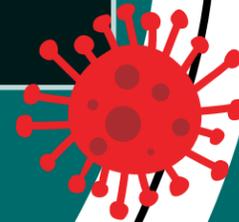




# CONISTON CHRONICLE

SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION



2020 REFLECTIONS

FOR YMCA CAMP CONISTON  
ALUMNI AND THE CAMP COMMUNITY

2020 REFLECTIONS

FOR YMCA CAMP CONISTON  
ALUMNI AND THE CAMP COMMUNITY

*Blog*

AN INTERACTIVE VERSION IS AVAILABLE  
WITH LIVE LINKS TO BLOGS AND VIDEOS  
[CONISTON.ORG/2020-CHRONICLE.PDF](https://CONISTON.ORG/2020-CHRONICLE.PDF)

**NOTE:** The Coniston Chronicle was paid for using NH GOFERR funding. This funding was given to assist Coniston in maintaining normal operations, to encourage supporting local vendors, and to stimulate the NH economy during COVID-19. No donations were used in the printing or mailing of this publication.

## YMCA CAMP CONISTON

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As of October 1, 2020

**John Calcutt, Chairman**  
Oro Valley, AZ

**Rolf Gesen, Vice Chair**  
Concord, NH

**Neil Abramson**  
New Orleans, LA

**Richard Altman**  
Grantham, NH

**Lynne Schiffman Delise**  
Concord, MA

**Chris Eldredge**  
Sunapee, NH

**Gen Izutsu**  
Atlanta, GA

**Catherine Johnson**  
West Lebanon, NH

**Jon Marvin**  
Bow, NH

**Mary Helen Morris**  
Riverside, CT

**Stefan Timbrell**  
New London, NH

**Katie Smidt**  
Woburn, MA

**Michael J. Work**  
New London, NH

**John Zimmerman**  
Hopkinton, NH

**Tricia Brooks, Emerita**

**Greg Bryant, Emeritus**

**Katie Gardner, Emerita**

**Brian Grip, Emeritus**

### STAFF

**John Tilley**  
Executive Director

**Lorraine Newcomb**  
Registrar

**John McNair**  
Summer Camp Director

**Nicole Berthiaume**  
Summer Camp Director

**Lindsey Tompkins**  
Director of Mission Advancement

**Emily Judkins**  
Administrative Assistant

**Hannah Slafsky**  
Afterschool Director

**Isabel Caruso**  
Interim Afterschool Director

**Aaron Turner**  
Maintenance Director

**Dave Savio & James Newcomb**  
Maintenance



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

**NOTE:** The Coniston Chronicle was paid for using NH GOFERR funding. This funding was given to assist Coniston in maintaining normal operations, to encourage supporting local vendors, and to stimulate the NH economy during COVID-19. No donations were used in the printing or mailing of this publication.

For the past five years, the board and staff have been working quietly—although to some of you, nothing about it felt quiet. We were trying to build a Coniston that can serve any child who wants to attend. We were also focused on building a community that supports its members outside of Camp with reunions, networking, and career services.

We have come a long way. Our growing annual fund and campership program brought in new children from Newport, the children of veterans and active service members, and the New American community in Concord, NH. The number of campers on financial support doubled in three years. Camperships now follow a camper, ensuring all Conistonians have the opportunity to return to Camp, year after year. Our NH families now mirror the median family income distribution of our state.

Donors, board members, and community members had already come together providing significant support for a long range plan that we were preparing to unveil to the entire community in the near future. That campaign has been temporarily suspended because of the pandemic. But the work to achieve those goals has somehow continued—sometimes at lightning speed. I think people believe in what Coniston is trying to accomplish.

The story of our combined year enables you to get a glimpse of what we are working on and what we are preparing for the future.

I hope this Chronicle will provide a mirror of the tragedies we have all faced. I hope you will find inspiration in what we were able to achieve. In these pages, I hope you will find hope.

JOHN TILLEY, CAMP DIRECTOR



# World News

A STRANGE NEW VIRUS IS REPORTED  
IN THE CHINESE CITY OF WUHAN

WORLD

1

COVID-19 CASES



**DECEMBER**  
**20**  
LEPROSY FREE  
WORLD GOAL IS  
ANNOUNCED

DECEMBER 2019

DECEMBER 2019

# US NEWS

UNITED STATES

0

COVID-19 CASES



NEW  
HAMPSHIRE  
PREPARES  
TO BE THE  
NATION'S  
FIRST  
PRIMARY



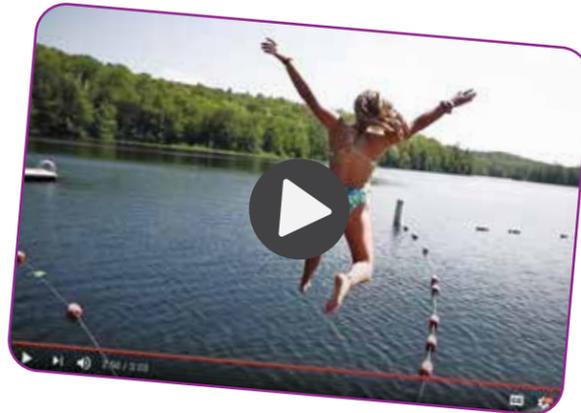
THE COUNTRY FINDS ITSELF  
DIVIDED OVER IMPENDING  
IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDINGS



**GREYHOUND**



PROVIDES FREE TICKETS  
TO RUNAWAYS WHO WANT  
TO RETURN HOME



# GREATEST RITUAL OF ALL

To close out 2019, a video was created to bring to life one of the most heartfelt letters we've ever received from a camp family. The letter is so powerful, it was read aloud to open the YMCA of USA General Assembly in July for over 2,500 people from around the world in Anaheim, CA. There wasn't a dry eye in the house. We hope you will be moved by the video too: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qojT-Cguk0U](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qojT-Cguk0U)

PLANNING FOR THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF CAMP WINNING SPIRIT BEGINS WITH THE NH CHILDHOOD CANCER LIFELINE



December trip to YMCA Camp Huckins to share ideas and learn from the combined staffs!



Coniston's final, official alumni event of the decade closed with almost 20 young Conistonians meeting in NYC in November!

## Hypertherm

Employees of the local company volunteer at Camp every fall to help get the Coniston property cleaned and shut down for winter. Over fifty volunteers came to Camp in November to button everything up before snow blanketed our facility.

## FACILITIES

A new site for a basketball court was cleared behind the Pavilion and Middler Girls Camp. Preparations for a new WCIT girls cabin were started by beginning to expand the current septic system. B-17 construction begins! The final phase of the staff tiny house village was completed adding four additional structures for a total of nine.

Shannon Rush and Patrick Noble hired as 2020 Girls and Boys Camp Directors.

Maura Ryan and James Cawley hired as 2020 Program Directors.

Nurses hired for summer and 25 additional staff interviewed in preparation for the summer.

## Staffing

## #GIVINGTUESDAY 2019 RESULTS

178 DONORS

RAISED AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO SENDING

23 KIDS

FOR A 2-WEEK CAMP EXPERIENCE IN JUST 24 HOURS!

## SUNSHINE LUNCHEON

SENDING KEARSARGE AREA CHILDREN TO CAMP

The annual holiday lunch gathering helped Coniston prepare for the 2020 summer by raising enough money to pay for

14 TWO-WEEK CAMPERS!

Thank you to this group of local grandparents and community members!

## HELPING OTHER CAMPS



John McNair joined the ACA Standards Committee.

John Tilley travels to Nashville, TN for his final meeting as the Co-Chair of the YUSA National Camping Cabinet.

## ANNUAL GIVING 2019 & MULTI-YEAR PLEDGE

Thanks to generous donations in 2019, every camper attending Camp was subsidized by \$187, and 334 additional children received financial assistance.

Due to COVID-19 lockdown we did not print the Spring 2020 Chronicle where the list of 835 donors who donated \$561,575 would normally have been published. Thank you to the Coniston Community members who came together to make that year so special for every Coniston Camper.

To view a list of the 2019 donors visit:

[coniston.org/2019-giving-report](http://coniston.org/2019-giving-report)



Congratulations to Caitlin Elgert who was married in September 2019 and joined by fellow Conistonians, Emily Elgert, Nicole Berthiaume, Eben Gannett, Ben Mark, Eric Rightor, Brian Doucet, Jacquie Wheeler, Beth Doucet, and Rachel Brodeur

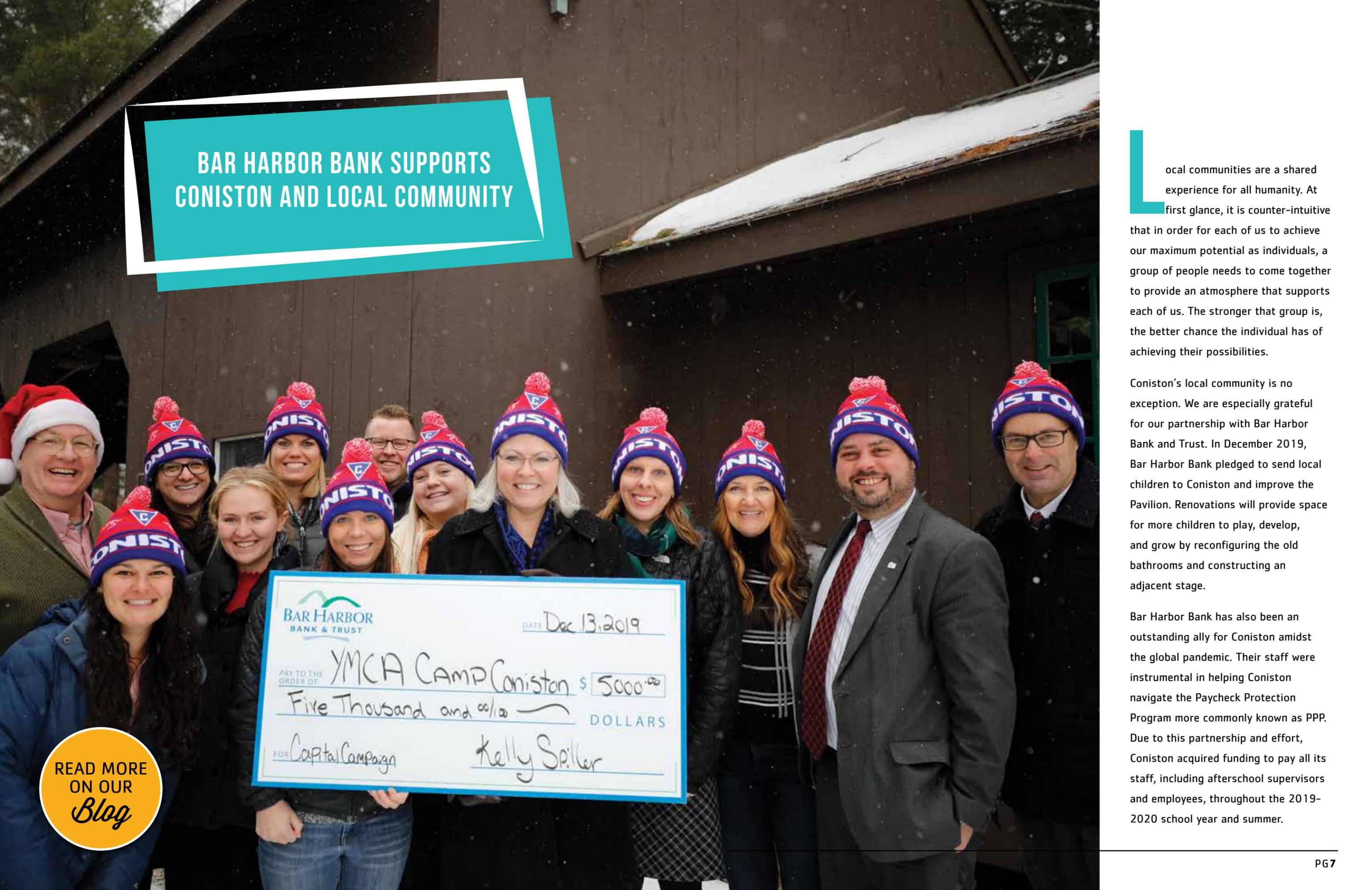
On October 29th, Morgan Milardo Schermerhorn welcomed baby Theodore Joseph Schermerhorn to the world.



