

I wanted to let you know about some important camp updates we have made. Earlier this week, AboutFace confirmed that Camp Trailblazers will not happen in-person this year due to the global pandemic. Many kids with facial differences are at higher risk if they contract COVID-19 due to their medical conditions, including kids with tracheotomies, compromised immune systems, and recent surgeries. The decision was a difficult one, but we focused on the importance of keeping all our campers and their families safe and healthy.

Instead of in-person camp, Camp Trailblazers is going virtual! And, we have some exciting things planned:

- Camp will last for five weeks and will be open to kids from across Canada – this will be a unique opportunity for kids living with facial differences to connect with their peers in other provinces.
- We are also inviting siblings to join camp, to help support entire family units.
- Camp will be three days a week for 60-90 minutes. Two days of the week will focus on activities, and the third day will focus on psychosocial support through AboutFace Time.
- Each week has a theme, and every day will end with a virtual campfire where kids can share their skills, talents, and stories.
- In addition to virtual camp, we will have summer challenges. The challenges focus on health and wellness, recreation, helpfulness, and self-care.
- Each camper will receive two packages: camp in a box supplies and a package at the end of the year with the prizes from their challenges.
- There will be extra teen-focused leadership sessions. Sessions include improv and problem solving, self-advocacy, and communications.
- Being mindful of families who may not have internet or reliable internet, we are also creating a camp handbook with recreational activities outlined, which can be sent with boxes. Offline resources will allow some families to have camp activities and resources on-hand for kids to undertake through parent-directed initiatives.

I understand this is a big change but I strongly believe we will be able to continue engaging children and providing them with a sense of belonging, even more important now, given the current pandemic.

I hope the HPDA will continue to support AboutFace as we navigate this new programming structure!

Thank you,

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