



# LAKETRAILS BASE CAMP

BUSINESS: PO BOX 810, WARROAD, MN 56763 ... 800-450-6460

SUMMER: PO BOX 25, OAK ISLAND, MN 56741 ... 218-223-8281

May 2020

Dear Laketrails Family,

May is often an exciting time in the North Country. We watch as the early signs of spring emerge in the form of green grass and the appearance of the first buds and leaves on the trees. After many months of silence we hear bird song and lapping waves on the shore. It's a time when we eagerly look forward to the summer months. This year, however, as we enjoy the promise of Nature's beauty and warmer days ahead, there's a different feel in the air. COVID-19 has left us with numerous changes to our routines and plans.

At a recent meeting of the Laketrails Board of Trustees, the decision was made to **cancel all programs for 2020**. In reaching this important and disappointing conclusion, we have thoughtfully considered the trends and projections of our shared pandemic, advice from the CDC and MN Department of Health, and the implications of guidelines and regulations to the Laketrails program. We are deeply saddened, yet we know it's the right thing for Laketrails to do to keep our campers, staff, and families as safe as possible.

To our camper families, we want you to know that this has been an incredibly heartbreaking decision for us as we understand how much camp means to our youth. Already, we can hardly wait for the laughter, songs, and joyful ringing of the Laketrails bell to welcome campers back to the island next year!

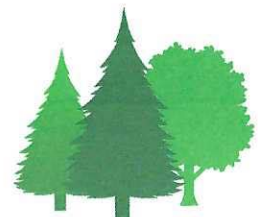
Parents and guardians of currently registered campers will be contacted in the coming weeks to arrange refunds. We hope some folks will be able to donate a portion of their paid fees to help Laketrails get through the coming months. Families will also have the choice of applying fees to our 2021 season or receiving a full refund. Please know that we value your comments, concerns, and questions. We hope you will feel welcome to share with us at any time by way of phone (800)-450-6460 or email at [info@laketrails.org](mailto:info@laketrails.org).

Today we are forced to adapt to numerous changes; to "go with the flow" as instilled in Laketrails campers by the *Ten Commandments of Wilderness Survival*. Therefore, we will make a shift this summer to a new "social media style" of programming that we truly hope will appeal to our campers, friends, and alumni. While we're still in the "visioning" phase of what this will look like, our amazing and talented Guides are planning some fun videos that we hope will be both enlightening and entertaining. We look forward to having you join us on Instagram, Facebook, and our new YouTube channel starting in mid-June. Even though we can't be together on the island, our Guides will share with you their unique brand of humor, wit, and love of canoeing and camping that has been a hallmark of Laketrails since 1952.

Our primary founder, Fr. Bill Mehrkens, knew that young people can be profoundly impacted by a wilderness experience. Wild places can heal our hurting hearts, build confidence, inspire and empower youth, and change lives for the better. In writing *The Laketrails Idea*, Fr. Bill reminds us that "Laketrails is a land of Hope." And so, we remain hopeful, knowing that the wilderness will be here, waiting for our campers to return in 2021.

Sincerely,

Sue Lemm  
Laketrails Camp Director



*Laketrails: Inspiring teens with an appreciation of self, community, and environment through a wilderness canoeing adventure.*