On December 20th, Meridith (Astles) Lee and family welcomed Lucca Margaret Lee into the world.



## BAR HARBOR BANK SUPPORTS CONISTON AND LOCAL COMMUNITY

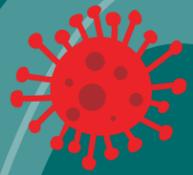


READ MORE  
ON OUR  
*Blog*

Local communities are a shared experience for all humanity. At first glance, it is counter-intuitive that in order for each of us to achieve our maximum potential as individuals, a group of people needs to come together to provide an atmosphere that supports each of us. The stronger that group is, the better chance the individual has of achieving their possibilities.

Coniston's local community is no exception. We are especially grateful for our partnership with Bar Harbor Bank and Trust. In December 2019, Bar Harbor Bank pledged to send local children to Coniston and improve the Pavilion. Renovations will provide space for more children to play, develop, and grow by reconfiguring the old bathrooms and constructing an adjacent stage.

Bar Harbor Bank has also been an outstanding ally for Coniston amidst the global pandemic. Their staff were instrumental in helping Coniston navigate the Paycheck Protection Program more commonly known as PPP. Due to this partnership and effort, Coniston acquired funding to pay all its staff, including afterschool supervisors and employees, throughout the 2019-2020 school year and summer.



# World News

WORLD  
**9,927**  
COVID-19 CASES



**WORLD CELEBRATES  
A NEW DECADE**

**PRINCE HARRY AND  
MEGHAN, DUKE  
AND DUCHESS OF  
SUSSEX, ANNOUNCE  
THEY ARE STEPPING  
DOWN AS SENIOR  
MEMBERS OF THE  
ROYAL FAMILY**



**THE UNITED  
KINGDOM  
COMPLETES  
BREXIT AND  
LEAVES THE  
EUROPEAN  
UNION,  
JANUARY 31**



**JANUARY 2020**

**JANUARY 2020**

# US NEWS

UNITED STATES  
**7**  
COVID-19 CASES



**DOLLY PARTON  
CHALLENGE**

**JANUARY  
21**

**U.S. ANNOUNCED FIRST  
CASE OF COVID-19**



# JANUARY PREPARING FOR SUMMER

*The early winter months are when  
Camp is staffed and envisioned!*

January and February 2020 were no exception to the previous years. When one staff member can't return, all other jobs need to be rearranged—like a football team we need to have all positions covered so we can hit the field running. Over 120 contracts were extended. Attention is turned to internationals. That screening process will bring in another 25 individuals who consistently enrich Coniston by bringing their culture to our community, teaching us new lessons and skills as well as reminding us all

of the importance of being welcoming. Reservations are made for the 180 people who will take trips off camp! Arizona, West Virginia, Utah, Maine and more. Many weeks in each summer have 2-3 trips on the road at one time. This is the time of the year that is the hardest to explain. The days are short, but the work is long. It's preparation time. After all, come June, the gate will open and 400 campers will come pouring in every other week.

### Funding for Academic Assistance and Scholarships Sought

Seeing yourself reflected in leadership is critical to feeling engaged and part of a group.

Due to the recent expansion in camperships, it is clear that we need staff from every community as leaders in the Coniston Community. Since college students are the primary source of our summer staff, we wrote a request for funding to send Conistonians to college this winter. Even though Camp did not receive the funding, the grant laid out a pathway which lead to our new tutoring program.



## NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND K-9 SEARCH & RESCUE

regularly uses Coniston's facilities and grounds, free of charge, for training purposes and January was no exception. The group is the main search and rescue group for VT, NH, & ME and is called into duty when hikers and skiers are lost in the outdoors.

Trainings like the annual **Northeast YMCA Camping Conference** are critical to helping Coniston and other camps improve every year. Our Camp often takes four to six participants! At the January 2020 conference, we were proud to have **John McNair** named Chair. Pictured below with fellow Conistonian, **Berta Sinclair**, currently of the Beckett Chimney Corners YMCA. Berta will serve as the Vice Chair and next Chair of the Conference. Conistonian **Chris Burke**, also of the Beckett Chimney Corners YMCA, was also a recent Chair. **John Tilley** served as Chair in the early 2000s.



# FINANCES

With an October 1st fiscal year, multiple building projects, trainings, and staffing underway for the summer of 2020, Coniston exited January having already spent \$791,327.



### Summer Staff Holiday Party

An annual tradition since December 1999, Coniston staff gather and reminisce about the summer past and share in a reunion! Every year, some staff decide to come back to Camp the following summer at the event.

# YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT

Imagine a weekend where the Governor, Supreme Court, Senate, and House clear out of their desks and chambers in Concord and allow high school students to take over! It happens every year and Coniston hosts the caucus for Kearsarge, Newport, and Claremont School Districts! This state-wide effort between the YMCAs of New Hampshire and 38 school districts across the state will bring 275 participants together in March for a life changing experience.

Congratulations to **Ben Mark** and his family who welcomed Madeline Anne Mark on January 4th.



**Nicholas Zweig** aka "Ziggy", camper/counselor in the 90's, was inspired by one of his Cabin 4 campers, **Peter Logan**. He purchased a plot of forest on the Saco River in Maine, and has just finished his second year in a 15-year plan to turn it into a private campground for family and friends.



**Lucas Cummings** moved to Sabah, Malaysia for his Fulbright Scholarship project where he was teaching English and conducting research for his Entrepreneur Scholars project.



At the beginning of the year, **Parker Olson** founded a superfood granola company infused with mushroom extracts—fôrij available at [www.forij.co](http://www.forij.co).



This is a photo of Parker with a Reishi mushroom, one of the mushrooms he uses in his granola.



# World News

WORLD

**85,967**

COVID-19 CASES

**CORONAVIRUS  
MAKES ITS WAY  
THROUGH CHINA**

FOR MANY, THE WORD  
CORONAVIRUS WAS  
STILL UNFAMILIAR,  
BUT NOT FOR LONG

**OFFICIAL CORONAVIRUS  
NAME ANNOUNCED AS**

**COVID-19**

**BY THE INTERNATIONAL  
COMMITTEE ON  
TAXONOMY OF VIRUSES**



**THE CRUISE SHIP DIAMOND PRINCESS  
IS QUARANTINED OFF THE COAST  
OF JAPAN DUE TO INFECTIONS**

**FEBRUARY 2020**

**FEBRUARY 2020**

# US NEWS

UNITED STATES

**24**

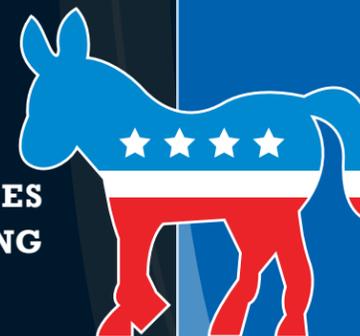
COVID-19 CASES



**FEB 6TH**

**FIRST U.S. COVID DEATH**

**IN THE U.S., THE  
DEMOCRATIC  
PRIMARIES GET  
UNDERWAY WITH  
MAJOR CANDIDATES  
QUICKLY DROPPING  
OUT OF THE RACE**





NH Hall/Dinning Hall Renovations



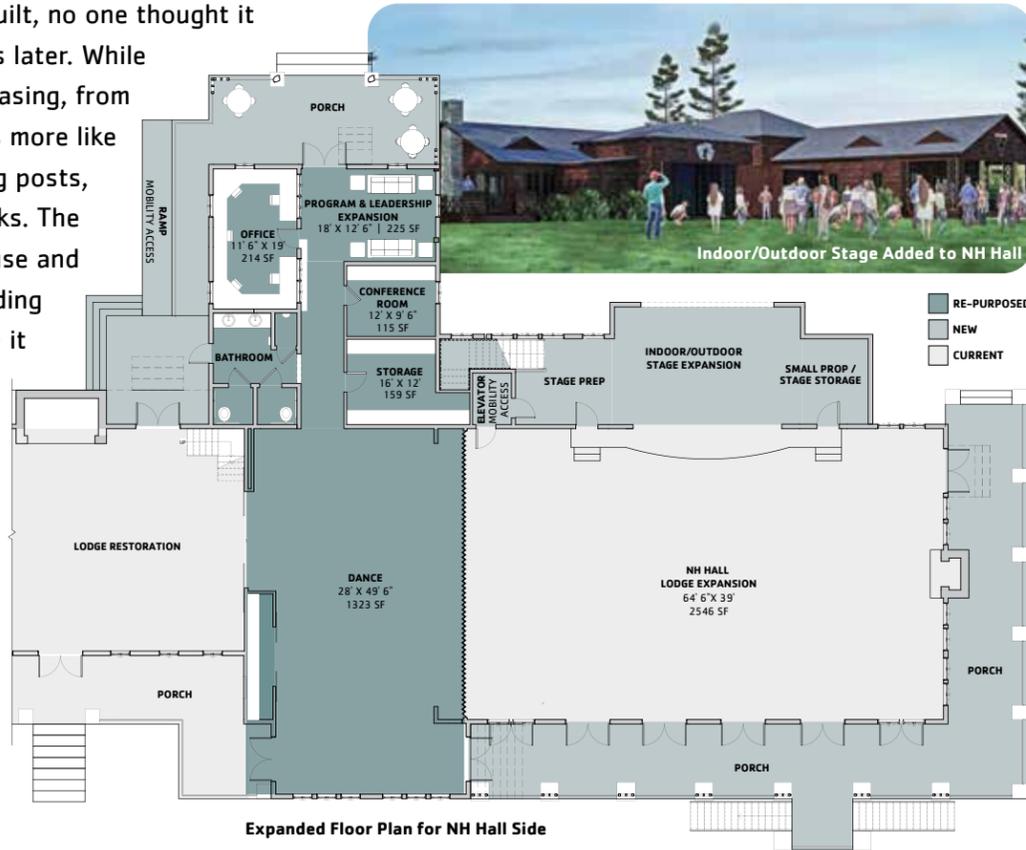
Current Arts & Crafts/Old Kitchen Exterior

## LODGE PLANS REVEALED!

In 1923 when the lodge was built, no one thought it would still be in use 100 years later. While beautiful and aesthetically pleasing, from a construction standpoint it is more like an oversized shed. It is built on log posts, perched on rocks and cement blocks. The 97 summers and winters of hard use and weather are taking a toll. The building must be addressed—both because it is undersized, and because there are many repairs that have to be made.

