



## **COVID-19 UPDATE – CYOB Program Suspended for 2020 – April 27<sup>th</sup> 2020**

Much has changed in our world quite quickly, and much uncertainty still remains. With all of this please know that you, your families, and your congregations are in the forefront of our thoughts and prayers through this challenging and troubling time.

This past week Cairn's Board of Directors and Executive Leadership Team met to discern the best path forward in terms of our 2020 summer programs. In light of the realities surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, we have made the difficult decision to suspend our Camp in Your Own Backyard (CYOB) program for the summer of 2020.

Our first priority at the Cairn Family of Camps is always the health and wellbeing of our campers, volunteers, and staff. After carefully reviewing guidance and recommendations from government and public health officials, the Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit, the Ontario Camps Association, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada we have determined that the CYOB program poses a high risk due to the following factors:

1. CYOB is a day camp program. Very similar to schools, day camps are at higher risk of transmission as children are interacting with a variety of environments and individuals each day as they travel from home to camp to outside activities.
2. The CYOB program would not be able to practice effective social distancing. CYOB relies on the support volunteers, many of which are considered high-risk due to their age or medical status, this increases the risk for all.
3. CYOB requires Cairn staff to travel from one city to the next, billeting with members of the church during their stay, with only a two-day break in between. We are unable to have staff self-isolate for the appropriate time (14 days) between programs, which significantly increases the risk to them and to all the churches that host CYOB.

While this summer will be different for us all, we want you to know that we are continuing to make plans to support all of our campers and camper families including CYOB. We remain hopeful that we will be able to run a traditional overnight camp program at our site in Baysville. Camp provides the opportunity for children and youth to create authentic connections, experience growth, and learn how to live in Christian community with one another, all while immersed in the beauty of Creation. We know they need this now more than ever.

Over the past five weeks, Cairn has been offering the opportunity for children, youth and families to experience that camp-like connection through our virtual camp program, Cairn Connects. We will continue to offer connection and community through virtual programs until we can meet again in person. Robynne Howard, our Camp Director, will be in touch over the next weeks and months to provide you with information about resources and programs to serve your campers, families, and congregations.



We are saddened that we cannot offer CYOB this year but we trust in God's goodness, mercy, and love and look forward to the time when we can come together again in Christian community. Please know that we are eager to extend our knowledge and experience to support your youth, families, church leaders or congregation during this time. Please connect with us if there is anything we can do to serve you - we would love to help.

Yours in Camping,  
Michelle "Konk" Roberts  
Executive Director, Cairn Family of Camps