



**JUST KEEP
GOIN' ON**

Hello Team Skyline!

Unprecedented times. New normal. Plot twist.

There are so many expressions that we've used as a society to frame these past, present and future months. And so many ways we talk about ourselves, too: citizens, voters, patients, consumers, students. When you have a connection to a camp, there's the additional invitation we all have to think of ourselves also (and maybe first), as campers. Whether it's the last week, the last decade or the last century since you've been camping, there's a certain essence that stays with you.

The American blues songwriter, Eric Bibb, sings these words which have become an anthem for Skyline campers:

*Just keep goin' on, just keep goin' on,
Take ev'ry knock as a boost,
and ev'ry stumbling block as a steppin' stone,
Lift up your head, hold your own, just keep goin' on.*

This has long been an ethos of Camp Skyline that we teach explicitly to our campers and staff. A few summers ago our staff shirts played with the word CAMP as an acronym. We came up with Create, Adapt, Motivate, Play. In many years, the opportunities to put this intention into practice come as playfully theoretical, or slightly artificial, but this year of course presented that need as an unswerving reality.

Camp has always been about responding to challenges with creativity, whether that's wet socks, getting lost in the woods, or dropping your marshmallow in the coals. Broken shoes? Get some duct tape. Punctured volleyball? Invent a new sport. Homesick cabinmate? Dig deeper for kindness.

What the world needs now is more of this spirit: more campers, more camp. Camp teaches us that we can turn the stumbling blocks into stepping stones, and that we have to figure it out with compassion. When we think of ourselves as campers, we are reminded of our creativity, are inspired to embrace adversity as opportunity, and are unafraid to get our hands dirty.

Could there be a more important time than now to embrace camp?

We are so thankful for the support that we have from you, Team Skyline. We need all of it now: your prayerful thoughts, your participation in our programs, and your generosity as donors and volunteers. And dare I say – you need us more now than ever! Be sure to come and visit, and rekindle the flame.

We have some interesting times ahead, and we're confident that as a camp, and as campers, that we'll continue to hold our own, with our heads lifted up.

Camp on!



Matt Henry
Executive Director

WILD CHILD: BACK TO THE WOODS

Wild Child begins its third year this fall, and after two terrific years of growth, our little program is at full enrollment.

The 3s and 4s come Monday through Thursday for a morning of exploration, friendship, and learning. Relying on the intuitive wisdom – supported by research – that children learn best when they are in the flow of play, Wild Child welcomes the children to the woods where they climb, run, and poke around at all the gifts nature presents.



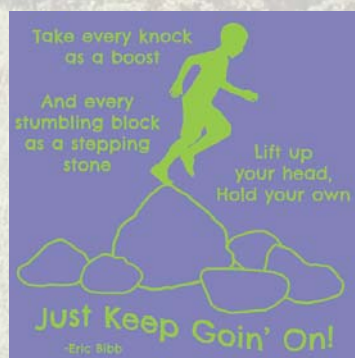
The literal sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and textures of the woods both inspire and satisfy burgeoning curiosity, and the metaphorical textures and such of the social landscape give opportunities for friendship development and kindness. More than ever, after months of some activity limitation, children are hungry for experiences like Wild Child!

The name of the program is based on an acronym: Wonder-Inspired Learning and Development. There is structure that the camp educators provide, and the day has a deliberate pattern and timing. In other words, it is not completely wild! It is such good energy to bring to Skyline, and we are excited for this busy year to continue as well as it has commenced.



SUMMER 2020 T-SHIRT

Since we made “Just Keep Goin’ On” our theme for the summer, we sought permission from Eric Bibb, the songwriter, and came up with this design for our *Summer 2020: Take Two!* t-shirts.



Not only did we get permission, but we were able to form a nice connection and share about Skyline with Mr. Bibb who now lives in Sweden. These shirts (and many more items) are available for purchase at www.campskyline.org/camp-store.

SUMMER 2021?

Our intention at this time is to have summer 2021 run more like other years. The months ahead are critical, and changes in the community health situation – hopefully for the better – will guide us as we move ahead.

More than anything, we want to have Skyline overflowing once again with campers, so you know that we’ll be keeping you posted. Keep an eye out for emails, social media, and always at www.campskyline.org



TAKE TWO!

This summer, we took the commitment to “hold your own, just keep goin’ on,” and turned the summer into *Take Two!* This choice reflects that we expect life to not be perfect, and that there is no shame in taking a second attempt when the first one does not pan out as expected. This section highlights some of these *Take Two!* endeavors and adventures.