As the pandemic approached, Camp was preparing to unveil plans for significant renovations. Plans include a beautiful renovation to the lodge that will preserve the space for another 100 years of memories to be made. A new stage will be constructed on the NH Hall/old Dining Hall side. The stage will open to maximize program options. A new porch will be built around NH Hall, having the impact of increasing capacity. Arts & Crafts and Woodshop will move to a new building so that space can be repurposed for our now larger Camp and new programs!

Coniston has been discussing the need to address this building since 1997—COVID-19 just shelved the plans for at least another year.



Expanded Floor Plan for NH Hall Side



Indoor/Outdoor Stage Added to NH Hall



### NYC Professional Development Night

As we expand campships, connecting our young alumni into this amazing community becomes more and more important. Camp's newest offerings include resume writing workshops, career panels with professionals, and college Common Application workshops for LITs in the summers—all run by professionals who volunteer with the camp community. The last career event was run in NYC in February and had 25 participants and presenters!

John Tilley visited Senators and Representatives on behalf of YUSA in Washington, DC to talk tax credits, child-care, and youth programs in late February. While in Senator Jeanne Shaheen's office, he ran into Coniston alumna Carly Prescott who is a member of the Senator's staff.



## AFTERSCHOOL

Coniston's Afterschool Program serves 203 students daily at five different sites located in elementary schools in Lebanon, New London, Plainfield, Sunapee, and West Lebanon.

John McNair and Nicole Berthiaume travel to San Diego, CA for the National American Camping Association conference to help in preparation for our upcoming ACA accreditation visit and summer 2020!

*Summer Preparation*

Caroline Lawrence was honored by the American Red Cross and received the American Red Cross National Lifesaving Award for doing CPR on a woman during the summer of 2019. She was a 2017 ECIT and the lake is where she learned how to do CPR.



Maddie Blewitt, Sunapee Middle-High School senior presented her senior project on social media to Coniston team. She had some wonderful suggestions which have helped Camp a lot. Thanks, Maddie!



John McNair and Nicole Berthiaume visited with alumnae Meghan Tierney and Caroline Donahue in San Diego.



## CREATING LIFELONG MEMORIES THROUGH THE JOCELYN B. TETEL CAMBERSHIP

READ MORE  
ON OUR  
*Blog*

## MAKE A CHILD'S FUTURE YOUR LEGACY

How does this work? Because of generous donors like Jocelyn, the Coniston Endowment Fund is growing and providing the life changing experience of Camp to many deserving children—regardless of financial means. The endowment also helps Coniston moderate inevitable cost pressures—rising prices, inflation, and unexpected expenses. This gift was given as a three year pledge from gifts of stock. For forms and additional information, visit [coniston.org/support-camp](https://coniston.org/support-camp).



Coniston has intentionally engaged with three communities to ensure Camp reflects NH.

NEWPORT &  
SULLIVAN COUNTY



VETERANS & SERVICE  
MEMBER FAMILIES



NEW AMERICAN  
COMMUNITIES IN CONCORD

**W**e are excited to announce the Jocelyn B. Tetel Campership, which provides the Coniston Experience to a deserving child so they may make new friends and participate in the Coniston program that gave Jocelyn so much joy.

Jocelyn grew up in North Carolina, attended Coniston from 1971 through 1979, and is the Vice President of Advancement for the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. Her independence, leadership, and social skills were shaped through nine summers on the lake. Her memories of Camp often include mental snapshots of waterskiing and sailing, shooting a bow and arrow, and sleeping out under the stars, and even teaching synchronized swimming as a staff member. But most importantly she met one of her dearest friends to this day—and though they have never lived in the same city—their friendship sustains the distance.

***If this past year has taught us anything, it is a deep understanding that learning to connect with others is the very lesson that kids need most at Camp.***

She is so pleased that the essence of the Camp remains the same and it is still offering these same experiences to young people today. The best way she can show her appreciation for Coniston is to give a campership in perpetuity—meaning the campership follows the camper through their entire Camp journey allowing every camper to achieve long-term development which happens through returning.

From 2015 to 2019, we doubled full camperships to 165. We believe having a Coniston filled with campers from all walks of life is stronger for every child.

Many things are taken into consideration when awarding a full Coniston Campership to a child. Initially, children and their families submit an application, the previous tax year forms, and are assessed through professionals such as school counselors and nurses. Next, the family's income is screened using the federal free and reduced lunch income eligibility guidelines. Then the family's income is multiplied by three, because the guideline limits are low, making it possible to serve a broader range of families. Finally, our registrar and CEO discuss each application to determine camperships.

Additionally, we offer campership opportunities for families who have a difficult story to share that may not be reflected in their finances. Families in cancer treatments, families who have suffered a loss such as a house fire, or even children who are being raised by grandparents deserve the chance to find a moment of respite on our lake.

**SHUT DOWN**

# World News

WORLD  
**858,340**  
COVID-19 CASES

ITALY BECOMES  
THE WORLD'S  
**NEW**  
CORONAVIRUS  
EPICENTER

## THE NEW NORMAL



WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION DECLARES  
THE CORONAVIRUS A  
PANDEMIC

MUCH OF THE WORLD  
CLOSES DOWN OVER  
ONE WEEKEND,  
INCLUDING LONDON,  
PARIS, BUENOS ARIES,  
AND MECCA

**MARCH 2020**

**MARCH 2020**

# US NEWS

UNITED STATES  
**188,724**  
COVID-19 CASES

MOST U.S. STUDENTS DON'T GO  
TO SCHOOL ON MARCH 16TH



A NATIONAL RUN ON TOILET  
PAPER & FOOD LEAVES GROCERY  
STORE SHELVES EMPTY OF SOME  
PRODUCTS FOR MONTHS



HEALTH OFFICIALS DISCOURAGE HAND  
SHAKING AND PROMOTE ELBOW  
BUMPS FOR A VERY SHORT PERIOD

## CARES Act

PASSES CONGRESS  
AND IS SIGNED INTO  
LAW INSTITUTING  
PPP, \$1,200 ASSISTANCE  
PACKAGES, TAX  
INCENTIVES, AND OTHER  
ECONOMIC MEASURES  
TO ASSIST GETTING  
THROUGH THE  
QUARANTINE PERIOD



SUFFERS ITS WORST  
LOSS IN THREE  
DECADES



DR. ANTHONY  
FAUCI IS  
REINTRODUCED  
TO THE AMERICAN  
PUBLIC AS THE  
FACE OF THE  
U.S. MEDICAL  
RESPONSE

SEATTLE, WA AND  
SURROUNDING  
COMMUNITIES  
BECOME THE  
FIRST "HOT  
SPOT"

# MARCH



## THE WORLD SHUTS DOWN

*When our lives got crazy they didn't become loud. Stores closed, playgrounds emptied, Main Streets went quiet, and people retreated to their homes*

**A**s Lindsey Tompkins and John Tilley flew home on Friday, March 13th from San Francisco, life felt scary, especially the empty airport and plane. The distance from people was in contrast to the wonderful, warm alumni event they attended in San Francisco earlier in the week. Quickly, the mood changed from the excitement of introducing new plans for the lodge, to methodically wiping every surface they came in contact with. The entire ordeal was a master class in opposites.

Alumni who always hug were bumping elbows. People who grew up in Camp immersed in the value of togetherness, were on the verge of

retreating to their own spaces for a lock down just two days later. Several alumni cancelled at the last minute. John presented on the developmental milestones that camp meets for camper and staff-aged adolescents. The alumni could see their past lives and stories reflected in the developmental science we understand today. There's clear irony here. As humans, we are all hard wired to connect with people. Those connections lead to rushes of oxytocin, lead to better outcomes in school, and even add years to our lives. The science of connection is clear—and we were about to retreat into quiet, solitary, and disconnected lives.



On March 7th, Coniston held its second annual ski day at Mount Sunapee with around 50 people in attendance.

### CONISTON ENTERS LOCKDOWN

*We knew Coniston would be judged by what we did, not by what we didn't do.*

Addressed shortages by donating all medical masks and supplies to the New London Hospital.

Addressed critical childcare needs by offering to administer childcare for Dartmouth Hitchcock and New London Hospitals in the event of crises.

Put Coniston's facility into the "overflow" list in the event medical professionals required the space.

Contacted local non-profits, schools, and churches to inventory local assets and skills in case the pandemic grew to worse proportions.



ACA New England conference was held virtually with

**John McNair** presenting on the latest Accreditation Standards updates!

*Staffing*

## FINANCES



**MARCH 9**  
Dramatically slowed down spending announced at a staff meeting.



**MARCH 16**  
Suspended all non-essential expenditures outside of payroll and utilities.



**MARCH 17**  
Suspended phone lines and internet. Turned off electricity to unused buildings.

In order to face the impending pandemic, the long-range plan and accompanying endowment and capital campaign had to be temporarily shelved. However, our work with this campaign created new relationships we didn't have just a few years earlier. This would prove to be a critical factor in continuing to move Coniston forward.



Coniston rescheduled, postponed, and shut down programs and services in light of the Governor's mandate to have no groups larger than ten in NH.

### WASHINGTON DC ALUMNI EVENT

NEW PARENT OPEN HOUSE

CONISTON OFFICE

AFTERSCHOOL

CAMP NOT ALLOWED TO OPEN

CAMPERSHIP CAMPAIGN

WALTHAM EVENT

ANNUAL FUND

Seattle area alumni report regularly seeing Conistonian **Dr. John Lynch** on TV bringing his experience and expertise to the earliest US epicenter of the virus.



On Saint Patrick's Day, Former Boy's Camp Director, **Sam Coleman** and his family welcomed Lawrence Harper Coleman to the world.



