

Southampton Summer Day Camp

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Dear SSDC 2020 Parents, Campers and Extended Family Members,

Jacque and I sincerely wish that you and all your loved ones are healthy and doing as well as can be expected during these tough times. We believe that this update will bring you up to date on where we are *at this moment* regarding our 2020 camp season.

As camp owners and directors we have had the good fortune to take care of so many amazing children each summer for the past 46 years. Jacque and I consider all of our campers, and you, to be our extended family. We recognize that for us, as well as many of you, camp has helped to define us. Camp promotes self-confidence, independence, and resilience while teaching all of us the life skills needed to build and maintain long term friendships and solid working relationships. And, over the past 46 years, SSDC has cultivated an incredibly unique and special community.

For us, as you can envision, this has been one of the most challenging times of our entire lives. It is fortunate also that we have been able to draw on our years of experience to help us navigate through the volumes of information, proposed guidelines and regulations to meet the needs of our campers and staff for the summer of 2020. We have spent countless hours monitoring the progress of this virus, learning about its impact, and how to best protect us all. We are developing detailed plans to help us be most effective in creating a more “protected environment” for all of us here when we open camp. As we decide how best to proceed this summer, we are in daily contact with government agencies, consulting with health professionals, and conferring with other professionals throughout the summer camp industry. The responsibility for providing a rewarding camp experience while doing everything possible to protect and care for everyone here at camp is indeed tremendous.

The challenge for us now is to totally rebuild our program from the ground up for this one season based on all suggested “best practices.” It will surely be different for all of us, but...it will certainly be a summer which none of us will ever forget!

While the number of new cases and related fatalities in our area continues to diminish and other nearby states continue to slowly reopen, uncertainty and fear naturally continue to dominate our news and whole lives. Many of our colleagues have already decided not to open their camps this summer. Others have delayed or shortened their camp season. It is important that you know where we are at this moment. Currently, based on all best available information and statistics from credible sources, we expect to open camp a week later, on Monday, June 29, and end camp on Friday, August 21. Primarily, as we have always maintained, **we will not open camp unless we are confident that we can adhere to all recommended “Best Safe Practices” for all in attendance.** Also, we need to be confident by the middle of June that all facts on the ground which are presented to us will allow us to execute a plan that helps keep the virus out of camp. We must also be confident that we can deal promptly and effectively with it at all levels, if necessary. **Only if we can reach all those conclusions, AND the State of Pennsylvania decides that it is safe by permitting us to open, will we even consider opening.**

As grandparents of three beautiful campers Jacque and I, much like all of you, would want to know as soon as possible if/when camp will open, and exactly what camp will look like for our children this summer. As all of us are aware, much is still unknowable, but we are constantly working to gather the detailed information that will enable us to make the best decision for all of us. Consequently, as we communicated in March, we continue asking everyone to hold off on payments until June. **We will absolutely honor all requests for full refunds, as well as offer incentives to roll deposits over toward summer 2021, until June 15, 2020.**

Considering what we already know, and to help minimize certain risks, here are just a few of the many different things to be aware of this summer:

- This will NOT follow the regular typical flow of an SSDC summer!
- All campers, counselors and staff will be required to wear face masks at camp
- Cleaning and disinfecting teams will operate continuously every day
- All staff will be trained in COVID-19 protocol prior to camp
- Health screening for all will take place upon arrival each day
- Social distancing will need to be followed by all, as much as possible
- There will be longer breaks between each activity period for hand sanitizing

- Each Bunk will be smaller and self-contained throughout the day
- There may be no clubs or leagues to minimize overall contacts
- Many activities will be adjusted, or eliminated, with quite a few new ones added which meet health criteria
- There will be no Visiting Week nor any visitors whatsoever, including family members, permitted on the campgrounds while camp is in session
- All Meet-the-Counselor events, as well as all staff trainings, will be virtual
- Food service will be modified based on CDC guidelines
- Transportation will be modified based on CDC guidelines
- We may need to stagger arrival and departure times for drop off and pick up
- There will not be any out of camp trips
- Late Night events will not be held
- Program and facility adjustments will occur as directed by the state, the CDC and ACA guidelines
- FYI - Here is the link to the [ACA Field Guide for 2020](#)

Jacque and I have always been optimistic, but also realistic, about all of this. We understand the value of a rewarding summer camp program for everyone but our approach to confronting our challenges and accurately measuring all the risks will be rooted in comprehensive guidance from all the expert sources mentioned above.

Of course, much about the future of this virus is still unknowable. Nothing can ever be absolutely 100% perfect and free of risk. Certainly, nothing about this situation can be guaranteed. IF we are PERMITTED by the state to open, we will be well prepared by all available known standards.

We genuinely believe in the value of an SSDC experience. While it will not be easy, and there are no guarantees, we will go to whatever lengths possible to keep all of our campers and staff safe while helping everyone have a wonderful, productive, and much needed positively great summer to remember!

So, for now stay safe and busy, keep fingers crossed and look for more updates as events unfold.

Healthy wishes,

Rick and Jacque