

Dear CYJ Family,

In over two decades as CYJ's camp director, I have been fortunate to help create recipes for successful summers. Each session requires a slightly different formula to produce a life-changing experience for Jewish children. Over the years, we have added traditions, altered schedules, re-written cheers, and changed menus to better maintain a fun, inclusive, challenging, safe environment where campers can play, grow, and make lifelong friendships. Truth be told, I look forward to varying the recipe each year to see if a little more of this or a dash of that might make the summer a little bolder and zestier than the year before.

As concerns about the impact of COVID-19 grew more serious, I was committed to continue our practice of changing the recipe so we could get it right—adding deeper and more regular cleaning practices, operating activities in smaller groups, redesigning our food service operation, and reformatting our session calendar to be responsive to medical guidance. We taste-tested every recipe we could think of, but despite the herculean efforts of our medical committee, our board members, and our amazing staff, we came to understand that the experience we could provide this summer just wouldn't be worthy of CYJ-Texas and wouldn't meet the health and safety standards we demand. When we promise you our delicious shabbat coffee cake, we owe you our delicious shabbat coffee cake—and with the ingredients available this summer, we simply cannot deliver on that promise.

With that in mind, I am heartbroken to share that we have canceled all sessions of CYJ this summer.

Over the past few months, many families have reached out to me to share the fear that they would have to tell their children that camp could not happen. I understand that concern—my kids were also looking forward to camp this summer.

I am committed to helping every family have this difficult conversation. I have put together a [video message](#) that I hope you will share with your camper to explain the decision we made and our plan to move forward. If the CYJ team can do more to help, please let us know.

Moving Forward

In the short term, I would encourage you to allow your child to grieve the loss they are experiencing. Whether it was the excitement of coming to CYJ for the first time or the anticipation of reuniting with friends from summers past, each child will experience a form of loss in their own way. Over the next few days, CYJ will host conversations with our parents, campers, and staff. I hope you will take advantage of at least one of these opportunities to come together as a community ([CYJ Calendar](#)). Doing Havdallah and singing as an extended CYJ family tomorrow night is a great way to highlight that no child has to face this disappointment alone.

Many of you have asked about the financial impact to camp of not operating this summer. Simply put, the decision not to open will have a profound impact on our organization. We will be reaching out soon with more information—but I am confident that, with your help, CYJ Texas will be here for you and your family long after the current emergency has passed.

We want to be here for you this summer, too. We may not be running our in-person camp program, but we are considering virtual program opportunities and the possibility of family getaways later this summer.

Frequently Asked Questions

I anticipate that you will have many questions about what this decision means for your family and for CYJ. The CYJ Team has pulled together answers for what we expect to be the most [frequently asked questions](#). If your question is not covered or our answer does not fully address your needs, please reach out to info@cyjtxas.org and someone will respond promptly.

Although I am deeply disappointed not to be in camp this summer, I am headed back to the kitchen to start preparing the recipe for 2021.

Life is good, CYJ is better.

Shabbat Shalom,
Frank