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July 27, 2020

A warm hello from Camp Caroline!

As this continues to be an unusual season for all of us, I have been reflecting on Lamentations 3:22-24:

*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases;  
his mercies never come to an end;  
they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul,  
“therefore I will hope in him.”*

While so much in our lives has been disrupted due to the COVID-19 outbreak, God’s promised presence and provision continues. He is steadfast. This season will not last forever. It may linger longer than any of us want but it will come to an end. God’s faithfulness, however, will last. And, his love will endure. Because of who he is we can hold firm to our faith and hope in him.

During any other summer I would be writing this update surrounded by the sounds of campers and counselors singing songs of praise during worship or squealing as they fly out over the ridge on the giant swing. Not this summer. At this time, we are still closed. Overnight camps are prohibited from operating and after reviewing the restrictions on businesses and gatherings we decided we were not able to offer alternative programming. We explored a few different options, including day camps on-site or at churches in the city; and, a limited opening to allow families to use the camp as a campground. Unfortunately, as we developed protocols to comply to restrictions on businesses and gatherings for each of these options, we determined none of them were viable.

**Without specific information on Stage 3 of the relaunch strategy, we have not set a date to re-open but hope to do so by the middle of September.**

Anticipating we will need to have measures in place to re-open, I have directed the staff to implement protocols based on existing guidelines for those sectors most similar to our operations for the fall, winter, and spring seasons. These protocols will allow us to resume operations with a capacity to sustain operations during our recovery.



I also met with the Board of Directors earlier this month and recommended that we take steps before the end of this year to prepare the ministry for a prolonged recovery. It is impossible to predict exactly how the ministry of the camp will be impacted following the pandemic but we want to do what we can to steward the continuing ministry. There is still a lot we do not know but with what we know right now we are expecting a significant decrease in bookings for at least the 2020-21 retreat and rental season.

**We are not panicked. We are prayerfully planning.**



Over the next few months I will continue working with the Board and team to adjust our anticipated costs for 2021 to avoid depleting reserve funds or over-extending our ongoing financial commitments. As I know more I will continue to keep you up-to-date.

## PRAY FOR US

In the meantime, I would invite you to be in prayer for us. As you pray for us, please pray for:

- 1) Wisdom as the team prepares to re-open with protocols to protect campers, guests, and staff. **The health and safety of our campers, guests, and staff is always of highest priority to us.**
- 2) Wisdom and direction as we plan for recovery.
- 3) The camp's finances as we continue to cut any costs that can be avoided and to identify other potential sources of income to decrease the expected year-end deficit. Based on decreased income we will need \$400,000 to address adjusted operational costs.

## PRAISE / PRAYER ITEMS

A couple of praise/prayer items related to the camp's finances:

- 1) Families donated more than \$30,000 from their registration fees after camps were cancelled last month. **We are so thankful for the support and generosity of each of those who gave.**
- 2) This week I will submit an application to the province's community initiatives program for a \$50,000 grant. This is a one-time grant designed to support camps that have closed due to the pandemic.

## FINANCIAL GIFTS

If you or your church are able to give this summer, financial gifts received will help the ministry continue managing ongoing costs and be prepared to re-open this fall. Gifts can be made online at [campcaroline.ab.ca/donation](https://campcaroline.ab.ca/donation). Until we are able to reopen, we are asking that gifts be directed to the *General Fund* to allow us to maintain appropriate cash flow and manage ongoing costs.

We are committed to keeping you updated on how we are proceeding. You can stay up-to-date on our COVID-19 response by visiting us online at [campcaroline.ab.ca/covid-19-response](https://campcaroline.ab.ca/covid-19-response).

On behalf of our staff team and Board of Directors, thank you for your support and prayer during this season.



Warmly,



Ben Frites  
Executive Director, Camp Caroline

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