

April 23, 2021

The Barton Center COVID-19 Update – Barton Resident Camps

Dear Camp Families,

We have been working extremely hard to open camp safely this summer. However, there are many circumstances beyond our control that we cannot overcome. Sadly, I am writing with the same heavy heart and great sadness that I did last year, although this year seems to sting a bit more as I am sure you will agree. At our recent board of trustees meeting, we voted to cancel **overnight** camps. This was not an easy decision.

The board and I want to be honest in sharing several reasons, all of which were conflicted and complicated.

- Safety: It is always the top consideration at The Barton Center as a medical specialty camp. We do not have enough staff to safely open. This includes both medical and program. It is in large part due to restrictions that require staff to remain in the “cohort/cabin” the entire time. They cannot leave their group. This also eliminates our short-term staff and volunteers who can only commit to a few days here and there.
- Fun: Regulations currently require each cohort/cabin to remain the same with no interactions between groups. No dances, no dining hall experience, very limited activities, and all within their own cabin/cohort. Campers will not have the same magical camp experience they are used to. Camp will not be the same, including changes in opening and closing where no visitors are allowed, and your child would be dropped off in a designated area.
- COVID-19: There have been an increasing number of families reaching out who are concerned with the variants as well as the increasing cases of children testing positive. A few have canceled. I think the hardest part for families isn't that they think a diagnosis would be fatal, but they don't want their children becoming ill during camp and having to quarantine or be picked up (pickup is especially difficult outside of our local area).

As we previously announced back in February, we canceled all our out-of-state programs including day camps in CT, NY, Vermont Overnight Camp and Adventure Program.

We will be offering a virtual program that will be run by the seasonal admin team and lots of familiar faces. We will also operate a virtual CIT program so that next year they will be ready as junior counselors. The virtual program will include camp goodies, songs, games, and many activities as campers connect with each other. You will not be disappointed! Campership is available for the virtual programs. Details for our virtual program will be available soon.

We will run our Worcester Day Camp program, and we are currently reviewing the possibility of offering an additional week of this program. We will provide more details as soon as possible if this occurs.

Additionally, please check our social media sites and website for updates and our virtual program registration that will be available soon. This was a difficult decision but one I hope you realize was made with the safety of everyone in mind. Thank you in advance for your understanding, and please feel free to call me with any questions.

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