



# FOOTSTEPS

CHRISTMAS 2020 NEWSLETTER

## Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Fircom Community:

What a year it has been! I was one month into my role as Fircom's new Executive Director when the COVID-19 Pandemic was declared and businesses were required to shut down. We suspended our operations on March 20th for three long months. The uncertainty of if and when we would be able to resume operating was very stressful. We did our best to keep morale high by viewing this period as a 'gift of time' with which we could complete many tasks on site and begin reimagining what our operations could look like with COVID-19 restrictions in place.

With the inability to operate summer camp experiences for children and youth, many camps across the country made the decision not to operate in 2020. Our Leadership Team recognized that opportunities to engage with nature and experience the magic of Fircom were more important than ever, and we felt compelled to find a way to host guests on site with protocols in place that would keep our guests, staff and volunteers safe and healthy.



  [www.fircom.ca](http://www.fircom.ca)

CAMP FIRCOM SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED  
CHURCH OF CANADA



A seed of an idea turned into a vision, and with hard work and determination, we were able to operate a very successful Family Vacations model. Our success is largely in thanks to you, our Fircom Community, who vacationed with us and spread the word about our vacation packages and rentals to your friends, extended family, colleagues and social media networks. We are extremely grateful to everyone who chose Fircom as a vacation destination in 2020!

The success of our Family Vacation model was also due to the tireless efforts of our staff and volunteers who, in addition to their professionalism and strong work ethic, brought with them to work every day positive attitudes and an abundance of enthusiasm and creativity. I am truly blessed to work with such an amazing group of individuals, and our organization is very fortunate to have a team that is so committed to living Fircom's mission and values.

In closing, I want to express a heartfelt thank you to Fircom's Board of Directors. They have provided an incredible amount of support to me as I both navigated our team through this challenging year and learned the duties and responsibilities of my new role. I also wish to thank: the Pacific Mountain Regional Council of The United Church of Canada; our one-time and monthly donors; our community members who purchased camp shirts during our T-Shirt Fundraiser in the spring; and finally, all the people who placed winning bids in our online auction this month. Your financial contributions have been a difference maker for our organization this year!

Wishing all of you a joyous holiday season and a new year that is filled with love, hope and an opportunity to visit us here at Fircom!

**Terra McKenzie**  
Executive Director



# Family Vacations 2020

Our Family Vacation model was well received by our guests, with a number of families returning a second (or third) time! Families enjoyed delicious meals prepared by our talented kitchen team and participated in a variety of fun and engaging 'traditional camp' activities with our camp programmers. We had many sold out sessions and we managed to achieve our three operating goals for the summer and fall seasons: a) mitigate our financial loss, b) continue living our mission and values, and c) keep the spirit of Fircom alive and well!

Many families asked if we would continue to operate our Family Vacation model in 2021. The short answer is ... YES!!! We have added some Family Vacation sessions to our 2021 operating calendar. In mid-January, we will announce our session dates for the spring!

We've included some testimonials from guests that vacationed with us during the summer and fall of 2020. We hope that these testimonials will motivate many more families from our Fircom Community to join us here at camp in 2021 for a wonderful vacation getaway!

"From beginning to end this was by far the most amazing family weekend getaway. The staff were so lovely, the food so, so wonderful and the attention to cleanliness and all the precautions due to Covid made me feel safe and well taken care of. I am so grateful to have had the possibility to take my family on this little weekend in paradise thanks to the financial assistance, without which I couldn't have afforded this for us. So appreciated, my family and I are forever grateful and hope to come back again."

-Family Vacation Guests

"We had such a lovely weekend. The staff was great, we really enjoyed our activities, and it was a very relaxing time."

-Family Vacation Guests

"We had a great time! Special thanks to all the staff - your friendliness elevated the experience. Canoeing and archery were definite highlights. The meals were wonderful and it was so nice to have a weekend without cooking."

