



February 9th, 2021

Dear Camp Oconto Families,

It is hard to believe it is February already. The first camper arrival day of summer 2021 is 141 days away- the countdown is on and we can't wait!

We are writing to provide you with a brief update as we continue to plan Oconto's 2021 season. We also want to introduce you to the summer 2021 Section Heads!

The last several months have of course been very difficult for everyone. The challenges for kids have been especially significant. Like all of you, we are looking forward to brighter days ahead and we are anticipating and planning for an amazing summer at camp in 2021. At Camp Oconto, we believe that kids have never needed camp more than they do now and we are making every effort to realize a safe and happy camp experience for your daughters this summer.

We would like to highlight some of the things we have been working on in preparation for the 2021 camp season such as:

- Construction of a new outdoor dining area.
- We have made arrangements for COVID-19 testing with a healthcare company that specializes in testing in the event that it is not available publicly for asymptomatic campers and staff. If we can be sure that everyone comes to camp healthy and COVID-negative, that sets a great foundation for maintaining a healthy camp population. Additionally, we know that the ability to test while campers and staff are at camp will enable us to identify any possible cases of COVID-19 quickly and prevent potential spread. While some children have experience with COVID-19 testing, we know that many do not. Your child's comfort is very important to us and we will have more details about the type of test and the experience of getting tested in our next update.
- Making adjustments to practices and procedures in the Health Centre.
- Working with our amazing staff to adapt some activities to the realities of COVID-19. For example, plays at drama will likely need to be plot lines/scenes that connect but do not overlap. Meaning one cohort would be in scene 1 and a different cohort would be in scene 2 etc. Other examples include moving activities outdoors when possible such as arts & crafts, song circle and dance.

As mentioned in a previous update, I (Bronwyn) have been volunteering on the Ontario Camps Association (OCA) COVID-19 Task Force Committee for Overnight Camps since September 2020. The COVID-19 Task Force has been helping to develop the guidelines for overnight camps to follow in 2021. We hope to have more details from Public Health in early March and we will share those details with Oconto families once they are known.

Here are some of the challenges and opportunities we are working on and tracking carefully:

- Overnight camps such as Camp Oconto have the benefit of operating as a largely "bubbled" community. This means we are separated from the general population and quite isolated. We acknowledge that camp will need to look a little bit different this year, most likely with a layered



1126 Camp Oconto Road • Tichborne • Ontario • K0H 2V0 • 613.375.6678



CAMP OCONTO

approach to non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs). The NPIs we are thinking about and scenario planning for include health screening, cohorting, physical distancing between cohorts, increased focus on hand hygiene, enhanced cleaning procedures where appropriate and the use of masks when required. We anticipate there may need to be changes to drop off and pick-up procedures, visitors and deliveries (for example: food, mail).

- The current COVID-19 vaccines are not approved for anyone under the age of 16 at this time. Therefore, we are planning based on the assumption that campers will not be immunized against COVID-19 in summer 2021. We do not yet know the timeline for when we can expect our staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19. We are planning based on the assumption that the vast majority of people at camp in summer 2021 will not be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- We believe that campers and staff from outside of Canada will be able to attend camp this year (if they are willing and able to abide by the Canadian requirements in place at the time). It is likely these requirements will include proof of one or more negative COVID-19 tests as well as a quarantine period after arriving in Canada. We will provide an update on this when we have more information and guidance on requirements and best practices.

A note about finances: In the unlikely event that camps are ordered closed by the government in summer 2021 then we will provide refunds and/or the option to defer. If camp goes ahead but you are not comfortable with the adaptations to the regular Oconto program, we are implementing a “full refund no questions asked” policy until April 1st, 2021. Otherwise, our regular cancellation policy applies. The full fee policy can be viewed at this link (please scroll to the bottom of the page): <https://campoconto.com/camp-oconto-rates-and-dates/>

Please know that we will make every decision with care and attention to the key goal: **to provide a safe and happy camp experience for your daughters in summer 2021.**

On a final note, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the summer 2021 Section Heads! They are:

Claire – Head of Tads

Hey Tads!

My name is Claire, and I am super excited to be your section head this summer! This marks my 14th summer at Oconto, and I am so lucky to be spending it on the sunny shores of Eagle Lake with all of you. When I am not at Camp, I can be found at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, where I am studying Community Development. While I love school, camp is my absolute favourite time of the year! I can't wait to be back in the water and at the barn hanging out with the horses. This summer is going to be filled with so many laughs, awesome dance parties and maybe even some magic!! I cannot wait to spend the summer having fun on top of Tad Mountain with you!

Megan – Head of Chips

Hey Chips!!

My name is Megan, and I cannot wait to be your section head this summer!!!! This will be my 12th summer at Oconto, and I think that we are going to have a blast together! When I am not at camp, I spend the rest of my year studying at Brock University in St. Catherine's where I am in their Concurrent Education Program to become a Teacher. I absolutely love spending my summer on the shores of Eagle Lake and I simply can't wait to be back there with all of you lovely ladies! I can't wait to meet you all and have the best summer ever!!





