



# EAGLE ISLAND NEWS

June 2020

Eagle Island, Inc.

Vol. 10 Issue 2

## SUMMER 2020 Katrina Dearden, Camp Director

Summer 2020 will not be the summer that we planned. We reviewed every scenario that would allow us to safely host camp and train staff within state and local guidelines, but ultimately, we made the difficult choice to suspend programming. We did, however, develop protocols, programming, and virtual training modules that we will be able to use going forward, created with the same level of inclusivity and intentionality that we always strive for. And so we continue to move forward with our goal of opening overnight camp in 2021.

Now, more than ever, we need to find ways to support youth in our local and Island community.

To keep the Island spirit strong, we are sending Eagle Island Camp Kits to all registered youth campers. These kits include items that bring a sense of the Island home, including materials for crafts and games to play outside and with their families. To continue building community, staff and volunteers will be delivering the kits to campers in the North Country and New Jersey. If you would like to sponsor a kit for a camper, please click here: [campfires-for-campers](#).

Eagle Island is also offering a Pen Pal program. **Anyone** can sign up to be paired with someone else in the Island community to send letters back and forth through the US Postal Service. To learn more and sign up to join the fun [CLICK](#).

We also continue working to connect with the local community by hosting events throughout the Tri-Lakes region, including three town-wide scavenger hunt style events (similar to the successful Winter Carnival Yeti Hunt we created), providing safe and fun outdoor events for the whole family.

And, for our whole Island community, we are planning a camping event: the Eagle Island Backyard Campout for Saturday, June 27. Join us by pitching your tent in your backyard, local park if permitted, or even in your living room. We will share our favorite campfire recipes, along with activities and songs for the whole family—and please share the Island spirit with your friends and neighbors. We can't wait to see your pictures! [Eagleisland.org/campout](#)

## UPDATES FROM THE ISLAND!

The big news from the island is that **the water and septic system, supported by your generous donations, is up and running!** Locations in Main Camp including the Kitchen, Green Johns, Shower House, Guide House/Health Center, and Trading Post/Laundry now have service. Water is being drawn with a new pump and a new line anchored 600' out under the lake; pumped through the rehabilitated historic Pumphouse; and filtered, chlorinated, and fed to new tanks beneath the Dining Pavilion. New septic lines and tanks are also in place and are being tested.

As of mid-May, construction work and limited volunteer work has resumed, with strict COVID-19 safety protocols based on NYS and CDC guidelines.

Contractors continue work on the first New York State grant for historic rehabilitation, which began in 2018 and is due for completion by the end of summer 2020. Planning for the second NYS grant and the National Park Service award is underway. Plumbing contractors are completing the finishing touches on water line work. Upgraded internet service is also being installed.

A skilled volunteer crew did amazing work in the kitchen in May, and our shiny new dishwasher is in place and ready for hook-up. New sinks and an ice maker are on their way, and after cleaning and repair, our original gas ranges are working like new. Volunteers will also be completing carpentry and construction projects in Main Camp in the coming months.

As ever, none of this would have been possible without the help of our generous donors and skilled volunteers! If you have special skills and would like to volunteer, please fill out the form at [eagleisland.org/volunteer](#). And, as ever, Eagle Island needs your support now to continue development of programming, staff, and ongoing maintenance as well as funding additional capital projects.





## ON THE FRONT LINES

Robin Greengrove, RN

A love of camping and Girl Scouting, a career as a pediatric RN, and a lifelong connection to Eagle Island Camp: Robin Greengrove has found a way to blend them all.

During her middle school and high school years, Robin was a camper at Eagle Island. She studied nursing in college and, after earning her RN, she established her career first in New York, then California and Vermont. She returned to New Jersey, where she raised her son and daughter and reconnected with Eagle Island. In the 2000s, up to summer 2008, she volunteered for Memorial Day Work Weekends and served as Family Camp nurse. Once the camp closed, she was involved with the formation of Eagle Island, Inc. to help save and reestablish the camp. She remains active serving on EIC's Camp Committee and Infrastructure Committee.

