

**Education Community COVID-19 Forum: Summer Camps and Programming**  
**April 13, 2020**

**Duke Yun, Queens Botanical Garden:**

- Programs are being adjusted in different ways
  - One spring program is getting a full refund
  - Middle school summer camp is still TBD.
  - Spring/summer program runs with about 25 kids, about 10 of those asked for a full refund
- Summer camp participants are starting to ask what's going on
  - Sent out email to let them know that it is being discussed - no details but reassurance that they haven't been forgotten!
- Considering state mandates as well as family comfort levels

**Lee Coykendall, US Botanic Garden:**

- Interested in how Summer School and whether it will run will affect their summer programming
- When will people feel comfortable coming to cultural institutions?
- Thinking about ways to bring the garden to other orgs that they work with instead of them coming to the Garden

**Tracy Calla, Sarasota FL:**

- They don't have a designated classroom space
  - kids like to touch and be close to people... thinking about sanitation and cleaning everyday with a small amount of janitorial staff
  - How can campers coexist with regular visitors?
- thinking about availability of supplies like paper towels, hand sanitizer, etc. - will those be more accessible soon?
- Classroom teachers and typical camp staff are not applying to work for these programs right now - teachers are wiped out!
- Citizen Science program on iNaturalist for Earth Day

**Lauren Marks, Desert Botanical Garden:**

- have already cancelled summer camps - made this decision a couple of weeks back towards the end of their spring kids programming.
  - The cleaning necessities and CDC guidelines about distancing were too hard to keep up with during spring programming.
  - You can't disinfect nature (pinecones!)

- Wanted to make a decision to cancel with enough notice for summer camp staff and for caregivers to find alternative child care.
- Now they are thinking of ways that they can continue to be a community asset this summer w/out summer camp
- Thinking about Girl Scout online programming with challenges for them to complete and get a badge/reward upon completion

**Dana Render, Atlanta GA:**

- Adapted their in-classroom curricula to Zoom and making these calls accessible to teachers and parents
  - Considering catering to inconsistencies in current school schedules and functions
  - Story time every morning, nature walks in the afternoon.
- Had a virtual spring break camp!
  - It went really well - the kids enjoyed it (meeting soon to debrief further)
  - Connected with Audubon and Dept. of Natural Resources to bring experts in.
    - Kids could interact with experts and teachers.
  - Sent out discount code for future camps to parents who had already paid
    - Gave people the option to cancel spring camp if they didn't want to do it online. If they didn't cancel they still paid full price.
  - Created camper box with supplies that campers could pick up from their porch.
    - worked with materials to make them relatively accessible and substitute-able
- Have rolling cancellation policy right now for June, will decide whether they will cancel June in the next couple of weeks and then will decide whether to cancel July after that.
  - Will kids have the attention span for online learning by June?
- Doing this work with two educators and laptops - figuring out Zoom as a team
  - Decorations from garden to decorate their settings!
  - Zoom has been the easiest - the information that they are sharing isn't sensitive so information breaches aren't a big concern.

**Ashley Young, Fort Collins CO:**

- Ways to make camp safe and confidence-inspiring to parents:
  - confirming that students are in good health
  - Disinfecting and hand washing
  - thinking strategically about the kinds of activities with contact in mind
    - giving kids individual supplies instead of shared

**Rosalie Kelley, Austin TX:**

- American Camp Association webinar: lawyer said that right now camps are at liberty to take kids' temperatures and ask them if they have family members with symptoms or illnesses
- They are likely going to cancel camp
  - thinking about sending invites to usual camp families for activities that would happen over the summer - individual summer programs rather than a camp.
  - Tied to the University of Texas which ultimately has control over decisions
- Having difficulty finding hirees!

**Erika Huber, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens:**

- Facebook Group for families with activity sheets and pictures, videos, information about what's going on at the Garden.
  - Earth Week challenge coming up - asking people do a different challenge every day like trash pickup, pollinator activity, etc.
  - They'll be entered to win a prize each day they participate!
    - Seed collections as prize. If they do all 5 days, they'll be entered to win family membership.
- Created garden kits that will be distributed with school meal delivery
  - With instructions and info about Facebook group

In the Chat:

From jill to Everyone: 01:47 PM

This is Jill from Wing Haven in Charlotte, NC. We have also refunded families for programming and events through 5/15 (so far). However, we gave everyone an option to opt out of a refund and donate their registration fee. We applied this approach to all educational programming, including adult. We did retain some funding b/c of the donation option.