CAMP OCONTO

Phoebe – Head of Eagles

What's up, Eagles?

I'm Phoebe, and this year I'm going to be spending my 12th summer with you on the sunny shores of Eagle Lake! When I'm not at camp, I go to Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and, by the time we're hanging out in the Rock Garden, I will have graduated with my bachelor's degree in Arts, with a major in Sociology. Outside of school, I love all things creative – writing, playing guitar and painting are all some of my favourite hobbies, which explains why you can normally find me hanging out at Arts and Crafts, Sparts, or Song Circle, but if I'm being honest, Diving is my favourite activity of all (just between you and me, I'm still a little afraid of jumping off Tower!). I'm counting down the days until I see all of your smiling faces and can't wait to make this the best summer ever!

Mackenzie – Head of Intermediates

Hi Ints!!!

My name is Mackenzie, and I am beyond excited to be your Section Head this summer!! This year will be my 14th summer at camp and I truly believe it is going to be the best!! This year I graduated from Queens University where I studied Film and Media. Camp is my favourite place in the entire world, and I absolutely love swimming in Eagle Lake and doing wacky dress-ups for dinner! I cannot wait to share this incredible summer with you all and I am looking forward to activities, dance parties, Sunday Evening Concert acts, and getting to spend my summer in Ints section! I am so excited to meet everyone, and I hope you are ready for the best summer ever!!

Erika – Head of Seniors

Hey Seniors!!

My name is Erika, and I am beyond ready and excited to be back at camp as your Section Head this summer! This year will mark my 12th summer at Oconto, and I can't wait to spend it on the water getting to know all of you! This spring, I will be graduating from the University of Western Ontario with a B.A. in English and French, though I look forward to returning in September for Teachers College! While I enjoy school, my absolute favourite part of the year is being back at Oconto! There are so many amazing activities at camp, but my favourites would have to be Kayaking, Arts & Crafts and Canoeing. Oconto holds such a special place in my heart, and I can't wait to be back on the shores of Eagle Lake singing songs, jumping off Tower, and having the best time with you Senior ladies!

Get ready for a great summer!

Emma – Head of QCs

Hey QC Ladies!

My name is Emma, and I am so excited to spend my 12th summer at Oconto up in QC land with all of you! I'm dying to get back to camp, (as I'm sure you all are too!) and I'm looking forward to some awesome QC all camps and super fun sessions! QCs is such an exciting and important year at camp, and I'm thrilled to be along for the ride. It's been a minute since I was a QC, but I have such great memories of that summer and I want you guys to have a fantastic time just like I did!

Summer can't come soon enough!

Lauren – Head of Semis

Hey Semis! As you may remember my name is Lauren and I'm so thrilled to be your Head of Semis this year! This will be my 12th summer at Oconto, and I can't wait to spend it getting to know each and every





CAMP OCONTO

one of you and watching you grow into the incredible counsellors I know you all are! I graduated from Dalhousie University in 2019 and I've spent this past year at home in Kingston, working at a local bakery and eating lots of delicious bread and pastries. But I couldn't be more excited to be back on the sunny shores of Eagle Lake. I'm looking forward to engaging sessions, hanging out in the Room and planning two incredible banquets!!! Summer can't come soon enough!

Emily – Assistant Director

Hello Oconto campers and families! My name is Emily Pepper, and I am so thrilled to be the Assistant Director at Oconto for 2021! I started coming to camp as a Chip and have spent 13 beautiful summers on Eagle Lake since then. I am currently in my first year of the Midwifery Education Program at McMaster University and am so excited to be on this path towards helping families grow! In my free time I like crafting (especially making warm fuzzies!), spending time outside with my friends and family, shamelessly watching The Bachelor - all things I have been doing a TON of during quarantine! My favourite activity at camp is Swimming Lessons, and I am a sucker for Sunday Evening Concert!! I am so looking forward to spending quality time with you all this summer and soaking up all the great things Oconto has to offer!! Sending you all a virtual hug or high-five!

The 2021 Section Head bios and pictures can be found at this link:

<https://campoconto.com/camp-oconto-staff/>

Summer 2021 at Camp Oconto is going to be wonderful – screen free, outdoors, filled with newfound friendships & the rekindling of old ones and fantastic role models! If you have not yet submitted your 2021 camper application forms, please do so as soon as possible. For emphasis I will state again: we believe that kids have never needed camp more than they do now and we are making every effort to realize a safe and happy camp experience for your daughters this summer.

We want you to feel well informed during this constantly shifting time. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns. We can be reached by email at bronwyn@campoconto.com or ted@campoconto.com or by phone at 613-375-6678. Additionally, we are planning to host a few Zoom sessions this spring to talk about the COVID-19 procedures and practices that will be in place at camp and give you the opportunity to ask questions.

Thank you for being part of the Camp Oconto community!

Sincerely,

Bronwyn and Ted Gorsline, Directors

Lisa and Bruce Wilson, Past Directors



ONTARIO CAMPS ASSOCIATION

1126 Camp Oconto Road • Tichborne • Ontario • K0H 2V0 • 613.375.6678