



Summer 2020

ALUMNI

NEWSLETTER

The official newsletter of the John Island Camp Alumni and Friends of John Island

SPECIAL EDITION

The sun also rises

COVID-19 , the YMCA, and John Island Camp
by Helen Francis
- What is being done at camp this summer



What this Edition is All About

A Camp without campers is haunting. But as Hemmingway so confidently expressed, “the sun also rises”. Thanks to a few very committed alumni, we have received financial support to enable a few staff to stay at the camp over the summer, following the direction provided by the local Health Unit.

This group will keep a watchful eye on the camp and do some maintenance and get a start on some necessary small construction projects.

Through the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy, we have six staff at the camp. Other Expenses such as fuel, boats, repair and operating costs for these few staff are being covered by alumni support. This newsletter is intended to bring our Alumni and Friends of John Island up to date on what is happening to help ensure YMCA John Island Camp is not only operational for the 2021 season, but in top shape.

COVID-19, the YMCA, and John Island Camp

By Helen Francis, CEO, YMCA of Northeastern Ontario

As I write this update, we are 18 weeks into the closure of much of our Association as a result of COVID-19. This, of course, has led to the need to cancel our overnight camp for the season at YMCA John Island Camp although we are still hopeful that we may be able to operate a fall season.

Across our Association, we adjusted and adapted our programs and services quickly and in relevant ways. YMCA Employment and Immigrant Services began offering their services virtually, Licensed Child Care and Licensed Home Child Care focused on serving essential service workers and staff and volunteers in the organization provided free virtual content through YMCA Home and through Facebook. Additionally, they also called members to check in and make sure they had everything they needed to prevent isolation and loneliness.

We also repurposed our Health, Fitness and Aquatics facilities in both communities. The North Bay YMCA became a temporary emergency shelter for those in need. The Sudbury YMCA opened their doors to provide access to computers, telephones, washrooms and a cooling station to those in need. Recently, we have also launched a new initiative in partnership with The Village at Canadore College called the Digital Inclusion, Seniors Connection and Opportunities Hub (DISCO). DISCO is focused on supporting our senior population through teaching them internet safety, connection with others and getting active through a short workout for free. We hope to extend this initiative to Sudbury soon.

Throughout our 176 years of existence, the YMCA has continued to reimagine itself and adapt to meet the evolving needs of our community. I couldn't be prouder of our team.

As we enter stage 3 of reopening Ontario, our priority remains ensuring the safety and well-being of staff, participants, clients and our community and we are working closely with our local health units to do so. We have received great support in all areas of our Association from our local health units, Workplace Safety North, subject matter experts across the YMCA Canada Federation and our own Joint Health and Safety committees. We are also carefully evaluating what we need in order to reopen, such as; access to safety supplies, staff training and understanding the needs and demand of our programs and services. To date, the Association has lost 1.4M in revenue which is a significant impact on our financial position due to the nature of our charity and not-for-profit status. This loss cannot be regained so it is imperative that we reopen in a sound financial way.

We are happy to share that YMCA Employment and Immigrant Services has slowly started to reopen their office and began to accept a small number of clients, so that those who do not have access to internet or a computer now have support. YMCA Child Care is also gradually reopening under revised protocols to support families as they too return to work. YMCA Summer Day Camps have been running over the summer season with smaller cohorts.



Helen Francis, CEO

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Summer 2020 - What's Happening?

A handful of dedicated staff can accomplish miracles. With very limited funds to date, a start has been made with many of the projects we talk about below. We expect to complete these tasks by the end of the summer.

1. Camp Director's Cabin

The plan for this 35+ year old building is to convert it to a activity centre and summer staff recreation facility. Currently there is no such place in camp for staff.

Renovations to the building require that most interior walls and insulation be removed (because of mice, squirrels and ant damage) and a couple of areas heavily with rot to be repaired. Cosmetic upgrades to the interior will make it a pleasant facility for its planned use.



