



Wilderness Canoe Trips Since 1893

Dear Keewaydin parents and campers,

I have appreciated your patience, persistence, trust, and commitment to Keewaydin over these last 8 months. I recognize a community of parents, campers, and staff who want the experiences and adventure Keewaydin provides. We are a unique group of people; eager for the resilience, growth, mental clarity, strength, and inner tenacity a canoe trip brings to a young person. In a year filled with countless losses, shifts, struggles, and also moments of relief, joy, and solidarity we were striving for one goal: "Let's get to the summer and get back to Lake Temagami."

I have never wanted summer camp more than I have wanted it this year, especially for all of the girls and boys who are ready and excited to live simply and immerse themselves in the Keewaydin way. Each camper hoping for the chance to make new friends, reconnect with old friends, sleep in a tent, paddle a canoe, and relish in the raw beauty of Temagami and beyond.

This is the longest portage we have ever navigated. We are making an incredibly difficult decision, yet the absolutely right decision, to cancel all of our summer sessions.

In the last few months, our leadership team zeroed in on the obstacles on our path. We could prepare sound plans, procedures and protocols. We could require testing and set up a system for safely transporting campers to camp. We could collaborate with experts, from doctors and public health consultants, to immigration specialists. What we could not change was the situation unfolding in Ontario and Canada.

With Canada's recent announcement on April 20 to extend the closure of the US/Canada border until at least May 21, we have reached the point as an organization where we need to make decisions about our ability to operate this summer. We had hoped that an exemption for campers to travel to Canada would be provided. The exemption is not moving forward.

The situation in Ontario remains challenging, with Covid cases at an all-time high, and the province in a lock down until May 20. Ontario's situation is significantly worse than 1 year ago, and the delays and obstacles in their vaccination rollout is cause for concern. We are very sad for our friends in Canada and hope the communities we hold so dear come out of this unscathed. By our estimation, it is unlikely conditions will improve as swiftly as we would need them to in order for us to be able to open camp.

Additional hurdles that remain are ones Keewaydin cannot directly remove from our path. The Ontario government has not yet permitted overnight camps to open for the summer. Camping is not permitted on Crown Land, visitation to many First Nations communities and certain parks is prohibited. In addition, for our staff, under the Quarantine Act, entry into Canada includes a required 14-day quarantine. These restrictions stifle our ability to move ahead.

Keewaydin Camps Corporation Canada / Keewaydin Camps Ltd.

Emily Schoelzel, *Camp Director* emily@keewaydin.org
Tel 802-352-4709 Fax 802-352-4772 www.keewaydin.org
Winter: 500 Rustic Lane, Salisbury VT 05769
Summer: General Delivery, Temagami ON P0H 2H0, Canada





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Equally important to us is the respect owed to you, who after a year of many new and difficult challenges, should have the opportunity to make plans for the summer. We do not want to string families and staff along for a few more weeks when we recognize the chance for a positive outcome is very low. We want families and staff to have time to pivot to a different summer option.

For 126 summers, Keewaydin ran without missing a year. No one would have guessed these Covid related challenges would cause us to cancel camp for a summer, let alone two in a row. Yet the depth of our resilience and ability to persevere come from lessons learned during the countless hours paddling a canoe into a head wind, arms and hands tiring from stroke after stroke, but still in sync with your boat partner. Or at the campsite, a hungry section eager for the pull of the saw, the blade's teeth cutting the firewood, your wood crew team working together to provide the foundation of a hot meal. These experiences, imprinted in our collective Keewaydin minds, help us lift our gaze to future Keewaydin summers. We are a strong organization, connected to and supported by an immensely caring camp community. We know we will be back; we know the value of a Keewaydin canoe trip. We believe in our mission, we live by our motto, and we recognize in this moment, the risk outweighs the reward.

I share the heartbreak of a lost summer with you, my own kids will also miss the chance to paddle a green canoe and immerse themselves into a stunning wilderness landscape. Going forward, you will receive an email this week from Katie Johnson, our business manager. Keewaydin will provide a full refund to parents or the opportunity to rollover deposits to hold a spot for your camper for the summer of 2022.

We hope that we will see everyone back in 2022, and look forward to hearing from you, whether your camper was to be in his first summer in Manitou, or in what she thought would be her last summer, paddling to Hudson Bay on Section 1.

With the decision to cancel camp for the summer, many parents may be wondering where to turn to next for their camper. Keewaydin Foundation's Vermont camps, Dunmore and Songadeewin, are unfortunately already full and are limited to an 80% capacity. A great summer camp resource is with the American Camp Association and their "Find a Camp" page. <http://find.acacamps.org/>

Refund questions can be directed to Katie Johnson katie@keewaydin.org

Camp questions can be directed to me, emily@keewaydin.org or by calling 802-352-4709

With a heavy heart, I wish you well,

Emily

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