FRESH AIR HIKES

In mid-March, we began offering two-hour time slots for families to walk Skyline’s trails, with only one or two families on the property at any given time. Especially in the early days of the pandemic, this was a welcome outing for many families who were seeking ways to get out of their house and play in a safe setting. Fresh Air Hikes continued throughout the summer, and sign-ups will stay open indefinitely. To take advantage of a little bit of Skyline’s fresh air, visit www.campskyline.org/fresh-air.

POOL RENTALS

In June we opened our pool and began offering two- and three-hour pool rentals for individual families or groups of up to 25 people. This was one of our most popular programs this summer, as local community pools were closed. The pool rentals introduced many families to Skyline for the first time and brought many back for other *Take Two!* programs.

MICROCAMPES

From June to August, we served a number of families and PODs in two-hour blocks of camp activity. Fishing and boating were popular choices, as were archery, shelter building, wild edible hikes and the low ropes course. A few groups did tree planting and camouflage hikes, and one even asked for water kickball. There were quite a few children who celebrated their birthdays with Microcamps. We will continue to offer Microcamps by appointment. Visit www.campskyline.org/microcamps.



CAMP DAYS

Camp Days is a program that arose from the success of our Microcamps. Families were looking for opportunities to bring their children to camp without their adults attending, too. Camp Days also utilized the POD-based system, in which groups of campers already known to each other and interacting outside of camp came to spend a full day at camp, designing their own program with the support and supervision of one of Skyline’s program guides. Each Camp Day had between four and nine campers, and several groups returned for multiple days. Many of our Camp Day participants were day campers from years past who were excited to be able to experience camp in a new way. For some, it was their first experience at Skyline, and they enjoyed discovering a slice of what camp has to offer.

LODGE RENTAL

Skyline's Lodge, which usually houses our summer staff from June to August, did not sit empty this summer! Nearly every week saw a new family renting the upstairs of the Lodge for family vacations. As we enter the fall season, many of our guest groups that have typically rented our facilities have decided not to proceed with their planned programs and retreats. This means that our Lodge has several open weekends of availability for any families, groups, or individuals that would like to rent it. More information can be found on our website at www.campskyline.org/lodge-rental.

MICRO RETREATS

Towards the end of the summer, we made the difficult decision to cancel our three-day Women's Retreat in November. Instead, we're offering a series of half-day and full-day outdoor workshops on Saturdays and Sundays through October (and one virtual workshop in November), which we're calling Micro Retreats. Workshop topics include cooking and baking, yoga and meditation, nature crafting, and more. For more information and for detailed information about all the Micro Retreats offered, please visit www.campskyline.org/micro-retreats.



VIRTUAL CAMPFIRES & COMMUNITY SING

Each week from March until summer's end, we welcomed all of Team Skyline - our campers, alumni, counselors, parents, and supporters - to join us for a Virtual Campfire on Zoom. We sang songs, told jokes, and acted out camp skits. As the summer came to an end, we merged our Virtual Campfires into our Community Sing program, which has been going on monthly (September-May) since 2017. We'll meet virtually for our Community Sing events until it's safe to gather indoors again. Join us, from wherever you are, once a month. Dates and details are at www.campskyline.org/community-sing.

CAMP CARE

Skyline is now many weeks into a new offering we call Camp Care. It is for families who are looking for support with their child's learning and a place for their child to run free and play. We know that with an increase in virtual learning and a decrease in some recreational opportunities, children are in need of more support, and Skyline is well equipped to provide this.

Families can choose both learning support and outdoor recreation, or just one option. They can come one, two, three, or four days each week.

Learning support is a couple of hours in which our staff use whatever learning resources the children bring with them, offering encouragement and tutoring. This takes place from 1pm to 3pm.

From 3pm to 5pm, we provide outdoor recreation. Children spend time with a Skyline staff member playing in the camp woods, fields, and sports courts. Campers have time to climb trees, roll down hills, play sports, and learn about the natural world. They are in groups of up to 15 children.

As a new program, Camp Care has started small and is growing a little each week. While the pandemic contributes to the need for such programming, it does emerge from some planning we had been doing here at Skyline, pre-pandemic, for after-school activity options. It is another example of that camp spirit and theme running throughout this newsletter!



WALDEN AWARD 2020 - KATIE ELY

In a typical summer, the dozens of summer staff we welcome from our own community and all over the world vote weekly to say thank you to their peers who have most fully embraced and expressed the values of community, compassion, creativity, and courage. At the summer's end, we celebrate this with the Walden Award, named in memory of Skyline program director Tom Walden (1968-2003). We add the recipients' names to a plaque, and they receive the communal gratitude and hugs from the staff, and usually a silly trophy from the Dollar Store.

This year was not typical, but we were busy with many smaller-scale programs, one family or small group of friends at a time. The values of the Walden Award were still very much our focus, and the person who most fully deserves this recognition in 2020 is Katie Ely.

