

SASAMAT OUTDOOR CENTRE

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A Note from Kristen,

At a time like this, there is truly no greater comfort than the Sasamat Camp Community. Our campers, families and staff have been the driving force that have kept our team moving forward over the last two months.

The camping community has pulled together in a tremendous effort to determine an appropriate path forward in light of COVID-19. As a board member of the BC Camps Association (BCCA), I have been directly involved with my colleagues from across the province in the submission of a blue print proposal for Dr. Bonnie Henry to review. We recently received word from our Provincial Health Officer which read *"the risk to public health this summer of overnight camps is too great to endorse"* and that *"day camps be considered as a safer alternative under the current circumstances"*.

Based on this clear direction from Dr. Bonnie Henry's office, it is with tremendous sadness for our community that we announce that all regular Sasamat summer camp programs will not be able to operate this summer.

The idea of summer without camp as we know it is heartbreaking for our entire team. Personally, I have not had a summer without camp since '97, it has been instrumental in defining who I am and I am fortunate to share this sentiment with so many at Sasamat. The impact of this decision on our organization, our summer staff and most importantly our campers weighs on us heavily, especially for those campers that were looking to camp as a beacon of light during this challenging time.

Parents, we know this will likely be very disappointing news for your children to hear. We decided to put together a *Video From Our Director* that you can share with your campers to help break the news. In the meantime, we hope our campers can reflect on what spending time at camp meant to them, and bring a piece of that home with them this summer. Also, if your camper wants to reach out to talk about it, we encourage them to do so, it would be great to hear from them. Campers can send a letter or email to our office and we will have a camp staff member get back to them.

In spite of all this, we also have a nugget of good news to share. Based on the recommendations of the PHO, Sasamat is hoping to move forward with operating a small modified day camp. It is important for us that if we are able to do so safely, we continue to offer programming to our community. This adapted program will provide valuable summer camp experiences for some or serve to offer needed childcare for others, and we are working hard to ensure it will still be lots of fun.

I would like to thank our full-time staff team - Andrew, Ben, Bob and Nadia, who have demonstrated remarkable commitment to the task at hand and who never lost sight of our goal. This group has worked tirelessly as we have chased a moving target for the last two months. Most of all though, we are grateful for our Sasamat families and have no doubt we will persevere through this together.

Until then, I wish you all good health and hope you will stay in touch.



Kristen Hyodo, Executive Director