-Family Vacation Guests

# Dear Campers...

Thinking about all your hilarious jokes, performances at the talent show, and the good chats I have enjoyed with many of you walking to the Dining Hall before lunch is keeping me smiling while I work from home this winter.

I know many of us have not been able to visit the physical place of Camp Fircom, and I know you are all doing a great job of keeping the spirit of camp alive in your families, amongst your friends, and with yourself. Just remember, Camp Fircom is waiting for you. We are so excited to play Operation Firefly, do archery and tie dye, and sing all our favorite campfire songs together when we are able.

In the meantime, we are doing everything we can to keep our community safe, and to care for the land and the animals that make camp possible. The chickens are doing well, the garden is prepared for new growth in the spring, and Terra has made the staff areas festive and cheery!



We are looking forward to offering opportunities for families to connect with the land at Camp Fircom next year.

I miss you all, and am so excited to see you again in whatever form that takes!

Happy Holidays,

**Marissa Gilmour**  
Summer Camp Director

As you rest and celebrate over this holiday season, here are a few things I have found inspiring or hilarious this year.



Is this what camp would have looked like in 2020?



"Sometimes I don't like wearing my mask but then I remember how much my nose must appreciate having a blanket made just for her. It is the only thing she owns, so I tuck her in and I let her cuddle."

- Winnie, 5 years old

[@LiveFromBack4Ever](#)



I have been paying attention to the chickadees in my yard, and they never stop making me laugh.

# **Fircom Needs Your Help Now More Than Ever!**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on our finances. Devastatingly, we lost close to 70% of our operating revenue this year and are ending the year with a substantial deficit. Our primary objective is to continue to be able to share the magic of Fircom with campers and guests in 2021 ... and for many years to come! As a result, we are seeking donations to help with our operating costs. If you have the capacity to do so, please consider making a one-time donation or becoming a monthly donor. Reach out to your social and professional circles, as well, to see if there are others that would be willing to make a donation. All donors who make a donation of \$20.00 or more will receive a Charitable Tax Receipt, which may be helpful as income tax time approaches!

The Fircom Leadership Team and Board of Directors thank you in advance for any financial help that you, or those you know, may be able to offer.

**Give a One Time Donation**

**Become a Monthly Donor**

# From the Fircom Kitchen & Garden

Happy Holidays!

This year certainly has been like none other. Our kitchen team made a tremendous effort to keep everyone safe and healthy over this 2020 season, and still managed to have fun! Go team GO! Although not the usual summer experience, I feel our efforts truly helped create some memories that will last families a lifetime.

As things quiet down at camp over the winter, we are busy planning some exciting new ventures for next year! Our main focus will be on sourcing and using local ingredients from our very own garden and from local farmers in the Lower Mainland and surrounding areas. We wish to create partnerships with these local growers to support the best quality of life for animals and to provide the best quality of produce, meats and cheeses for our neighbours and our guests!

In 2021, we are also hoping to create a hydroponic lettuce/herb wall in the garden and expand our wedding experience repertoire by offering locavore boutique (small) weddings! We are also preparing to launch a monthly cookie club to help support our camp operations (watch our Facebook page for more details to come!). Thank you for all the wonderful laughter and support throughout the season, staff and Fircomites!

**Dawn McKenzie**  
Head Chef



# Looking Ahead to 2021

With winter approaching, our Leadership Team is taking some time to reflect individually and collaboratively on the past year, and we are beginning to plan and prepare for the 2021 operating season. We are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to run summer camp programs in some capacity, and we are hopeful that we will be able to host rental groups and weddings once again (likely with a reduced number of guests). We are also planning to operate some Family Vacation sessions throughout the spring, summer and fall, as well as offer some retreat experiences throughout the year.

Regardless of how we operate next year, we know that we will have the continued support of you, our Fircom Community. We take comfort in that support and it is what motivates us to think creatively about how we can engage with you and continue to host you here at camp in a safe and responsible way.





# THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Brewis, Mya  
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# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

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