Katie's original job title for this summer was Apprentice Camp Director. She recently graduated from Central Michigan University (Fire Up Chips!) with a degree in Recreational Management, and is pursuing camp as a career by accruing additional experiences and qualifications. Having been with us for many summers, then interning at a different camp last year, Katie returned to learn the inner workings of the camp's operation, and throughout the spring took on the task of managing our accreditation process for the American Camp Association.

When summer-as-planned fell away, Katie rolled with the punches and adapted to every new and never-tried program idea that we threw her way. Even though the experience of the camp staff community was not a part of the experience, Katie stayed dedicated to expanding her skills as she supported Skyline. She embraced all the small groups that came our way, and never once balked at the strange needs that arose throughout the summer. As she has always been, but even more so this year, Katie was a terrific ambassador for Skyline, representing our values and providing excellent program leadership in a challenging time.

As with many recent graduates, Katie is still scanning the horizon for what's next. Skyline will always welcome her when she can be here and be proud of her as she grows into the adventure ahead. Thank you, Katie!



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

These past few years have seen Skyline invest in some small and moderately sized projects to increase our capacity for the present and future. The largest project in this campaign is the addition of new permanent staff housing, and the project is well under way! We're hopeful to have this completed before the snow returns.

The capital projects on the list that remain include some much-needed roof replacements, some pool rehabilitation, and a more reliable camp truck. We have reached about two-thirds of our financial goal, so we're asking all of our Skyline supporters to consider what they are able to give at this time. The projects to date (dining hall deck, two new cabins, makerspace hub and all new mattresses for the retreat buildings) have proven to be much appreciated by all who have benefited.

For more information about the capital campaign, please visit www.campskyline.org/capital-campaign or contact Executive Director, Matt Henry.

OTHER WAYS TO SUPPORT SKYLINE

Financial Support – individual donations are Skyline's most important form of support. Visit www.campskyline.org/donate to make a one-time or monthly contribution.

Follow us on Facebook – Even if you're not able to attend our programs and events, when you like, share, and comment on our posts, it helps to get our information out to more people. <https://www.facebook.com/SkylineCampMichigan>

Check out our wish list – we're always looking for used or new items. A few of the items at the very top of our wish list are: snow-plow capable 4WD pickup, any vehicle, appliances in good repair, commercial washing machine, stump grinder

You can check out our complete wish list (including our Amazon wish list) at www.campskyline.org/wish-list

Amazon Smile – Visit www.smile.amazon.com and select "Skyline Camp and Retreat Center" as your charity. Every time you shop at smile.amazon.com, a portion of what you spend will be donated to camp!

Kroger – visit www.kroger.com/communityrewards and choose "Skyline" as your organization. Kroger will donate a percentage of your purchase when you use your Kroger card!

Shop with Scrip is a program that allows users to purchase gift cards to hundreds of businesses. A percentage of your gift card is donated to Skyline, and you pay nothing extra!

HOW: 1) Complete a gift card order form through Skyline (email matt@campskyline.org) OR

2) Set up an account by emailing fundraising@campskyline.org, which allows you to purchase gift cards on demand and use them right from your phone!

Volunteer – We are always looking for helping hands on our trails and in our gardens (and everywhere else, too!) If you would like to "adopt" a section of camp to maintain, or just come out once to clip vines or pull weeds for a couple of hours, please visit www.campskyline.org/volunteer for more information.

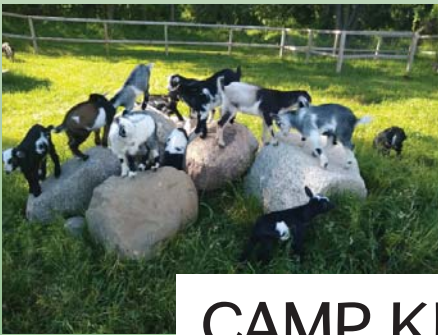


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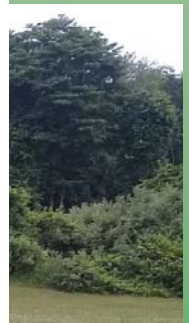
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CAMP KIDS

One part of our summer tradition that *didn't* change this year was the birth of our baby goats in May! We welcomed a record 13 babies this year, all named for historical figures from the musical "Hamilton". Our campers love visiting our goat kids each summer, and this year they brought joy to many of our Take Two! program participants. After a summer full of goat walks and romps around the goat pen, all of the baby goats are now in their forever homes - including little Abigail (Abby) Adams, who is joining Skyline's herd permanently.



WWW.CAMPSKYLINE.ORG