



**THE MARIST RETREAT CENTER**

May 10, 2020

Dear Parents and Campers:

March 13, 2020 is the date that changed our world in dramatic ways. I clearly remember having a discussion with friends on the impact this would have on camp. As June 15 is the date for our lifeguards to arrive at camp, I confidently stated that we had three months before any arrival date so we should be fine. Little did I know that it was only the beginning of the pandemic that continues to impact our lives and sadly has cost many their lives. While we have seen some improvement, there are still so many challenges before us. Hopefully, an effective vaccine will be developed that will protect us, but we are not there yet.

Our Board of Directors met on Thursday, May 7 to discuss the status of camp. Our discussion was somber and emotional. Many of us have been part of the Camp Marist community for a very long time. Some of the members of the Board were campers, CITs and staff. Our love of camp knows no bounds but it is our love for your children that guided our discussion. We listened to a review of the facts as we have them now and considered the options before us. The CDC and ACA Guidelines for Camps is still in the development stage but will not be ready until around June 28 making meeting those requirements more difficult. Therefore, the Board in a unanimous vote recommended that camp not open this year.

Difficult as this is to hear, please know that our decision was made based on our desire to protect and ensure the health and safety of our campers, staff, and their families. As one we felt there was just too much uncertainty surrounding the coming weeks and months and we simply could not take that risk. Gambling with the health and well being of your children and our staff is unthinkable. Yes, campers (and staff) NEED camp but more importantly they need to be healthy to pursue the exciting futures before them.

Whether you agree or disagree with our decision, I hope you at the very least recognize our motivation for this decision. We now look to the summer of 2021. We will be in touch throughout the year to give you a little taste of Camp Marist and we hope we can all gather at the Mound next summer in what will be our 71<sup>st</sup> camp season.

You are all in my thoughts and prayers – let us together offer our normal camp prayers.

St. Marcellin Champagnat.....Pray for us.  
Mary our Good Mother.....Pray for us.  
Let's Remember to.....Pray for each other.

Sincerely,

Vinny Gschlecht - Executive Director  
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