

## **Friends Camp Director's Fall Report 2019**

Since I last reported to this committee in September, the fall has progressed for camp as expected—no big surprises. In my fourth fall as Director, many of the processes such as closing the fiscal year, opening registration, and promoting camp have become more familiar and routine. I welcome work that is expected and can be accomplished without too much drama, especially after the summer months—months which will never be routine even if I hold this job for 50 years!

### **Property Updates**

A major effort during fall months at Friends Camp is closing the property for the fall season. We have closed the property for the year, although our maintenance director Jack Belyeu is still working to wrap up a few projects. Our Meetinghouse renovations, at the time of this writing, are almost complete. The new walls, windows, and ceiling follow the new foundation and roof in recent years. This historic building is now well prepared to weather the next few decades at camp. We purchased a \$25,000 tractor and quickly put it to use preparing space for a new staff cabin! The staff cabin will be delivered this spring by Backyard Buildings, a local company which is able to build similar buildings at low cost. We had planned to construct a garage extension to house our new tractor but have hit some roadblocks related to how the garage was originally constructed. This project has been postponed until the spring or until we can solve the problems presented by the garage foundation.

### **Preparing for Summer 2020**

While summer may feel far away, we already have almost 100 campers enrolled for the 2020 season. Registration opened on November 1, 2020. While I have not done extensive marketing for this season yet, I did use our existing social media channels and email to alert families about registration opening. Based on current enrollment trends, I feel confident about excellent enrollment in our sessions for younger campers, and I am hopeful that we will also see high enrollment for our teenage sessions. I plan to engage in a significant marketing campaign, using our existing camper pool as well as social media ads to reach more teenagers this winter. Talking with families and parents about their expectations for camp and their questions is a major part of my fall work. Over the past few years I have come to know many of our families well and enjoy hearing updates on their campers' lives and talking about how camp can be part of their summers.

I have just begun the hiring season for the 2020 summer. Some of our key leadership staff are returning from last summer, including our nurse, assistant director, and health center coordinator (a counselor leadership position). I will be hiring a new head cook, although our cook for the last few years has agreed to take a few weeks off of her job in the summer to get our new cook up to speed. This is going to be a huge help! It is too early to report on our counselor hiring yet. My priorities for our 2020 staff team will be balancing experienced staff with bringing in new energy, hiring a racially and experientially diverse staff, and hiring enough counselors to maintain the camper:staff ratios we achieved in 2019. Having the budget to hire additional counselors in 2019 made an enormous difference on camper AND staff experience. We had 26 counselors in 2019 compared with 21 in 2018, and for 2020 I plan to hire 26 again. I am also working with some other camps to advertise “work at camp” as a campaign at colleges for camps with similar philosophies. Teaming up with a few other

campers could allow us a wider reach in advertising to potential camp counselors. This could also allow us to educate a more diverse college student population about the value of camp jobs.

### **Development**

The Friends Camp development committee has been holding monthly meetings again this fall. We are nearing the annual appeal, and we now have the ability to automate monthly gifts. We are excited to be unrolling a monthly giving club—details to follow soon! We especially hope to engage younger alumni (in their 20s and 30s) in monthly giving to encourage their ongoing connection with camp and encourage the habit of giving. I am hosting a few “young alumni” get-togethers this winter, in collaboration with Friends Meeting at Cambridge and Friends School of Portland. While these events are not “fundraisers,” they achieve the same goal of helping alumni feel an ongoing connection to camp.

### **Health and Safety**

This fall, the Friends Camp Committee met and decided to require all immunizations required for attendance at Maine public school for campers and staff. I informed all of our 2019 families via email during October, and received about 20 affirming emails from parents who felt our decision was wise. I did not hear any critical feedback from families. However, it’s worth noting that families who already pulled out from camp in 2019 due to refusing the Measles vaccine were not on the recipient list. We feel that this is the best way to keep camp safe going forward and contribute to public health.

### **Finances**

Friends Camp is on a solid financial footing entering this winter. While we have not yet formalized our financial statements for Fiscal Year 2019, treasurer Robb Spivey and I have developed bookkeeping systems that make our financial management much smoother and so we are close to final statements being ready. The restructured chart of accounts is working well for financial reporting, and allows us to see trends over the last few years including campership awarded. While we booked a higher net income in Fiscal Year 2019 than we budgeted, our net increase in cash was much lower than our net income since we made significant investments in our property.

### **Professional Development**

I have been spending several hours each week in business school classes. My most helpful classes for Friends Camp operation have been Managerial Accounting and Finance. These classes have helped me think about the long-term financial sustainability of Friends Camp, and look forward to continuing these classes and sharing my learnings. I continue to be involved as a Board Member and Chair of the Education Committee with Maine Summer Camps. This involvement gives me opportunities to learn what struggles other camps are facing and new initiatives folks are taking on. In addition, I am a facilitator with The Summer Camp Society and am assisting with a conference in Michigan the week before Thanksgiving. Meeting other summer camp professionals is essential for me, especially as I work solo much of the winter months!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Anna Hopkins