May 5, 2020

Dear Camp Friends,

We have been intentionally waiting to make any decisions about our summer sessions, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The longer we wait, the more information we have so we can make informed, solid plans. Please know that we want to have camp, and are fully aware how much YOU may need camp right now. This is why we are waiting and haven’t cancelled the entire summer; we want to have camp if even for a few weeks.

There are many things we need to consider, from staffing (many of our counselors are from other states and even other countries, will we have enough staff to work at camp?) to the cleaning and disinfecting that will have to be done after every single activity, to obtaining protective equipment for all of our staff, to handling mealtimes, etc. The CDC is expected to release guidelines for summer camps in the near future, this may alter our plans, as well.

**What we know right now:**

We will not be opening camp at all until at least July. As of today, May 5, staff would report on July 5, with campers able to attend sessions beginning July 12.

Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp will be adhering to state guidelines concerning group sizes, meaning we will most likely have a group of campers and staff members no larger than 50. All staff members will be required, and campers encouraged, to wear face masks.

When our camps open, we will be doing things differently. We most likely will NOT be opening the pool or the ropes course. Because there is potential for so many tourists in Wisconsin Dells, we will NOT be offering town trips, Duck Boat tours, Tommy Bartlett, bowling, and other trips we have taken into town in the past.

We expect to make a more concrete decision on our summer schedule in mid-May. All of the plans throughout the state and country are based on data, not on dates, so things can change very quickly.

**What can you be doing now?**

Please contact your primary healthcare provider to see if camp is right for you! Any campers or staff members with compromised immune systems or respiratory issues are strongly discouraged from attending camp this summer. Please contact our office (608-254-2502, jlloyd@eastersealswisconsin.com for Respite Camp, apeters@eastersealswisconsin.com for Camp Wawbeek) right away to cancel your session if you are choosing not to attend. We are aware that many healthcare facilities are not open for general physicals at this time. If your camp physical was done within the past 18 months, you will be allowed to attend camp. **If you are currently signed up for two sessions between July 12 and August 9, please cancel one session so that other campers who had their session cancelled in June will be able to attend.** If you don’t choose a session to cancel, the camp directors will choose for you.

Please prepare your campers for camp to be different! We are well aware that many campers have the routine of camp in their blood, and that is what they look forward to. We are preparing social stories that will be available on our website for you to use in advance. You can be helping a great deal to make this change a smooth one.
Practice wearing facemasks at home. There are campers who will hate doing this; if you start wearing them at home for short amounts of time, they may be more inclined to do so at camp. Also, please prepare your campers to be ready to see their camp counselors and other staff members at camp wearing masks.

Renita Link, Billing Specialist, (rlink@eastersealswisconsin.com 608-237-1372) will be contacting your funding sources to inform them of this change. Please call/email her if you have any billing questions.

Know that we miss all of our camp friends dearly, and can’t wait to see you at camp!

We will be continuously evaluating the status of this situation, and will keep you informed if there will be other changes. Please refer to the State of Wisconsin, Department of Health Services website for more information https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/outbreaks/index.htm.