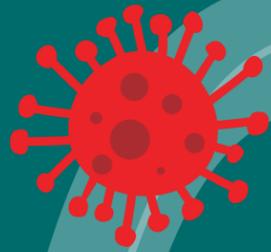
**Doug Newton** is living in southern Vietnam with his family after accepting a 2-year assignment. He is enjoying traveling in southeast Asia and exploring many amazing places.



**Briana Collier** is living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, working as an attorney for the Dept. of the Interior. In proper Coniston tradition, she spends most of her free time outdoors rock climbing, mountain biking, and back country skiing.

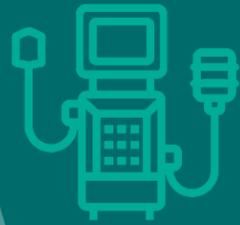


**Joanne Knox** is living in Kathmandu, Nepal with her family where she and her husband have been teaching at an international high school for the past two years and have signed on for a third. Their daughter is in first grade there and loving it! The world is a beautiful place — her advice: go explore and take a leap!



# World News

WORLD  
**3,261,450**  
COVID-19 CASES



WORLDWIDE  
SHORTAGE OF  
VENTILATORS



TIGER KING  
RELEASED ON  
NETFLIX



LOCK DOWN IN  
CHINA IS LIFTED



HIGHEST EVER CONCENTRATION OF MICRO  
PLASTICS FOUND ON SEA FLOOR



APRIL 2020

APRIL 2020

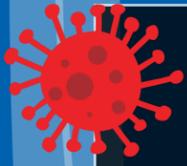
# US NEWS

UNITED STATES  
**1,092,815**  
COVID-19 CASES

APRIL 21, MA GOVERNOR CHARLIE  
BAKER ANNOUNCES SCHOOL WON'T  
REOPEN FOR THE YEAR—  
BEGINNING A TREND

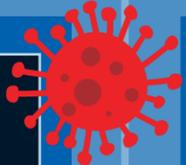


THE MARCH BIOGEN  
CONFERENCE IS NOW  
LINKED DIRECTLY TO 20,000+  
U.S. CASES MAKING THE  
GREATER BOSTON AREA  
ANOTHER HOTSPOT



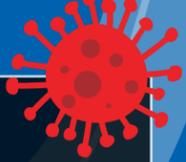
APRIL 30, MICHIGAN  
PROTESTORS STORM  
STATEHOUSE OVER  
STAY AT HOME  
ORDERS

WEARING  
FACEMASKS  
BECOMES  
CONTROVERSIAL



ARROWS ON THE FLOORS OF STORES  
CREATING ONE WAY AISLES BECOME  
STANDARD MAKING THE CONISTON TRAFFIC  
PATTERN A NATION-WIDE PHENOMENA

THE OUTBREAK EPICENTER  
IN THE U.S. MOVES FROM  
SEATTLE TO NYC





READ MORE ON OUR *Blog*

## VIRTUAL VESPERS

*Keeping The Coniston Community Connected*

**Y**ou are at Camp and activities have wound down. It's 5 PM, the bell rings, cabins empty in silence, and everyone moves towards the Boys & Girls

Vespers rings. It is time to think about our day, learn a lesson, and share in gratitude. For many, the connections shared here are among their most treasured stories.

When April arrived, it became clear that some of the most important work we could do was keeping people connected. Giving people a sense of normalcy. Creating a feeling of togetherness—and hope.

So we reached out through social media to our Community and beyond, and most weeks hundreds of different families would join live. Several weeks

over a thousand would watch the archived video. Each vespers can still be found on the [Camp's YouTube channel](#).

Coniston also provided many online activities in which families and youth could participate.

Nightly highs and lows were posted on Facebook and Instagram. Hundreds of Conistonians regularly joined together there too in order to continue the sense of togetherness we know is important to our mental well-being.

Even closed, even during quarantine, new people joined our community. Current Conistonians did an amazing job welcoming these new participants. And once again we want to say welcome to our community.



"Thanks for calling me every day during this time. You're awesome."



"My Dad, thank you for sending me to Camp every year and for telling me all your Camp stories!"



"Healthcare workers in the Coniston Community—thank you. We appreciate you so much."

Coniston served as a location for families to gather and safely socially distance while memorializing the passing of loved ones as funerals were suspended.



## FINANCES

With the help of our friends at Bar Harbor Bank and Trust, Coniston acquired a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan which helps businesses keep their workforce employed during the COVID-19 crisis. Coniston's loan will be fully forgiven and turn into a grant by using the funds for payroll and personnel costs.

*Evening Vespers was always a time of quiet contemplation and inspiration . . . Forty-five years later Coniston's Virtual Vespers are very nostalgic and often very personal. But the themes haven't changed that much, and I still find them refreshing as they remind me of the importance of relationships that the Coniston Experience always provided.*

— Dave Barden, Sanders' Era Alumnus

To help guide camp through the rapidly changing days during COVID-19, a communications committee was formed to help the year-round staff clearly tell what actions the camp was taking. This committee's support and expertise enabled the camp to guide our families through the difficult decision of closing for the summer. Together we put out numerous letters, statements, videos, and even launched a new website—all while "closed!" Thank you to **Lynne Delise, Liz Morris, Anna Kelsey, and Joe Whelan** for bringing your passion and clarity to the table.

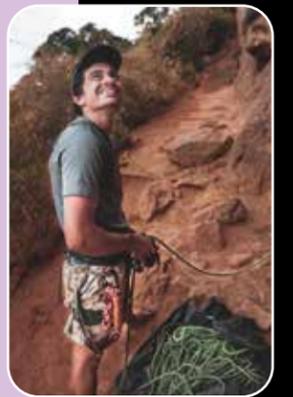
READ MORE ON OUR *Blog*

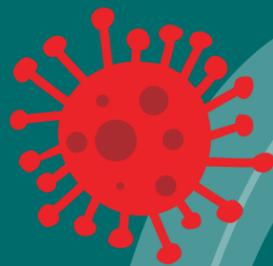
*Volunteers*

Within a period of 36 hours, Fulbright Scholarship participant and alumnus **Lucas Cummings** had to hop on a boat and leave Tonsai, fly to Kuala Lumpur, and before he knew it, he was on a plane back to the US. He didn't have time to fly back to Sabah so all his belongings were left behind. He didn't have time to eat his last Malaysian meal. He didn't have time to walk down the beach or climb up the hill overlooking his little town. He didn't have time to say goodbye. No goodbye to the community, his school, and most importantly, his students. **"Time on the island moves in all kinds of ways. This time it was abrupt and chaotic."** Lucas left his last few memories in SE Asia with smiles, new friends, and beautiful views. It's what he was able to hold onto while he began to process everything that had just happened.

*Lucas quarantined at Coniston upon returning from his Fulbright in Malaysia just as winter began to turn to spring. After two weeks of isolation and hiking the Coniston woods, Lucas returned safely home to his family.*

**Zach "ZZ" and Jacquie Zimmerman** at a recent Camp reunion. ZZ spent the summer on Little Lake Sunapee in NH and moved to Portland, ME in September.





# World News

WORLD  
**6,178,860**  
COVID-19 CASES



WORKERS ON ZOOM  
START NEW FASHION  
TREND—DAYTIME  
LEISURE  
WEAR PJS



THE WORLDWIDE EPICENTER  
OF COVID MOVES FROM  
CHINA AND ITALY TO THE U.S.

MAY 2020

MAY 2020

# US NEWS

UNITED STATES  
**1,799,122**  
COVID-19 CASES



MURDER HORNETS  
SPOTTED IN U.S., MAY 4

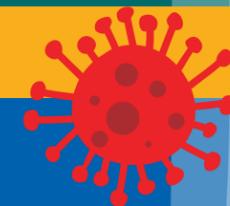


DOMINO PARK CIRCLES  
KEEP NEW YORK CITY  
SUNBATHERS IN CHECK



US RECORDS ITS  
**100,000**  
FATALITY

GRANDPARENTS OF ALUMNI FAMILY LEAVE  
THEIR HOUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 6 WEEKS  
FOR A SOCIALLY DISTANCED VISIT AT CONISTON  
THE VISIT BECOMES THE INSPIRATION FOR  
**COMMUNITY DAYS**



MAY  
**25**

GEORGE FLOYD KILLED  
IN MINNEAPOLIS, MN  
SETTING OFF MONTHS  
OF PROTESTS  
ACROSS THE COUNTRY



# ANNOUNCING THE CLOSING

*The Coniston Community stepped up in a big way. Camp refused to let what we couldn't do stand in the way of what we could do.*

On May 13, our current camper and staff families received a letter that we could have never imagined writing. Due to COVID-19, the Board of Directors and staff decided that Camp would be canceled.

Worst-case projections showed Coniston facing a \$1.3 million loss if all tuition payments were reimbursed. That's because on March 16th, the day NH went into a stay-at-home order, we had already spent \$1.1 million preparing for summer, ordering supplies, and improving facilities.

On that day, all spending that could be postponed came to a quick stop.

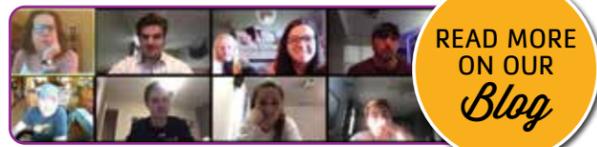
*"The world is round and the place that seems like the end may also be the beginning."*  
— Ivy Baker Priest

This disappointing situation created a new path for Coniston. Donors whom we hoped would fund camperships, projects, and even college scholarships were asked to support a different summer. One where Camp would open free of charge to any local community member who could safely attend.



## New Website Launched

In the midst of closing, a new website was launched creating a user friendly platform to share information, videos, and helps process the upcoming surge in cancellations and donations! Check it out at [www.coniston.org](http://www.coniston.org)



## ZOOM Career Counseling for 2020 Staff

After announcing closing, **Patty Sinacole** volunteered with the 2020 staff to help them navigate finding summer employment and continue professional development.

At the root of the conversation was the opportunity to pivot the skills utilized at camp to lead to a summer that helps them gain valuable experiences.



Don't forget Coniston's own superhero nurses who provide safety and comfort to thousands of kids every summer and keep children healthy in schools and hospitals year-round. A **Class A clap** to them for gathering Camp's masks and sanitizer so Camp could donate those items to the local hospitals!