2. Guest Cabin (Cabin on the Hill)

After a major renovation in the early 2000's, this cabin has again been attacked by squirrels and mice.

Renovations here (already completed) include removing all insulation and ceiling plywood. The ceiling will be painted and the cabin will remain as a 2 section guest house or other accommodation.

3. John Island Canoe Fleet

The John Island Fleet of canoes numbers over 60. Most are in very good condition and with minor repairs, our entire fleet can be made very useable (with perhaps a very few exceptions).



4. The JIC Flagpole

The flagpole came down this past winter when one of the 2 supporting anchor posts broke at ground level from decay. This is being replaced so we can continue to fly the flag of our country with pride!

5. Fresh Coat of Paint

This is always an annual event in order to keep our facilities attractive and protected from the qualms of nature.



6. Dining Hall Porch Repairs

With a building that is approaching 70 years of age, our Dining Hall has become a symbol of camp for thousands of campers and staff. When a structural problem appears, the solution is simple - FIX IT! A temporary solution was in place for the winter, but a permanent solution will be completed this summer to be ready for the 2021 season

Preparing for 2021 this Summer

We plan to add a few new treasures as our small troop works through this summer.

1. Two New Bunkies

We are starting to replace our long-standing tent platforms with cabins that we call "Bunkies". These will be built on the tent platform bases that currently exist for staff accommodation.

The plan is to begin with two being built this summer. It is anticipated that the students from Lasalle Secondary School in Sudbury will continue this project in spring 2021 as part of their school program.

2. New Wash Stands

These will facilitate increased hand washing and hygiene throughout the camp in 2021. These sinks will have running water and soap for hand washing at the dining hall, craft shop and out-tripping food shed. Plumbing is already installed and water readily available for these three locations.



3. Enhanced Swimming Area

Plans are in place for a front beach floating dock, a fenced in beach area for swimmers and a sun shelter for lifeguards. We have in place currently 2 new lifeguarding chairs (from Camp Falcona) to add to our aquatic supervision area.

And Looking Ahead.....

Plans are in place to construct a new Director's Cabin for camp. It has been over a decade since a new cabin has been built for any purpose and the time has come for proper accommodation for the Camp Director. More information will be forthcoming about this project.

COVID-19, the YMCA and John Island Camp (Cont'd from page 2)

damaged or accessed. They are also taking the opportunity to undertake necessary repairs and renovations in preparation for a hopeful reopening in fall or perhaps next spring. These repairs and renovations are not possible without the support from our donors, and I would like to sincerely thank all of you who have contributed a total of \$11,225 so far. We hope to raise another \$25,000 to complete the remainder of the work. Should you be in a position to donate, please contact jenny.groom@ymcaneo.ca to make your gift.

The road ahead for our Association will be challenging as we work our way through the lasting effects of the pandemic however our YMCA has been in existence for 212 years, with YMCA John Island Camp celebrating 65 this year. We have weathered storms before and with support from our communities, we will do that again. Thank you for your ongoing support and stay safe.

Helen Francis

President and CEO

YMCA of Northeastern Ontario

John Island Camper Refunds: Unfortunately, due to the financial pressures resulting from Covid-19 our Association has been unable to refund campers immediately. We have reached out to all campers indicating when we plan to provide their refunds and will have refunded all campers by the end of our Fiscal Year. In addition, as we secure an improved financial position and funds become available we will strive to bring all refunds forward.

By the end of August we will have refunded 47% of camper families

The YMCA John Island Camp Alumni Newsletter is published 2 times a year with occasional Special Editions.

For comments or to submit articles or content ideas: gary.gray@ymcaneo.ca

Visit the John Island page on the website of the YMCA of Northeastern Ontario

www.ymcaneo.ca/john-island-camp/

on Facebook: YMCA John Island Camp



Watch for It!
John Island Camp Auction
On line

Coming Soon!