



Friends of Camp Kirkwood



Greetings from YMCA Camp Kirkwood,

We hope this message finds you healthy and safe. While we are all facing this unprecedented time, our staff here at Camp Kirkwood have been planning and preparing as usual with the hopes we would be able to safely run our summer camp programs. YMCA Camp Kirkwood has always strived to provide programs we can be confident are safe, fun, and unforgettable.

Over the past few months, we have taken into consideration information provided by the American Camp Association, local health departments, the YMCA of the USA, and the CDC. Based on what we know, we have examined many different options for keeping our campers distanced, in small groups, with various protocols for cleaning our facilities around the clock.

After much deliberation, we have decided to suspend all currently planned summer camp programming for 2020, in an effort to protect our campers, staff and families, and to ensure YMCA Camp Kirkwood is positioned to serve kids and families for many more years to come.

This is a heart-breaking and incredibly difficult decision and was not entered into lightly by our staff and board. Camp, by its nature and design, is a social experience. When we take a step back and look at where camp memories are made most, campfires, capture the flag, swimming, dining hall songs and cabin activities we see these times as the promotion of social proximity, not social distancing. While every camp location is different and accommodates diverse situations uniquely, we felt Camp Kirkwood's programs could not be delivered at the high-quality we promise and you expect, at this time.

The YMCA Camp Kirkwood team is here for you through phone, email, social media, or snail mail. Let us know what Kirkwood traditions you are doing from home. Since campers will not receive their yearly bead at camp, every camper who is currently registered for overnight camp will receive a gold bead in the mail. This one-time bead is gold because gold represents love, compassion, courage, passion, understanding success, achievement, and triumph. Add this bead to your necklace and when you look at it remember you are loved, you are courageous, and you will triumph through this difficult time.

Stay strong, stay kind, and stay healthy.

Luke Dooley
Associate Executive Director
YMCA Camp Kirkwood

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Refunds for Registrations

For those of you who have paid some, or all, of your 2020 fees, we have the following options:

- **Donate all paid fees.** This helps us now more than ever to operate on a year-round basis and enables our staff to continue working and developing programs for summer, outdoor education, and groups. Supporting camp now helps us the most to make sure we're ready to open in the future! You will receive a donation receipt.
- **Donate a portion of paid fees, receive a refund for rest.** This option helps in the same way as above. You can specify what amount you'd like to donate and what amount you'd like refunded back to your original payment method.
- **Full refund.** We know that many families are also facing their own hardships and a full refund will be helpful for you now. Your refund will be paid back to your original payment method.

Please email Luke.Dooley@ymcasenc.org to inform us of your choice by June 15th, 2020.



How to Talk With Your Child About Camp Being Cancelled

You are the expert on your child and have a better understanding of how they might handle this information. We encourage you to first digest the news yourself before talking to your camper. Below are some tips that can help guide you when talking to your child about camp:

1. **Acknowledge their feelings.** Expect a range of emotions, including disappointment, anger, sadness, or even grief. Most of us, including our children, have experienced a lot of canceled plans, and adding yet another disappointment to the list may feel overwhelming. Acknowledge that it is frustrating to suffer yet another loss.
2. **Ask: What would help?** When your camper is ready, think about what can be done to cope. You can set up a video call with some camp friends. If comfortable, have your camper follow YMCA Camp Kirkwood on Instagram or Facebook. What are some things that your child can do to share their favorite parts of camp with your family? Maybe they can teach you a game from camp or camp song. Is there a camp meal you can make at home? Not every child will feel better by doing camp activities at home, so let them be the guide. It may take some time to process this information, so be patient with them. Have your camper write to camp with things that work well and that you all enjoyed.
3. **Keep calm.** Take a look at some resources addressing other challenges that can arise in a crisis. [This short activity](#) may help with calming your child after bad news is delivered. Simply use your senses.
4. **Practice mindfulness exercises.** Try a few of these [mindfulness exercises](#). Many don't require any materials.
5. **Manage disappointment.** Other activities this summer will likely be canceled in addition to camp. [This video](#) provides some ways to manage that disappointment.
6. **Talk about your child's mental health.** After months at home from school and now the possibility of more time at home this summer, it is more important than ever to keep your camper's mental health positive and, [here is a resource](#) to open that conversation.
7. **Be the best version of yourself.** At Camp Kirkwood, we teach campers to be the best version of themselves. [Here is a TED talk](#) for doing that during a crisis.