# \$250,000 MATCHING FUNDS

## EARLY MAJOR GIFTS CREATE A WAVE OF SUPPORT

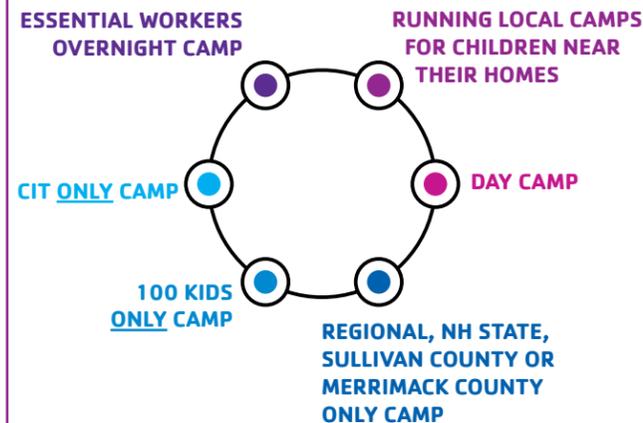
A group of Coniston families and donors stepped forward within days of the closing of camp to produce a \$250,000 matching gift for parents. The concept was simple. Having a substantial goal for parents to donate their tuition towards would help get Coniston through the year ahead. It worked! It was another step in keeping Coniston alive for the future.

## REFUNDS, DONATIONS, AND ROLLOVERS!

After announcing the cancellation of Camp, approximately 1,500 campers and CITs had to be "unregistered." Registration software isn't written to do that. However, **Lorraine Newcomb**, Coniston's Registrar of 20 years, was the right person for the job. Parents could donate a portion or all of their tuition to help get camp through the year. They could also roll over the money and reserve a spot for 2021, while others took a refund. Many families chose to do a portion of all three!

## Contingency Planning and the Summer

As it became more obvious that Camp would not happen as normal, multiple scenarios were planned and budgeted as alternatives. This graphic illustrates a few of the most heavily considered.



**Kathleen Moore** makes masks for the office staff. During the summer, she sent more for the Community Days staff.

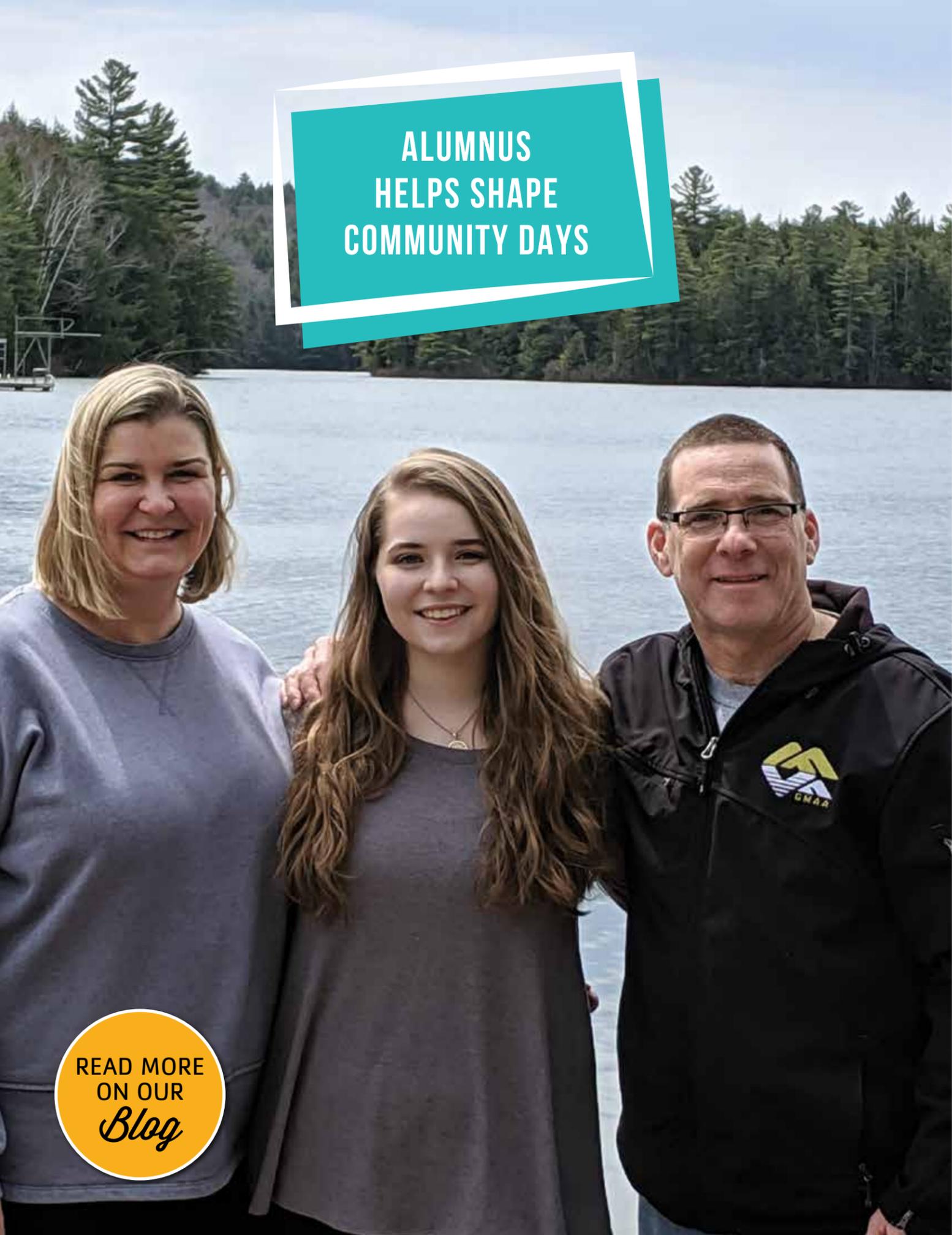


**Cassie Short**, a teacher at Wellesley Public Schools as well as the track coach, has used her passion for running as a way to help frontline workers with a Miles for Masks fundraiser.



Part of the COVID-19 response is adapting, overcoming, and coming together as a community, and **Rachel Graf-McCabe** is doing just that. Rachel, alongside other restaurants in the Tahoe area, started the Sierra Relief Kitchen which provides meals to residents in need. They started at 40 meals per day and quickly increased due to demand to over 750 meals.

**Josh Adler** graduated from Georgetown Law and **Rachel Adler** graduated from Boston College School of Social Work.



## ALUMNUS HELPS SHAPE COMMUNITY DAYS

READ MORE  
ON OUR  
*Blog*

**W**ith lockdown stretching on, it became apparent that there was a need to ease the anguish of isolation. Society was stressed. Indeed, we all were stressed. The psychological benefits of being outside and making connections are innumerable. People suffer from a lack of contact with others and from being confined to their homes.

Earlier in the spring, Coniston received correspondence from [Howie Kalfus](#), a Sanders' Era alumnus and former camper parent. He visited our 1600-acre property with his family to see his parents in late April. It was the first time these grandparents had been out of their house in a month and a half. His powerful letter to Camp is on our blog, and told us of how his reunion reminded him that no matter where he gathered, because they were together, that place became home.

Coincidentally, at the same time, Coniston staff had been separately musing over the concept of running a program where families would drop by camp and participate in activities while maintaining social distance. This would enable multiple generations to see each other safely, perhaps for the first time in the summer.

Our plan was simple. During July and August a community program would be run on-site. Sign-ups for the program would occur on the new Coniston website. A small staff of fifteen additional staff would be rehired to run activities like swimming and sailing, hiking and field games, and even arts and crafts.

On July 12, we launched Community Days with a group of fifty two nurses and family members. They spent the day at Camp rediscovering a sense of normalcy, joy, and connection. It felt incredibly important for something so straightforward. Through a generous gift from the Brown Foundation, Coniston did this free of charge all summer for local families. By the time it all ended, almost 3,500 visits were made to Camp without a single report of COVID-19!

# World News

WORLD  
**10,476,012**  
COVID-19 CASES



**BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTESTS INTENSIFY ACROSS THE U.S. AND SPREAD TO THE UK, GERMANY, FRANCE, BRAZIL, AUSTRALIA, SOUTH AFRICA, AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN RESPONSE TO GEORGE FLOYD AND BREONNA TAYLOR**

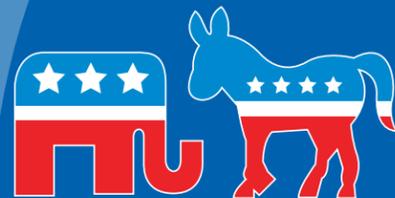


**JUNE 2020**

**JUNE 2020**

# US NEWS

UNITED STATES  
**2,635,603**  
COVID-19 CASES



**THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION TAKES SHAPE WITH BIDEN AS THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINEE AND TRUMP HITTING THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL**

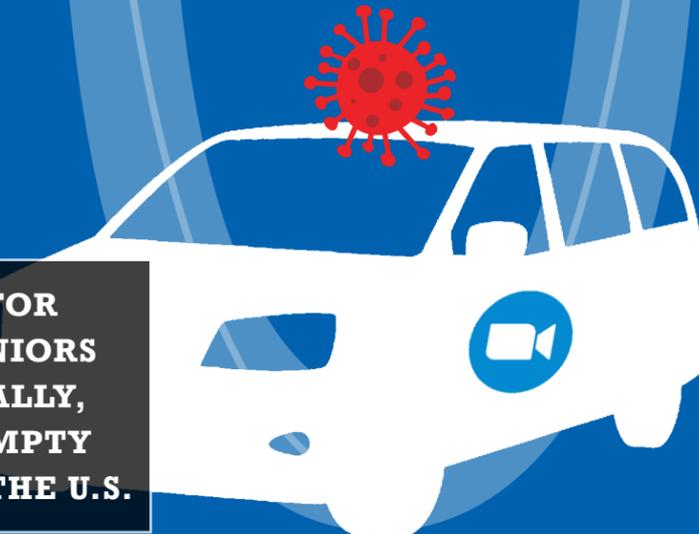
**REPORTS OF FAMILIES MOVING OUT OF THE CITIES AND INTO THE SUBURBS AND RURAL AREAS BECOME NATIONAL NEWS**



**DRIVE BY BIRTHDAY PARTIES BECOME THE NORM**



**GRADUATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS ARE HELD VIRTUALLY, IN CARS, OR IN EMPTY STADIUMS ACROSS THE U.S.**



# JUNE



"The map is just incredible. What a clever way to engage campers and teach them the importance of being a part of positive change in the world."  
— CONISTON PARENT

READ MORE ON OUR *Blog*

## KEEP CONISTON ON THE MAP

*"To secure the future of Camp and allow us to stay open to anyone who wants to come to Camp."*

We launched the *Keep Coniston on the Map* campaign to raise an additional \$300K and minimize the long-term impact of losses and ensure Coniston could continue to offer camperships, keep prices affordable, and reach children from underserved groups, such as refugees, lower income communities, and veterans & active service members.

Additionally, the campaign helped keep our current campers involved in service through volunteering in their own communities. Each hour of service translated into a cash donation to Camp thanks to generous matching donors.

From food banks to picking up trash—these good deeds affected home communities and brought a generous gift from long term Camp supporters.

The campaign was a huge success! The goals were met and Conistonians have lots of wonderful volunteer stories to share. You can check out the colored map at [coniston.org/keep-coniston-on-the-map](http://coniston.org/keep-coniston-on-the-map)

Over the past three years, Coniston has doubled our camperships. In summer 2019 (as we do every summer) we spent \$149 more per camper than we charged in tuition.