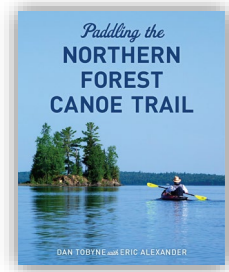
She credits her camp experience, particularly primitive camping, with teaching her how to be self-reliant and independent—skills she has drawn on in her career as a pediatric RN in hospitals and schools, a camp nurse (both at Eagle Island and Camp Nejedá, a camp for children with diabetes), and, most recently, providing palliative nursing care and working in the CCU for COVID-19 patients at the height of the pandemic from late March into May. Caring for the COVID-19 patients was particularly challenging, as she was out of her “comfort zone,” providing end-of-life care or monitoring multiple IVs for up to 17 adult patients in a 10-bed unit, rather than providing pediatric health care. During her 12-hour shifts, four days a week, she was constantly on her feet, weighed down by heavy personal protective equipment. But she was heartened that, among her fellow health care workers, she experienced a Girl Scout-style team approach, each offering help from their area of expertise to less experienced colleagues to provide the best care for their patients. Now that the first phase of the COVID-19 crisis has passed, Robin is back to her primary work doing pediatric nursing at Overlook Hospital, coordinating health care in schools, and serving as Health Center Director at Camp Nejedá. She is currently studying to receive certification as a certified diabetes educator.

Robin is devoted to providing health care to campers, students, and children in hospitals—much to the benefit of the Eagle Island community and her many patients. We salute Robin and health care workers everywhere.

Camper, 1970's; Staff, 1990's  
RN, Overlook Hospital, Clifton School

## PADDLING THE NORTHERN FOREST CANOE TRAIL

Just about a year ago, we received an email from Dan Tобыne, an author and photographer writing a book on the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. He was looking for a Great Camp to visit for some photographs to illustrate the adventure.



Eagle Island is a well-known feature of the 740-mile Northern Forest Canoe Trail, the longest inland water trail in the United States. It follows the traditional travel routes of Native Americans, including the Wabanaki and Iroquois, as well as their Paleo-Indian ancestors.

Beginning in Old Forge, New York, and ending in Fort Kent, Maine, the NFCT encompasses 58 lakes and ponds, 22 rivers and streams, and 62 portages.

The book is described as “a guide for doers, as well as dreamers. Practical information on paddling, gear, safety, plus maps will help you get started; and the beautiful photography will inspire you to prepare and help you stay motivated until it's time to head out.

“A paddle on the Canoe Trail is a trip through time as canoeists and kayakers discover the rich Native American and forestry history of the region, pockets of pristine wilderness, and an abundance of wildlife, including moose, bear, deer, beaver, bald eagles, and loons. It's the backwoods paddling experience of a lifetime.”



Photo credits: Dan Tобыne & Eric Alexander





### A Message to the Eagle Island Community

We are deeply troubled by the recent events and by the racial injustice that continues to plague us as a society.

We recognize that this is an incredibly painful time for many across the country and many within our own Eagle Island community.

As an organization, the recent events and the outcry for change and reform have only emboldened us in our mission to inspire and empower girls and young women to be confident, collaborative, and courageous - attributes that are more critical now than ever.



Photo credit: Dan Tobyn & Eric Alexander



## VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

Laura Bolger, Teacher, Sailing Instructor

What experience can compare with stepping onto a boat and returning to Eagle Island? Many of us love the camp song "I'm Going Back" because it perfectly captures that exhilarating sense of timelessness and becoming part of something bigger than oneself.

I can't remember my first arrival at Family Camp at age 6, but I remember many returns—whether basking in the breeze on a bright, crisp afternoon or wearing a garbage bag as a makeshift poncho during a torrential downpour. Each time, I had the same, familiar sense of leaving the regular world and entering another—immersing myself in tradition, adventure, community, and friendship.

