



YMCA of Orange County – Camp E.L.K

May 18, 2020

Dear Y Campers, Parents, Staff, Friends and Family,

It is with a very heavy heart, I write this letter to inform you that the YMCA of Orange County finds it necessary to cancel our current schedule of 2020 Camp ELK summer camp programs and sessions. We know how much your camper was looking forward to this summer, as were we. Summer 2020 was supposed to be a celebration of our 20th anniversary. We had big plans to share this milestone with our campers and staff.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many unforeseen obstacles and circumstances that continue to change daily and are out of our control.

- Planning for Camp takes many months. Months have been lost to this situation for our staffing, screening, training, fundraising, programming and the like. The loss of this critical planning time does not allow us to provide the excellent experience you all deserve and expect.
- Camp is about creating real and close relationships. Camp is the opposite of social distancing. Being close is a part of how we do things at camp; riding in buses, caring for each other, sleeping in bunk beds, swimming, team building activities, socializing, high fives, campfires, meals and activities. 6-foot distancing, small disconnected groups and facemasks are not what we are used to at camp. Nor, will they allow for the true camp experience.
- We have been waiting for guidance from the CDC and our local health department, but this information is slow to be communicated and the anticipated requirements would greatly affect our ability to deliver the quality experience at Camp Elk.
- Our number one and most important priority is the health and safety of our campers and staff.

We understand that this is hard. We see and hear you and we want to be able to support you. As we receive more clear recommendations and requirements from local health agencies, we will be looking at other opportunities and possibilities. We have ideas and are working hard to develop plans to bring your campers back soon with new activities, new protocols and new adventures! You have not heard the last from us! Until then, we have some thoughts we would like to share:

To our campers:

YOU mean the world to us! This is your camp and we will be working hard to get you back to camp as soon as possible so we can all be together again. We feel sad and want you to know that it is okay to feel sad, too.

To our camper families:

Thank you for wanting your child to join us at Camp ELK this year. We hope that you will consider joining us for a future event as soon as the situation allows. If you had already registered for summer 2020, we will begin processing refunds over the next week. Please be patient as we work through this process.

To Our Staff and Volunteers:

You are the magic makers, the role models, you are the glue! We could not do what we do without your dedication, devotion, kindness and willingness to give of your time, talent and energy to be a part of this incredible experience. As we have all acknowledged, it takes all of us to make this magic happen regardless of your position or role. We are proud to have you as part of our organization. Please know that we are hopeful and look forward to your return as soon as it is allowed and our next adventure will be here before you know it.

Stay Connected:

We will do our best to keep you informed of any upcoming events and opportunities. If you have not already done so, please find us on Facebook at [@campelk](#). Be sure to "Like" and "Follow" our Facebook page for all the latest updates. You can also visit our website at www.campelk.org.

To Everyone:

Please stand with us during this incredibly difficult time. As I previously mentioned, 2020 is the 20th anniversary of Camp ELK and we look forward to serving our campers and families for the next 20 years.

Yours, in spirit, mind and body,



Jim Emery, Director
YMCA Camp ELK
YMCA of Orange County
campelk@ymcaoc.org