

May 22, 2020

Statement on the Status of Summer Camps

For nearly 3000 children every summer, Dovercourt Camps offer two full months of adventure, excitement, and friendships. Anyone who has seen the outdoor field during the summer months can agree that it is a place that quickly comes to life with sunshine, laughter, songs, and games. A place where children quickly form new friendships and find confidence in new skills. For almost 250 camp staff, volunteers, instructors, and support workers, Dovercourt in July and August is a place to learn, to contribute, to excel, and to grow, safely surrounded by others doing the same.

Recent news from the province regarding the closure of overnight camps and the status of day camps has presented a moment of pause and reflection not only about the safety of our kids and what measures are necessary, but also in the value of summer camp itself. For those who have never experienced it, there is no real way to explain the magic of camp. For those who have lived it, you know exactly what I mean. While we are anxious of course to bring all of our campers 'home' this summer, we remain cautious in our planning as the safety of our campers and staff is our *only* priority.

There are still so many things unknown at this time but that list seems to be getting smaller each day. What we do know is that our overnight camps will not be offered this year. For the 100+ campers who are already registered, we will be in touch, and look forward to seeing you in 2021. We also know that our facilities are closed until at least June 30th. This means that the first week of camp, June 29th-July 3rd has been cancelled.

We know that we will not have access to all of our regular facilities including public schools, and that the use of City amenities like beaches, parks, and playgrounds will be different.

We also know that we want to get kids active and outdoors and back together with one another, even in small groups and we are working hard to make that happen. At the top of our priority list is learning how to help staff care for children in this new world – how to comfort a child without a hug, this is all new to us.

We know that when we do open our doors they will be open to everyone. As usual with our summer camp programs, it means that no one comes unless everyone can come. We are working hard to ensure the continuation of our inclusion & integration procedures so that all kids can participate, as well as our financial assistance program, so that no family is left behind.

Registration for summer camps has currently been put on pause while we work closely with the City of Ottawa, public health authorities, and our many program partners to determine our next best step. If you are currently registered for a camp, you will receive program-specific updates from us and refunds if it is cancelled. You will also receive updates as new programs are offered and the opportunity to quickly put your child's name back on the list. If you have not yet registered for a camp, please check our website often for updates.

Thank you for your continued support and patience and for your trust in our careful planning.

Robin Cloutier
Program Director
Dovercourt Camps