*"We've decided to volunteer at the Arlington Food Assistance Center because the COVID-19 pandemic has caused food instability to skyrocket."*



*"I picked up trash on the streets near my house to help keep my town clean."*

**Community Days staff training** began on June 22nd for sixteen staff members who were hired back through a generous grant. Training was very different with social distancing, mask wearing, and lots of new COVID-19 cleaning protocols!

Several Board members joined the Community Days staff along with **John Tilley**, **John McNair**, and **Nicole Berthiaume** for a YUSA day long national training on **Unlearning Systematic Racism**.

*Staff & Volunteers*

## TEENS RAISE MONEY TO SAVE CAMP



1st-yr staff members, **John Shelley** and **Ellie Wilson**, jumped into action when they heard Camp needed help by creating a fundraiser. These entrepreneurs sold \$1,800 worth of friendship bracelets and, more importantly, found a way of keeping the spirit of Camp alive during these times.

READ MORE ON OUR *Blog*

*"I'm so sorry about this summer. I can't imagine how hard this must be on you, your staff, and of course the kids. My kids are so disappointed, but knowing Coniston will always be in their hearts and in their future a smile remains on their faces."*  
— CONISTON PARENT

## GEORGE FLOYD AND BLM

As a predominantly white organization, we have a special responsibility to our community to teach and model anti-racist behavior. History teaches us that movements for change are most successful when privileged communities use their voices to advocate on behalf of marginalized communities. Camp has always worked hard to teach and live the values of respect, honesty, inclusivity, responsibility, and caring. But we acknowledge that we need to and must go further and we're deeply committed to doing that.

READ MORE ON OUR *Blog*



## Virtual Opening Campfire!

Even though we couldn't have opening campfire in person, we decided that the show must go on! Check out the recording at [youtu.be/VI-fSm86emE](https://youtu.be/VI-fSm86emE)

The **2000 CITs** were bummed to have their 20th reunion cancelled. They were looking forward to seeing friends they hadn't connect with in years. However, the cancellation didn't stop them from rallying together and raising \$15,000 for the **Keep Coniston on the Map Campaign**, which "rebuilt" the CIT cabins they lived in for summer Y2K.

READ MORE ON OUR *Blog*

A group of **70/80's Alumni** have been connecting via Zoom every couple of weeks and even hosted a virtual



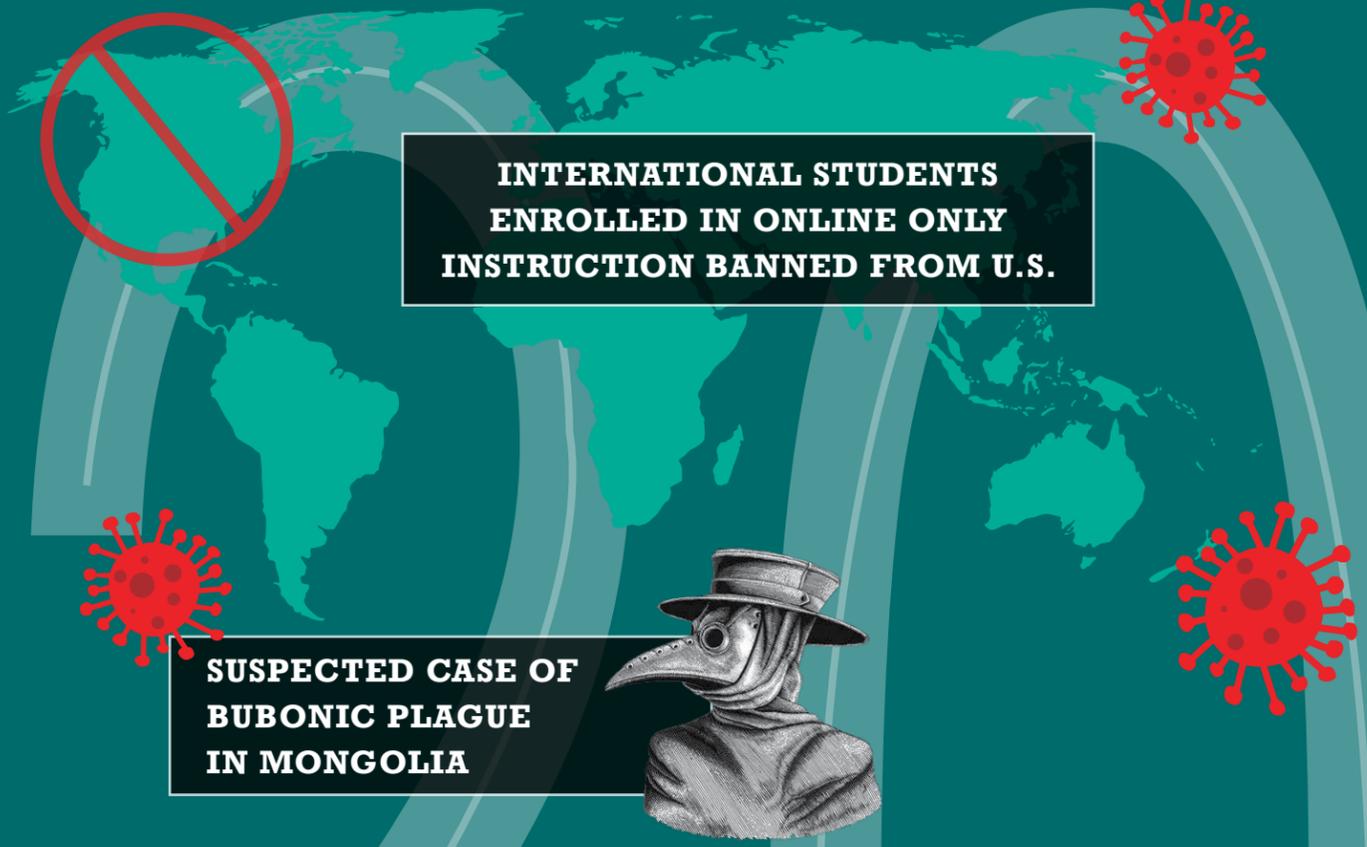
Chapel. They have an impromptu story telling contest using their Coniston memories to which they assign random points. It seems that each memory boils down to the same thing: how funny something was or how forgiving an environment Coniston was.

# World News

WORLD  
**17,408,033**  
COVID-19 CASES



OVER 163  
COVID-19  
VACCINES IN  
DEVELOPMENT  
THROUGHOUT  
THE WORLD



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS  
ENROLLED IN ONLINE ONLY  
INSTRUCTION BANNED FROM U.S.

SUSPECTED CASE OF  
BUBONIC PLAGUE  
IN MONGOLIA



JULY 2020

JULY 2020

# US NEWS

UNITED STATES  
**4,601,526**  
COVID-19 CASES



CIVIL RIGHTS  
ICON AND  
CONGRESSMAN  
JOHN LEWIS  
PASSES AWAY



RESTAURANTS ACROSS THE UNITED  
STATES SERVE DINERS OUTSIDE



NBA SEASON  
RESTARTS  
WITH NO FANS  
IN THE STANDS

CENTER FOR  
DISEASE CONTROL  
RELEASES  
PAPER SAYING  
"GEORGIA'S  
SLEEPAWAY CAMP'S  
CORONAVIRUS  
OUTBREAK IS A  
WARNING FOR  
WHAT COULD  
HAPPEN WHEN  
SCHOOLS REOPEN"

31  
JULY

# JULY



## COMMUNITY DAYS 2020

*This summer showcased Coniston's capacity as a vibrant regional resource and asset.*

In light of the dire regional COVID-19 situation in the Greater Boston Area during April and May, Coniston chose a "day camp" style program open to families. Leveraging Coniston's beautiful lake and 1,500 acres, children could run, swim, and explore. Multiple generations could safely see each other for the first time in months. Families could envelop themselves in normalcy. Coniston met its mission by providing families access to a psychologically

beneficial outdoor setting. Almost 3,500 individuals participated in Community Day programs throughout the summer, far surpassing our expectations.

Our actions during COVID-19 have raised the profile of Camp in the eyes of funders, neighbors, and policy makers. Coniston is now acknowledged as an organization that actively improves the quality of life in our region.

### Quotes, Ideas, & Thoughts

Tacked above John Tilley's desk are index cards. On the cards, he has captured thoughts and insights over the years from many that helped guide his actions through the pandemic. Here are a few relevant favorites:

- Don't let a good crisis go to waste.
- Kindness is most often received deeply during moments of vulnerability.
- We don't believe in limiting opportunity to those already on the road to success.
- We believe character determines success—not pedigree.
- Important people think that what we do is important.
- Don't use your organization's resources to cherry-pick the best students, remove them from their communities, and indoctrinate them in a culture not committed to helping others.

The traditional **CIT Talk** between last year campers and staff was hosted virtually. This presentation gives an overall view to campers of the CIT program, what to expect, and more importantly, how to apply.

*Leadership*

## GRANTS

The **Community Days Grant** received from the Brown Foundation opened doors for Coniston with other foundations. Leaders in the area began to notice that Coniston wasn't just a summer camp, but also a statewide resource. We were out there looking for ways to connect and engage and make our community a better place. Coniston received **NH governmental funding** and **YUSA COVID Relief Grants**. That funding helped us to reduce our losses from the pandemic. Other grants allowed us to create new program offerings that were much needed for the youth in our community. One will bring a group of **South African staff to Camp** and Camp staff to Africa. Another grant will bring the **children of incarcerated parents to Camp**. Another will provide a **tutoring program** for members of our community in Concord, NH and elsewhere. Keep reading for more details!

## IN THE NEWS

The incredible support of the Coniston Community didn't go unnoticed. Camp was interviewed and featured in a blog written by Campminder, our registration and donor technology platform: [campminder.com/go/tips-to-effectively-fundraise-for-your-summer-camp-in-the-midst-of-covid-19](https://campminder.com/go/tips-to-effectively-fundraise-for-your-summer-camp-in-the-midst-of-covid-19)

facebook  
@YMCA Camp Coniston

FOLLOW US ON  
**LinkedIn**  
@ymca-camp-coniston

JOIN OUR NEW CAREER DEVELOPMENT GROUP:  
[www.linkedin.com/groups/13608842](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13608842)

**Corey Miller** prepped to launch his first podcast as Senior Producer, set to air in September. Check out **Truss Levelz**, hosted by Cam Jordan and Mark Ingram on the Players Tribune to see what he is working on!



**Emily Ascarino (Kerrigan)** debuted @playingwithhazel on Instagram: a place for moms to support each other and keep it real.