I was a camper for ten years, and spent many of my teenage years in the sailing unit. I had always planned to be a counselor, but camp closed before I turned 18. It was an early lesson in the truth, now glaringly obvious during this time of pandemic: Life rarely plays out as planned.

I followed developments from the Friends of Eagle Island with interest, and I even spent a weekend volunteering with my family. Then came the inaugural summer of the "new" Eagle Island. I was excited, but didn't think I could be part of it, knowing I had to teach that summer to pay my rent. But Eagle Island reached out to me and asked if I had one week free, so I joined the team of sailing volunteers for Day Camp. Eagle Island called, and I answered.

As I reconnected with counselors and campers last summer, I realized that we all miss the "old" Eagle Island. Some, like me, feel a sense of loss. But by returning, we have chosen to look toward the future. We've committed to remaking Eagle Island for ourselves and a new generation. I want these kids to have what we had: A place to feel both safe and challenged, independent and loved. As a teacher, I know how important this can be. It allows young people the freedom to dream and grow.

While working with my students remotely, I dream of returning to camp. These months have been challenging for many young people and their families. I know that kids in 2020 need the camp experience now, more than ever.

Camper, 1998–2008; Sailing Volunteer, 2019  
BA, The College of William & Mary, 2014  
MAT, The American University, 2018  
ESOL Teacher, Annandale High School, VA

## EAGLE ISLAND CAMP IS STRONG Paula Michelsen

Our mission embodies strength, and as much as we were looking forward to summer 2020, in true Eagle Island fashion we are adjusting our sails because we cannot change the wind.

Like you, Katrina and I have been hunkering down, socially distancing, and doing our part. Our homes have always served as our offices, so that is nothing new. We already understood the struggle of forcing a routine and getting out of PJs before noon; we ZOOMed our meetings and knew what time the mail carrier arrives. Like YOU, we miss meeting friends face-to-face for coffee, weekend get-aways, and giving hugs.

Difficult as the decision was to suspend 2020 programming, the outpouring of support and encouragement has been tremendous and heartening. Even before making it official, Camp Director Katrina and Assistant Camp Director Mary-Anna began creating virtual staff-training modules. While this would never replace in-person training, it would provide flexibility and prepare staff to hit the ground running on arrival on the Island. All is not lost; the modules, designed specifically for EIC, will continue to be a resource in 2021 and beyond.

Eagle Island is also carving out a place in the local community, and will continue to develop relationships with

organizations like the Adirondack Diversity Initiative and the Saranac Lake Youth Center. We also continue to develop virtual content for kids and adults, including historic tours, nature exploration, the 100-inch hike, and the first Eagle Island Backyard Campout. And while we could have done Virtual Campfires at any time, it took a pandemic to get this new tradition rolling. It is heartening to see so many smiling faces singing along to old and new favorites. Personally, I have been energized by the enthusiasm of alumni from across the years. Please continue to share your ideas with us and join in as much or as little as you like. [communications@eagleisland.org](mailto:communications@eagleisland.org)

**YOU** can help keep this momentum going and keep Eagle Island strong. If you usually give at the end of the year, please consider a donation NOW. Or, in these uncertain times, if you prefer a recurring monthly or quarterly credit-card donation, this is also available and can be canceled at any time

Your support, financial and otherwise, is crucial at this time, and as I noted in a recent *Adirondack Explorer* article, "We will come back better and stronger next year . . . we will be ready for 2021." Join the effort,

commemorate the experience you had at camp, honor a friend or family member, and send a donation today. Let's make sure Eagle Island will be there far into the future to help kids be kids, explore nature, learn new skills and grow to become confident, collaborative, and courageous [eagleisland.org/donate](https://eagleisland.org/donate).



Virtual Campfire Sing-Alongs – check out [eagleisland.org/events](https://eagleisland.org/events), social media or your inbox for future notifications



[eagleisland.org/trading-post](https://eagleisland.org/trading-post)

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