, friends, and neighbors. There is no way for our camp to enforce a quarantine of campers, staff, and their families during non-camp hours and therefore there is no way to guarantee our camp would be infection-free.

I realize not all of our camp families will agree with this decision and many of you were willing to send your child to camp despite the risk. I also realize many of you desperately need childcare during the summer. I am sorry we cannot provide this much needed service in your time of need. I do plan on providing on-line resources (for free or a minimal cost) this summer. I know this will not replace the camp experience, but I hope it provides some structure for your camper. I will keep you posted as those are developed and released.

Finally, I wish you all good health (mental and physical) in the coming months. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.