



Camp Fire Camp Toccoa Families and Friends,

It is with great heartbreak and hope for the future that we write to tell you the Camp Fire Camp Toccoa Staff along with the board of directors have made the tough decision to cancel day and overnight camp programs at Camp Fire Camp Toccoa for the Summer of 2020.

As you can imagine, this decision was not easy. It was made through many hard conversations and careful consideration of the variables we were given. Although our hearts still long for the sights and sounds of a full camp, the health and wellness of our campers, families and staff members has always been our top priority here at Camp Fire Camp Toccoa. We waited as long as we possibly could to make a decision while collecting as much data as possible, noting regional trends, consulting healthcare professionals and our local Health Department, and the most current guidelines issued by the CDC and the State of Georgia.

Our staff have spent countless hours pondering ways to make summer 2020 possible. One can tell simply by looking at the pictures that camp is a social experience. A community filled with hugs and high fives, gatherings in the dining hall and around a campfire, running to the cabin next door and most importantly friendship circles along with council fire hugs. As we considered ways to make all these things possible it became very apparent that the most effective weapon in fighting COVID-19, social distancing, would significantly alter the essence of the camp experience - togetherness.

Since 1927, our 176 acres have been filled with the hustle and bustle of campers each summer. Camp Fire Camp Toccoa has sustained itself through World War II, Polio, September 11th and many other major life altering events. In the Summer of 2020, Camp Fire Camp Toccoa will rest. The trails will grow firmer, our trees will grow bigger, the Mad Tapper will sleep, the wildlife will thrive and the sweet smell of the lodge will grow stronger. The Camp Fire Camp Toccoa staff will certainly grieve the echoes of campers each night as we lay our heads to rest.

There is no doubt you and your camper are disappointed by this news. We are heartbroken as well. As we consulted with those involved in the decision and the answer became more and more clear the disappointment grew. We hope you understand this decision and that it was not easy. The Camp Fire Georgia staff will continue to offer virtual song deck and other programming for your family to stay connected. Rest assured Camp Fire Camp Toccoa will do everything to prevail and be standing strong on opening day of Summer 2021!

We believe most families and businesses are asking themselves this same question, and we've spent many hours trying to figure it out; what comes next? There is no doubt cancelling operations has already had and will continue to have a huge financial impact on Camp Fire Camp Toccoa and Camp Fire Georgia for a few years to come. Overnight camp and day camp operations bring in the vast majority of our operating revenue. Camp Fire Afterschool assists with income during the school year but is only a small portion compared to camps. When afterschool came to an abrupt halt with the closure of schools, we immediately began taking action to cut costs. Preparing for the next summer season begins days after the current summer comes to a close. Before the news of COVID-19, Camp Fire Georgia had already begun many costly preparations for Summer 2020.

We have prepared a [Summer 2020 Refund Information](#) that we believe will be inclusive of each family's needs. Please review the updated policy and respond to info@campfirega.org regarding your funds. We would love to have all accounts wrapped up by May 15th but do understand some families may need more time to make a decision. If you have additional questions, ideas, concerns, etc. please email us and we will get back with you as soon as possible. Our staff are working remotely from their homes, please be patient as we want to respond to everyone in a thorough manner as everyone deserves.

Thank you for your continued support, loyalty and patience as we navigate these waters. We are excited for the day that we're all back together again 'beneath the pines!

WoHeLo,

Mary, Elaine, Ondi, Geri & Berthenia