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 01:47 PM

Hi all. This is Erin at WV Botanic Garden. We haven't made any decisions yet, but are considering moving our June camps to early August. The University here has already canceled their June camps...

From Jeremy Joslin to Everyone: 01:47 PM

Hi all;

From Susan Eggerton to Everyone: 01:48 PM

we are offering people a chance to donate all or part of their registration

From Gabe @ Phipps to Everyone: 01:48 PM

Great idea on offering a donation option Jill and Susan

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 01:49 PM

We also offering a donation option for public programs being cancelled. Or a credit for a future program.

From Jeremy Joslin to Everyone: 01:49 PM

Jeremy from Morton Arb. We're also refunding anyone that brings up COVID-19 for any future program. For camp, whether or not schools go back in session will impact our camp schedule. But we've also built schedules for 8 and 6-week sessions of camp vs our usual 10-week schedule based on when we can get back on-grounds, what kind of health guidelines in terms of gathering size are in place, and availability of staff to bring in

From Duke Yun to Everyone: 01:49 PM

Yes, we have opened up to families about donations, but carefully navigating in who we ask as all of our families have different backgrounds

From Gabe @ Phipps to Everyone: 01:50 PM

Erin, Jeremy, Jill - for the refund setting, do people have to opt-in to the donation, or opt-in to the refund?

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 01:51 PM

We send them an email and give them options. So, we don't do anything until they let us know what they want us to do with their registration fee.

From Jeremy Joslin to Everyone: 01:51 PM

Opt in for donation. We've made it part of our communication on any program that if they would like we can convert their refund to a donation instead. It's picking up some steam the longer this goes, but most just take the full refund

From Gabe @ Phipps to Everyone: 01:51 PM

Thanks

From Lee Coykendall to Everyone: 01:53 PM

Does anyone know of schools already committed to extending school year or running school in the summer? Thank you.

From Sarada @ Pittsburgh Botanic Garden to Everyone: 01:53 PM

In Western PA, it looks like schools are going online until early June, as of now.

From rkelley@wildflower.org to Everyone: 01:54 PM

UT-Austin has all summer classes on line until end of Aug.

From Dana Render - Trees Atlanta to Everyone: 01:56 PM

@ Lee Coykendall and everyone, all of the school systems in the state of GA are closed, but are progressing online. There are some systems that are considering ending the year as of April and determining progression/graduation based on student progress prior to March 13th and then having a large emphasis on hosting summer school (possibly virtually) for those who were underperforming or not attending the virtual sessions initially. In short - it's all over the place because the school systems across the states and even in the areas that we service are not necessarily all doing the same thing as far as how school will progress.

From Kavanah Anderson to Everyone: 01:57 PM

Hi everyone, this is Kavanah Anderson from Duke Gardens in Durham, NC. We are on the campus of Duke University and so we follow Duke's policies. All on campus programs have already been canceled through June 30 and Duke will be announcing at the end of April the decision about the rest of the summer. I have already shared this info with parents, camp staff and volunteers. In the case that all camps get canceled, many parents have expressed interest in virtual camp activities. I'm interested in brainstorming creative ideas for remote camp.

From Laurel Olson to Everyone: 01:59 PM

I missed where Lauren is located. Can you reply with the garden name?

From Gabe @ Phipps to Everyone: 02:00 PM

I believe Desert Botanical IGarden

From Jeremy Joslin to Everyone: 02:00 PM

If virtual camps are a common direction that might be an entire webinar series on its own. The idea of getting staff who can conduct virtual camp vs in-person is an ENTIRELY different skillset! Not to mention the strain it is going to put on IT staff in terms of getting more access to whatever platform we're putting camp on, and the idea of messaging around the worth of a digital experience when our gardens are such physical places. i'm not saying it can't happen, but an initiative like virtual camp would take just as much time to plan as in-person, and we haven't had the lead time.

