April 13, 2020

Dear Blue Lake Community,

After careful review of available information relating to the impact of the coronavirus and COVID-19, the Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp board of trustees and administrative management team have unanimously voted to cancel our 2020 summer season, including all programs, sessions, and performances from June 1 through August 23. The health and safety of our camp community have always remained paramount within our work and remains our steadfast compass in making difficult decisions.

In any given summer, talented students, staff, and faculty from across the nation and around the globe convene on our campus in West Michigan to collaborate in a secluded teaching-learning environment. Blue Lake’s Summer Arts Festival offers nightly performances to our campus and local community, while Blue Lake Public Radio provides live broadcasts of a variety of concerts. With more than 6,000 students participating each season, an additional 750 staff and faculty, and 1,800 individuals in residence at any given time, the impact of cancellation on our arts community is significant. We are heartbroken. Nevertheless, complications relating to pre-season collaboration and preparations, long-distance travel, and widespread concern point to significant challenges in maintaining the high-quality programming for which Blue Lake is known. And even with the most stringent protocols and screenings, we cannot fully mitigate risk at this time given the many factors that are beyond our control.

The arts provide inspiration, motivation, understanding, transformation, interconnectedness, and joy. For 54 years, Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp has given young artists a most powerful environment to connect, support one another, bridge friendships, and build life-long skills. We are devastated that we will not have the opportunity to share that Blue Lake spirit with you this summer. But we are prepared to meet this challenge head-on, creatively, and with our future campers in mind every step of the way. We are already counting the days until we see you next year.

Sincerely,

Heidi Stansell
Vice President, Operations & Finance
Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp
Frequently Asked Questions

Why can’t you just delay the start of 2020 season?
Blue Lake’s administrative team considered a variety of scenarios in processing this difficult decision, including delayed start dates and curtailing specific sessions and programs. But because of the lead time necessary to place staff and faculty, orient seasonal employees, and develop programs, along with the uncertainty of school recovery calendars, state and federal mandates related to health and safety, and unknown complications of domestic and international travel, we determined that the factors beyond our control far outweighed what we could manage effectively. A delayed start would likely delay -- not eliminate -- these complications.

Will I get a refund?
You are eligible to receive a full refund of any tuition or unfulfilled orders or services. This includes your deposit, which is now fully refundable. For all enrolled participants and families, the Admissions Office will be in contact within the next several days with more information about this process, instructions, and timeline. Refunds will be processed as quickly as possible, but we request your patience during this period of high demand.

I earned a scholarship. Can I save that for next year?
If you earned a Blue Lake Alumni or Merit scholarship toward camp tuition for 2020 and are currently enrolled, your scholarship will be maintained, and you can carry that forward to 2021. If you earned another type of scholarship (Financial Need scholarship, Advanced Chamber Orchestra or Masterworks award, funding from an outside source, or other), you may be asked to reapply next year. More details will be emailed to all families soon.

What are the dates for next year’s programs?
All program and session dates for 2021 will be announced by July 5, 2020, on Blue Lake’s website.

Can I save my spot now for 2021?
Yes. If you are currently enrolled, you can save your spot in camp for 2021 by leaving your deposit with us. While we do not yet have our online application set up nor next season, we expect to have our 2021 programs, dates, and other details confirmed during the late summer. Once our 2021 programs are finalized, you will receive information on how to reconfirm your 2021 registration. More information will be emailed to families soon.

How can I stay connected with my Blue Lake family this summer?
Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp is now working on virtual content to help spread some joy and learning this summer. We encourage you to like Blue Lake’s Facebook page, follow @bluelakeofficial on Instagram, and tune in to Blue Lake’s YouTube Channel. Download Blue Lake Public Radio’s app. Stay tuned and watch for interesting stuff in the next several months! And all you creative students, staff, and faculty out there: please send us your performances, artwork, or projects via WeTransfer to virtualarts@bluelake.org. You might be featured in a post! We will share more details on this project soon.

What can I do to help?
First, we ask for your patience. Our administrative staff is currently working from our homes and doing everything possible to respond to inquiries and messages in a timely manner. Second, please consider
supporting Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in any way that you can, whether now or in the future. The previous cancellation of Blue Lake’s 2020 International Exchange Program tours, combined with the new cancellation of our summer camp programs, has dealt an unprecedented financial impact on our non-profit arts organization. We are strong, disciplined, efficient, and well managed. But even the very best organizations are suffering under these exceptional circumstances. Whether your support comes by way of a large or small donation, a gift-in-kind or volunteer, radio listener or cheerleader, any contribution in support of our work is a vote for the future of Blue Lake. Visit www.bluelake.org/give to offer your support, or contact Dave Myers, Vice President, Broadcasting & Development, to discuss other ways to help.

Thank you.
Thank you for your understanding, patience, and support during this challenging time for our nation and world.

***