ALUMNI NEWS

STAY INFORMED ABOUT CONISTON BY REGISTERING AS AN ALUM  
[coniston.org/alumni](https://coniston.org/alumni)

# COMMUNITY DAYS 2020



## ESSENTIAL WORKERS' DAYS

As a way of showing our appreciation to our local essential workers, we invited them to enjoy relaxing days at Coniston with some limited Camp activities throughout the summer.



## AFTERSCHOOL FAMILIES DAY

Our Afterschool program closed early and we wanted to give families a chance to enjoy Camp and catch up with their Afterschool friends (socially distanced).



## COMMUNITY DAYS

Our local community enjoyed several days with their family outside on the beautiful shores of Lake Coniston. There were a variety of water and land activities available.

*Community Days is the best lemonade from lemons I've seen during COVID19.*

— CONISTON COMMUNITY DAYS PARTICIPANT



## CHILDHOOD CANCER DAY

An exclusive day to minimize exposure for compromised pediatric cancer patients, and have some fun in the process!

*This is the first time we've felt comfortable enough to leave our house as a family since March.*

— PARENT OF CHILDHOOD CANCER LIFELINE



## CONISTON NURSES DAY

We invited our wonderful Coniston nurses to enjoy a relaxing day at Camp and to take advantage of some Camp activities with their families.



## ALUMNI DAYS

Our local alumni community enjoyed several days with their family outside on the beautiful shores of Lake Coniston.



## DAY CAMPERS EVERY THURSDAY

Children from the New London and Newport Recreation Departments Day Camp joined us at Coniston every Thursday this summer.

*... I want to thank you for making our campers believe in the kindness of strangers.*

— NEWPORT, NH RECREATION DEPT.



## NEW AMERICAN DAY

46 members of Concord's New American Community enjoyed a day of swimming, tie-dyeing, and archery!

*With public pools closed, it has been a treat for our New American friends to enjoy the lake!*

— STUART GESEN, SCHOOL NURSE, CONCORD, NH

READ THE FULL REPORT AT  
[CONISTON.ORG/DOWNLOADS/COVID19COMMUNITYDAYS2020REPORT.PDF](https://coniston.org/downloads/covid19communitydays2020report.pdf)

# COMMUNITY DAY METRICS

**TOP 10  
ZIP CODES**

NEWPORT, GRANTHAM, NEW LONDON,  
CROYDON, SUNAPEE, LEBANON, CONCORD,  
WILMOT, HANOVER, NEWBURY

**=56% OF  
PARTICIPANTS**

**SULLIVAN COUNTY,  
NH RESIDENTS**

**=37% OF  
PARTICIPANTS**

11% OF RESIDENTS LIVE  
BELOW THE POVERTY LINE

**1 OF EVERY 10  
PARTICIPANTS**

**FROM NEWPORT, NH**



**PARTICIPANTS**

**3429**

TOTAL NUMBER INCLUDING  
REGISTRANTS & WALK-INS



**243**

ESSENTIAL WORKER  
AND NURSES DAYS  
REGISTRANTS

**GRANDPARENTS**

**156**

PARTICIPANTS REPORTED  
BEING OLDER THAN 60

**88**

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS  
FROM NH CHILDHOOD  
CANCER LIFELINE

**32**

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS  
AND BUSINESSES

ENGAGED TO MAKE THE  
SUMMER A SUCCESS



**330**

DAY CAMPERS  
FROM LOCAL RECREATION DEPTS

Each Thursday this summer, campers from the New London and Newport Recreation Departments Day Camps joined us at Coniston. Permanent use of Coniston buses this summer eased socially distant transportation requirements. YMCA staff helped keep kids safe on the water and helped train visiting-staff in group management. Below is an email from the Newport director.

*When Coniston called to invite our camp to visit this summer there was no hesitation in my response. At the time of the call we weren't sure how we were going to conduct our camp and I was searching for activities to do with our kids. Ordinarily we would travel across the state to various attractions, but those trips were canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions.*

*I was ecstatic to learn that our campers would get the opportunity to experience what Coniston had to offer. I have lived in neighboring Newport for most of my life and have never had the opportunity to visit Camp. I worked in the same school with one of the camp nurses and the horseback director. Both of them rave about their summer jobs and frankly I was a little jealous.*

*This "hidden gem" in Croydon with the rustic cabins and the pristine lake is breathtaking. Our campers loved every minute of their visit. Of course the swimming, tie dye shirts and field games were nice, but the kayaking and archery were our campers favorites. Many had never done either activity before.*

*Each time I looked at our campers participating in the various activities, I kept thinking how lucky these kids are to be able to enjoy this facility and the many different outdoor adventures it has in one location. Our days at Coniston pale in comparison to anything we would have done at our camp this summer. One camper even asked if we could go back to Coniston next year. Hopefully (for your sake), this won't be possible, but if it was, I would put you on our calendar right now. This would easily replace our trips to Weir's Beach or Chunky's Movie Theatre.*

*Our campers live in a town without a lot of opportunity and we were grateful that they were able to get the chance to use the Coniston facility. Additionally, we were beyond grateful to have the Coniston staff available to instruct our campers without any cost to us.*

*Your generosity has made it possible for our campers to create memories that they will cherish for a lifetime and in a time when our campers didn't have much to be thankful for, I want to thank you for making our campers believe in the kindness of strangers.*

— Becky Merrow, Day Camp Director Newport, NH Recreation Dept.

READ MORE  
ON OUR  
*Blog*

# World News

WORLD  
**25,368,818**  
COVID-19 CASES



MEXICO LAUNCHES SCHOOL BROADCASTS - AIRING CLASSES ON TELEVISION



RUSSIA ANNOUNCES VACCINE FOR COVID-19 AFTER 2 WEEKS OF TRIALS

AUGUST 2020

AUGUST 2020

# US NEWS

UNITED STATES  
**6,047,692**  
COVID-19 CASES



WEST COAST WILDFIRES ERUPT FROM CALIFORNIA TO WASHINGTON, BURNING MILLIONS OF ACRES AND DISPLACING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE



HOME VALUES SOAR AWAY FROM CITIES AS PEOPLE TRY TO BUY HOUSES WITH MORE SPACE



ATLANTIC HURRICANE SEASON EXTENDS BEYOND THE NAMED STORMS AND USES GREEK LETTERS FOR ONLY THE SECOND TIME IN HISTORY

# AUGUST

## TRANSFORMATIONAL SUMMER

*"Love is like a lucky penny  
Hold it tight and you won't have any  
But, give it away  
And you'll have plenty  
You'll end up having more."*

The lyrics from this old children's song never rang more true than this summer. In a year where we "closed" — we didn't. An incredibly generous grant allowed Camp to operate for the first time in our history solely on donations—offering all programs and access at no charge.

and offered Camp's facility to local school districts to ease reopening.

We have added three initiatives we think will complement the campership expansion, career counselling, and alumni networking we have been building:

1. A virtual tutoring program for middle and high school aged New American students.
2. Camp for the children of incarcerated parents.
3. A staff exchange with the Peace Parks Foundation's, South African College for Tourism.

Doing this changed our mindset. Sometimes, you have to lose something to see the possibilities of what can be. Through pivoting and serving the community, Coniston had conversations and opened doors with organizations that we never had before. Some ideas remained just that—ideas. We discussed providing childcare at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center,



### SERVICE TRIP

FIRST SESSION TO FILL FOR SUMMER 2021

After a summer of no overnight camp, the first session to fill for next year is a group of campers working with Habitat for Humanity in West Virginia. There's something that feels right about a community whose actions match their words.



**JOHN TILLEY DISCUSSED YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DURING COVID19 IN KEYNOTE PRESENTATION AS GRANTHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF MET IN PREPARATION FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR**



**CAROLYN FINNEY, RENOWNED NATIONAL SPEAKER AND AUTHOR OF BLACK FACES, WHITE SPACES, SPOKE ON NEW LAWN ABOUT THE BLACK EXPERIENCE IN THE OUTDOORS TO DRAW ATTENTION AND CRITICAL THOUGHT TO THE NATION'S RACIAL STRIFE THIS SUMMER.**



Coniston parents, board, and staff members were joined by representatives of Colby-Sawyer College, New England College, Concord YMCA, NH Society for the Protection of Forests, Merck Forest and Farmland Center, and the US National Park Service for Carolyn Finney's August 7th presentation on race and the outdoors.



Follow us on **Instagram**

AND OUR NATURE PAGE: @ConistonFloraAndFauna



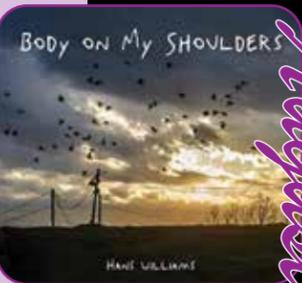
**The Townies, Tom Lynch and Chris Magnani,** played an acoustic show at Girls Waterfront to a very appreciative audience.



After helping to found a new summer camp, Eden Village West, and being in the non-profit world for over ten years, **Zach Friedman** is starting a new journey. This fall he will begin a one year Masters in Nonprofit Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania (all online).



**Hans Williams, 2017 CIT,** released his single *Body on My Shoulders*. This song is about the suicide of a friend and he hopes it helps destigmatize mental illness.



### COLBY SAWYER COLLEGE

RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION STAFF TRAINED AT CAMP IN PREPARATION FOR THE UPCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR





# World News

WORLD  
**33,875,810**  
COVID-19 CASES



ISRAEL, ENGLAND,  
AND SCOTLAND ALL  
ANNOUNCE NEW  
RESTRICTIONS TO  
COMBAT RISING  
COVID-19 CASES



THE OXFORD VACCINE TRIALS FOR  
COVID-19 ARE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED  
DUE TO A PARTICIPANT FALLING ILL

SEPTEMBER 2020

SEPTEMBER 2020



# US NEWS

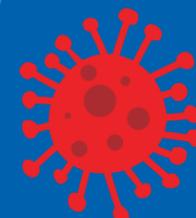
UNITED STATES  
**7,260,465**  
COVID-19 CASES



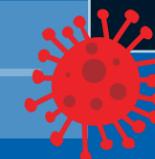
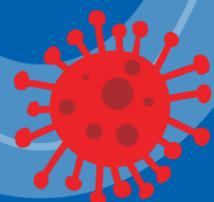
SCHOOLS REOPEN WITH  
MIXED SCHEDULES OF  
VIRTUAL AND IN PERSON

**BIDEN HARRIS**     **TRUMP PENCE**

PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HEATS UP



RUTH BADER GINSBURG  
PASSES AWAY





## SOUTH AFRICA EXCHANGE

*Empowering youth through life skills and experiences is the best way to learn and expand your vision.*

Coniston continues to work with the Brown Foundation which funded Community Days. Our newest collaboration includes a South African organization and will allow young people who are just starting their careers a life changing experience.

helping program evenings and down time on-site in Graff-Reinet to improve that experience. At the conclusion the Coniston staff will return with eight recent College of Tourism graduates who will work in NH for the summer improving and adding to our own Community!