From Kristen Webber to Everyone: 02:00 PM

Yes I think Lauren is at Desert Botanical Garden

From Jeremy Joslin to Everyone: 02:01 PM

I think I'd want to hear more about how a digital plant sale works too!

From Kristen Webber to Everyone: 02:02 PM

I made a note too about virtual camps webinars.

From Lee Coykendall to Everyone: 02:02 PM

Would love to hear from folks who have really polled their teachers to see what they are wanting that they are accessing. Thank you

From Lauren Marks to Everyone: 02:02 PM

yes I'm from Desert Botanical Garden. We are a large garden. Summer camp would have been about 270 individual registrations and a good amount of our annual revenue.

From Monica Fuller to Everyone: 02:02 PM

Hi, there. This is Monica Fuller with the Illinois State University Horticulture Center. ISU has moved all classes online through the end of summer and cancelled all in-person events through summer as well (including our own annual children's garden party).

From jill @ Wing Haven to Everyone: 02:04 PM

Wing Haven also did an online plant sale. Went well enough considering no lead time. Our net has been over half of what is usually is, which is pretty good, all things considered. My question is are people planning to charge for virtual camp and if so at what % of your typical camp registration fee?

From Linda to Everyone: 02:05 PM

At Green Bay Botanical Garden, we are thinking about virtual camps by doing an online video/webinar (shorter 15-30 minutes) with directions for a project that

families can do at home with common household items. We are actually sending a survey to our members and followers this week asking if they'd be interested in virtual camps or comfortable coming to the Garden for camp if allowed.

From Ashley Young to Everyone: 02:05 PM

This is Ashley Young from the Gardens on Spring Creek in Colorado. We have heard from teachers that they are getting overwhelmed with resources. so we are working directly with our teachers that were registered for programs to provide lessons and virtual field trips they can use with their students.

From Lauren Marks to Everyone: 02:06 PM

right now, almost all of our ideas for virtual programs will be free

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 02:06 PM

As of now, our site is still open and free even though we are not running programs. What is this "camp in a box" idea? Could we send families activities and ideas for things they could do on their own when they visit our Garden? And maybe supplement with some virtual lessons?

From Susan Eggerton to Everyone: 02:07 PM

I am curious about camp in a box too

From Linda to Everyone: 02:07 PM

Lee, we emailed our teachers that were supposed to come to our Garden for tours last week to ask if they would like small videos of what they would have seen on their tours and so far, teachers are interested in that and also asked if we could put together some sort of scavenger hunt for kids to do at home.

From Sarada @ Pittsburgh Botanic Garden to Everyone: 02:08 PM

What would "Camp in a Box" look like?

From Malia Brandt to Everyone: 02:09 PM

Here's a good resource for considerations about charging for virtual/other programs  
<https://www.summercamppro.com/charging-for-virtual-camp/>

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 02:11 PM

There is no concern about people sharing camp in a box items? We are trying to avoid people touching shared surfaces....

From Kristen Webber to Everyone: 02:12 PM

Erin, where are you that your site is still open?

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 02:13 PM

West Virginia. Our state order allows people to go outside to recreate...

From Elisha Taylor to Everyone: 02:13 PM

This is Elisha Taylor at the North Carolina Botanical Garden in Chapel Hill, NC -- part of UNC-Chapel Hill. UNC has cancelled all group events, including youth camps, through June, and will make a decision on July-Aug by May 31. I'm also concerned about resource saturation for teachers -- and perhaps for families, too? I'd be interested in examples of effective evaluation strategies to determine what the actual needs are?

From Susan Eggerton to Everyone: 02:15 PM

I am wondering about a family day with time entry. Stations can be from our school field trip curriculum for STEAM focus.

From juliadunn to Everyone: 02:15 PM

Hi this is Julia Dunn from Wave Hill in New York responding to Elisha. Next week we will be piloting a caregiver series via zoom that offers support around a specific topic—this week will be facilitating learning conversations. The first session is all about discussing participant needs and experience at the moment. The following session will be a more formal PD that responds to the needs of the first session. That

way we know participants want to be there and we're able to hear directly what they need.

