



Keewaydin Foundation
500 Rustic Lane
Salisbury VT 05769

Tel 802 352 4247
Fax 802 352 4772

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www.keewaydin.org

March 15, 2022

Dear Keewaydin Community,

After a thorough and thoughtful process, involving a search team of trustees, senior staff, and parents, it gives me great pleasure to announce that Lauren McDowell will be the next director of Songadeewin.

Lauren comes to us from Putney Student Travel in Vermont where she has had a 20-year career that has allowed her to play a role in nearly every component of that business. She began as trip leader for Putney after college, leading summer long trips to Central America, South America and Europe that focused on community engagement, outdoor education, service, language, and cultural immersion. From there she took on the responsibility of creating and coordinating new programs for middle and high school students in Cuba, Ecuador, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, and Spain, sometimes in coordination with partner organizations such as the National Geographic Student Expeditions, New York Times Student Journeys, and Smithsonian Student Travel. She has also played a lead role in marketing, communications, recruitment, budgeting, staff hiring, staff training, and scholarship program management. Since 2018, Lauren has been the director of programming, where she is in charge of oversight of 40+ summer international programs, as well as Putney's creative direction and summer program creation and execution.

Lauren describes herself as "a collaborator and an outdoor adventurer who strives daily to be inspired by the people, cultures, and landscapes around her." With a career dedicated to creating transformational educational experiences for youth and which has allowed her to live and work in dozens of countries, Lauren brings a perspective on people, youth and education that makes her uniquely well qualified to lead Songadeewin.

Lauren will begin working at Songadeewin and the Keewaydin Foundation in mid-May. She looks forward to having her family—her husband, Drew, and sons Callan, Holden and Anders—be part of the Keewaydin and Songadeewin community. She

will spend the summer working closely with Ellen Flight who will remain as director through the summer season. Lauren will assume full responsibilities as director in the fall. Upon accepting the Songa director position Lauren said, "I am deeply honored to become a part of the Songadeewin and Keewaydin community and to have the opportunity to work and learn alongside Ellen this summer. Together with my family, I can say that we are thrilled for this new chapter and look forward to meeting all of you in June!"

I know I speak for the entire Songadeewin and Keewaydin community when I say that we greatly look forward to welcoming Lauren and helping her get off to a great start!

Keewaydinly,



Pete Hare
Executive Director