The South African College for Tourism trains impoverished, unskilled young women in a year-long course that focuses exclusively on developing skills in the hospitality service.

The grant will pay all costs for the participants and the students will return home to find employment with incredible experience on their resumes. The exchanges have dual purposes of positively affecting the lives of participants and creating mutual growth and capacity for both organizations.

[youtu.be/3AXnr-EUTtM](https://youtu.be/3AXnr-EUTtM)

Each May and June the college offers a program to teach local youth about the college. Eight Coniston staff will be



## CAMPER REGISTRATION SETTING RECORD HIGH

2020 has been a year full of many things that have challenged the norm. We are happy to say that this was also the case with the number of applications received when we starting accepting them on July 1st. In our first 24 hours, we received over 500 applications for 2021. In the next couple of weeks, we surpassed the amount we normally receive in several months. This confirms our belief that parents understand that Camp is as important to their children as we do.



## 25th Anniversary of Camp Winning Spirit

Each Labor Day weekend, Camp hosts families from the Childhood Cancer Lifeline of New Hampshire. Last summer, campers were buzzing with talk about the 25th anniversary of this magical tradition in 2020. Planning started to create a weekend built to support families who would be spending the entire time mixed with a big bash welcoming past staff and families for a day of carnival fun, cookouts, and a campfire. We were very disappointed to not celebrate this momentous Anniversary, but are looking forward to welcoming all Winning Spirit families and staff past and present to celebrate 25 years of friendships and support next summer.

CIT applications for summer 2021 were submitted on September 1st. During the summer of 2021, WCITs will not fly to the Grand Canyon to ensure safety of all participants. Instead, the WCITs will adventure on the East Coast. CITs and their families will find out more about their travel plans in the spring.

*Staffing*

## AFTERSCHOOL



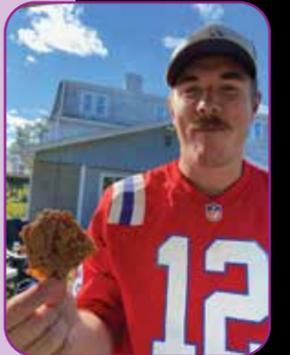
Over the summer, Afterschool Director, **Hannah Slafsky**, was busy staying informed on protocols and best practices to safely open our afterschool programs. By the time schools decided about their opening plans, only New London and Sunapee were in person and ready for our program. Our other three programs in Lebanon, West Lebanon, and Plainfield remained closed as those schools did not allow any afterschool activities.

The decreased attendance from 203 children per day to 55 children per day is causing the needed programs to run at a significant losses. Thankfully, Coniston received funding from Child Care Recovery and Stabilization Program (CCRSP) to help reduce these financial losses related to lower enrollment and the additional expenses related to the pandemic.

**Katie Kavanagh** served as Interim Legal Director and is now Senior Attorney for the California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice (CCI), a new nonprofit organization dedicated to the abolition of immigration detention. Katie's cutting-edge work providing emergency legal response to ICE enforcement has received positive coverage in the media recently, including the New York Times.

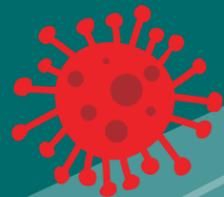


When **Matt Comstock** is not mowing his pristine lawn, he spends his time researching the world of hommus. After receiving an Honorary Doctorate in Homology, Matt went on to scientifically prove that Za'atar by Cedars Foods is the best hommus flavor available. He took his research to the airwaves and created the wildly acclaimed podcast "Dudes Talking Hommus," available on all podcast outlets.



**Caroline Bourque** is attending University of South Florida, in Tampa, Florida, majoring in Criminology with career goals of working in justice and prison system reform. She recently graduated from Kearsarge Regional High School.





# World News

WORLD  
**41,570,883**  
COVID-19 CASES



COUNTRIES ACROSS EUROPE, LATIN AMERICA, AND THE MIDDLE EAST RETURN TO LOCK DOWN TO REDUCE COVID-19 SPREAD



ISRAEL AND SUDAN SIGN PEACE AGREEMENT TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS



OCTOBER 2020

OCTOBER 2020

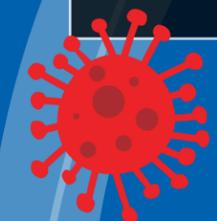
# US NEWS

UNITED STATES  
**8,312,667**  
COVID-19 CASES



WE MET THE IDAHO POTATO WORKER WHO SENT FLEETWOOD MAC SALES SOARING

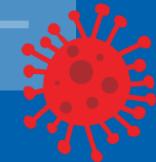
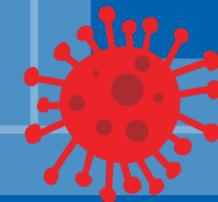
LA DODGERS WIN WORLD SERIES WHILE COLLEGE AND PRO FOOTBALL HAVE DIFFICULTY BEGINNING SEASONS



WHITE HOUSE STAFF, INCLUDING PRESIDENT, ARE INFECTED WITH COVID-19



RECORD-BREAKING # OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS SUBMITTED FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION



# OCTOBER

## CONISTON TUTORORS

*When we come together, we can create a more equitable future*

**W**e are excited to announce the launch of a new tutoring program for middle and high school-aged children funded through a NH Empowers Youth Grant. The first cohort is New American students from Concord, NH.

virtual school world. It is one that we hope to offer to many more Conistonians in the very near future. Imagine enough alumni volunteering to enable every Coniston camper to access academic assistance during the school year!

Already more than sixty alumni have raised their hands to volunteer with twenty youth from the Concord Area. Coniston has hired alumna and teacher Izzy Caruso to manage the program. Izzy is a recent graduate in Education from Loyola University of Chicago. She is pairing students in a variety of classes from science and math to history and foreign languages to engineering and construction.

If interested in becoming a tutor or receiving services, feel free to reach out to Izzy at [isabel@coniston.org](mailto:isabel@coniston.org)

Schooling has changed dramatically over the past year, and every student is feeling the effects. In a world where youth are developmentally wired to be making connections with peers their own age, learning on a screen is not optimal. Equal access to quality education is vital for children to thrive and grow into informed, successful adults.

The mission of the new program is to give students additional support that they need to succeed in this new

# GIVING TUESDAY

On December 1st we kicked off the giving season with our **#GivingTuesday** campaign to take on COVID-19. The opportunity for kids to grow at Camp is needed now more than ever, and we ask you to help us provide this safely. As the **Coniston Community takes on COVID-19**, Camp must evolve and be resilient. This means providing increased ventilation in cabins, adding tents and picnic tables for outdoor dining, hiring extra staff to keep the camper/staff ratio low, and providing ample testing. When we come together, we can accomplish anything!

Thanks to **Bar Harbor Bank** and **Facebook** who matched gifts on #GivingTuesday.

## CONISTON ADDS NEW PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS

In conjunction with the NH Department of Corrections, made available through private funding, Coniston will host fifteen children next summer whose parents have no negative behavior reports. As part of the program, children will be able to visit with their parent face to face and share in a meal and some activities—the only time during the year this is allowed.



## TAX BREAKS FOR ALL

Because Congress passed a \$2.2 trillion stimulus bill (CARES Act) in response to COVID-19, every American filing taxes can make a \$300 gift and deduct this straight from their taxes in 2020. We hope you will consider a gift to YMCA Camp Coniston to take advantage of this opportunity.

### STANDARD DEDUCTION?

The CARES Act allows for up to \$300 in charitable contributions per individual and \$600 per household to qualify as an above-the-line deduction, meaning you don't have to itemize deductions in order to claim the deduction.

### ITEMIZING DEDUCTIONS?

Prior to 2020, households who itemize their deductions could only deduct a maximum of 60% of adjusted gross income (AGI) for cash donations. For 2020, the CARES Act has eliminated this cap and households can deduct 100% of their adjusted gross income.

### CORPORATE GIVING?

In the past, corporations were able to deduct charitable donations up to 10% of taxable income. The CARES Act raises the cap to 25%.

\*If you have any questions please consult a tax advisor to discuss your specific circumstances.

READ MORE ON OUR *Blog*

# venmo

@YMCACampConiston  
*No associated fees with donation.*

# facebook

DONATE

@YMCACampConiston  
*No associated fees with donation.*

On October 10th **Hannah and Michael Slafsky** welcomed future Camper Warner Hal into this crazy new world. Congratulations to the **Slafskys** and proud new grandparents **Rolf and Stuart Gesen!**



Kristin Schulte, daughter of alumni **Karen and James Schulte**, makes the best of a crazy situation by celebrating her marriage via ZOOM.



**John Lynch**, camper, CIT, and staff in the 80's, is also the medical director of the Infection Control program at Harborview Medical Center. He has been at the forefront of COVID-19 safety and prevention. It's great to have a Conistonian to "check" in with about what's happening in the world of COVID-19. For some tips on how to stay safe this fall check out his COVID-19 aware habits here: <https://huddle.uwmedicine.org/people/in-the-community/masking-cleaning-and-takeout-3-covid-19-experts-share-their-safety-habits>





## EPILOGUE

**W**ith no spring Chronicle, no calendar, no regular program it seems odd publishing such a large winter edition. But we have an important story to tell. It's a story that is beginning—not ending.

Our year began with many plans and ideas:

- Plans to engage with even more children of diverse backgrounds
- Plans to keep them engaged in Camp with recurring camperships
- Plans to have a staff where every camper can “see” themselves
- Plans to renovate and enlarge the lodge and arts areas
- Ideas to provide academic assistance to campers
- Ideas to provide scholarships outside of Camp
- Ideas to link the entire community together for career success after Camp

We had built these plans and ideas knowing that Camp is good for kids. Recent research has shown kids who go to Camp succeed in college at a higher rate. We know that more kids need more Camp.

This is why we intentionally engaged children of veterans and active service members, New Americans living in Concord, families who have children with cancer, and children from our very own Sullivan County.

Then, just like that, we cancelled Camp for the summer.

All our plans and ideas seemed temporarily shelved.

As it turned out, the plans we had begun served as a road map for what we would become over the course of this tragic year.

2020 has been challenging. I know of many Camp families who have lost loved ones this year. Our nation and world have seen so much discontent. The connections that are so important in the lives of developing adolescents are gone. The work of quarantine is not easy. This has not been fun.

Opportunities presented themselves. When we open next summer, Camp will look different. I'm not talking about masks, fan systems in the cabins, or testing. I'm talking about tutoring for our campers by our alumni. I'm talking about a whole new group of campers who desperately need Camp and will enrich Coniston in an entirely new way. I'm talking about a staff exchange to South Africa.

In the midst of being closed we made headway. We kept moving. I hope you will walk with us as we continue to keep Coniston one of the finest camps in the land. Together we will change lives—together we can make the world a better place.



JOHN TILLEY, CAMP DIRECTOR