From Kristen Webber to Everyone: 02:18 PM

Around here a number of distilleries are switching to making hand sanitizer.

From Jeremy Joslin to Everyone: 02:18 PM

Should buying thermometers be an addition to everyone's budget if in-person camp does become possible?

From Erika Huber-Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens to Everyone: 02:19 PM

What about those people that are asymptomatic? Taking their temp is no help.

From Elisha Taylor to Everyone: 02:20 PM

Thanks, Julia. That's helpful. I'd love to hear more/participate in the caregiver series.

From Linda to Everyone: 02:20 PM

I would be happy to share! Sorry, no microphone on this computer.

From Alex Nuzum- Des Moines Botanical Garden to Everyone: 02:21 PM

American Camp Association - COVID 19 Resources for camps:

[https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus-information-](https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus-information-camps?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=click&utm_term=callout&utm_campaign=coronavirus)

[camps?utm\\_source=homepage&utm\\_medium=click&utm\\_term=callout&utm\\_campaign=coronavirus](https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus-information-camps?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=click&utm_term=callout&utm_campaign=coronavirus)

From Dana Render - Trees Atlanta to Everyone: 02:21 PM

<https://www.treesatlanta.org/virtual-youth-education/>

From Gabe @ Phipps to Everyone: 02:21 PM

Thanks Alex Thanks Dana

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 02:22 PM

If you have a nearby University, there may be college students looking for summer work or internships. That is where we get most of our summer staff...

From Annie Labus to Everyone: 02:22 PM

<https://covid-19-camp.slack.com/> This slack group has a lot of resources and good discussions about what to do for camp this summer

From Linda to Everyone: 02:22 PM

More specifically, I'll share the survey results from our survey to followers and members from Green Bay Botanical Garden about summer programming.

From Duke Yun to Everyone: 02:24 PM

<https://queensbotanical.org/qbgathome/> : Current virtual programming offered at QBG. In terms of who is providing (i.e. the educator in the vids), I will be doing the heavy lifting. All full-time staff is being asked to lend a hand, if comfortable

From rkelley@wildflower.org to Everyone: 02:24 PM

American Camp Asso: panelist handouts for you to download, using the link below. <https://acacamps.box.com/s/clh577mmxh5lr3sfqxjftk44k19f84ay> Here is the link to our recording from yesterday: <https://vimeo.com/403716343>

From Jeremy Joslin to Everyone: 02:25 PM

To Tracy's point, having multiple plans for what camp looks like is just about all we can do at this point anyway. A lot of the factors we're talking about are out of our control; schools, health recommendations, etc. Having multiple plans for what camp is once we're actually able to gather again is one way to build some flexibility into the process. We have multiple schedules we're building, and adding virtual camps would be another plan to have ready

From Dana Render - Trees Atlanta to Everyone: 02:27 PM

There is also a platform that is used for scavenger hunts and challenges called Goose Chase = <https://www.goosechase.com/>

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 02:27 PM

Did anyone answer the question about charging for virtual type camps? Especially if we are working so hard to put them together!

From Annie Labus to Everyone: 02:28 PM

Sorry all, the previous slack link didn't work for joining, this is the link to sign up  
[https://join.slack.com/t/covid-19-camp/shared\\_invite/zt-deibxy8j-mHDxNXnvSL1ZPovBSR9b8A](https://join.slack.com/t/covid-19-camp/shared_invite/zt-deibxy8j-mHDxNXnvSL1ZPovBSR9b8A)

From Gabe @ Phipps to Everyone: 02:28 PM

Hi Erin - this link was shared: <https://www.summercamppro.com/charging-for-virtual-camp/>

From Erin Smaldone to Everyone: 02:29 PM

Ah, yes. Thanks!

Hi Happy to. All is well here. Good luck with Board mtg. Ours is Saturday.

From Susan Eggerton to Everyone: 02:30 PM

what other activities are you doing for Earth Week Challenges?

From Kristen Webber to Everyone: 02:31 PM

Would it be helpful to continue some discussion through the Education Community?  
It feels like things are changing all the time yet so much is unknown - varies state by state for sure. Right now we have Thursdays held with the Association Zoom account - 3:30 EDT