

Muskoka Woods vs. COVID-19: An Exceptional Camp Confronting Exceptional Times

A Submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The impact of COVID-19 on the camping industry, the Muskoka region, and Ontario is massive and hard to comprehend. Camps in Ontario range in size and scope but one thing cannot be denied: Camps are major employers in this province, especially for students in the summer, and have a positive and significant economic impact on the small towns, communities, and regions they operate in. These are not large resort conglomerates, but, for the most part, family owned and operated organizations, many of which operate as not-for-profits.

It is not Muskoka Woods' preference to have to ask the government for assistance. Unfortunately, these are exceptional times. This is the first time in over 40 years we will not be able to run a summer program and the future beyond that is uncertain and growing increasingly expensive as the result of anticipated COVID-19 related changes.

The decisions made today will determine the long-term viability of Muskoka Woods, camps like it, and many of the small towns they operate in.

By way of example:

*"As a local business owner in the Muskoka region having partners like Muskoka Woods makes all the difference not only to my business but to the financial and social well-being of our community...**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of overnight camps this summer, I am witnessing the serious economic effects on businesses like mine and am deeply concerned that if financial aid is not provided for places like Muskoka Woods the loss would be detrimental to the local, provincial and Canadian economy, the families and children that depend on Muskoka Woods and the staff, contractors and***

other partnerships they have with businesses like mine. Please take time to consider their request for financial support and recognize that in supporting an organization like Muskoka Woods you are in turn supporting local businesses, communities, and Ontarians in this difficult and unprecedented time.”

Paul Nickel, President, Pride Marine Group

As hockey great Paul Henderson has said about Muskoka Woods, “Muskoka Woods has had a great impact on our children and great grandchildren as well personally...We have been strong financial supporters from the start and will continue to be as we feel we are investing wisely to raise up quality leaders for this great country of ours...Employing many summer staff and being a significant asset to many Canadian businesses, Eleanor and I fully endorse all of them.” (See Appendix A for additional supportive quotes from notable Canadians.)

WHAT IS MUSKOKA WOODS?

Since 1979, Muskoka Woods has operated a year-round camp in Rosseau, Ontario. We specialize in school trips, group retreats, summer camp, and leadership development for all ages regardless of religion, ethnicity, or financial means. We are a member of the Ontario Camping Association. (See Appendix B for more details on Muskoka Woods programs.)

Muskoka Woods employs over 500 staff¹ and hosts over 30,000 children and young people every year. 25,000 of these guests come from the public or Catholic school system as well as church and youth

¹ Staff Breakout: Full-time: 28 in Toronto and 44 in Muskoka; Additional seasonal staff in Muskoka: 75 from Sept-June and 360 in summer; 50 summer volunteers

groups and attend outside of the summertime. 10% of summer guests come from economically challenged families who Muskoka Woods helps to attend. These are staff, guests and their families who travel to the Rosseau and Muskoka region, especially in the summertime, and support the local economy.

While Appendix B outlines the full scope of Muskoka Woods' operations and program, there are two that are important to highlight:

Muskoka Woods Youth Foundation

The Muskoka Woods Youth Foundation has provided almost 5,000 youth from at-risk communities, those with exceptional circumstances, cancer, disabilities, and the children of military heroes the opportunity to attend Muskoka Woods as guests and staff. *(See Appendix C)*

Muskoka Woods Exceptionality Program

The Exceptionality Program gives over 60 children and youth with disabilities (including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder) the opportunity to experience camp each summer. These inspiring boys and girls discover new possibilities and uncover their hidden potential at Muskoka Woods. They are integrated, to the extent possible and appropriate, into camp programming by members of the Exceptionality team, befriended by their cabin mates, celebrated as they bravely perform on stage and are encouraged to try new things in a safe camp environment. *(See Appendix D)*

These programs, coupled with our school year and summer programs, have trained generation after generation of leaders who are today making a mark on our world. People such as Iain Lovatt, Mayor of Stouffville; Jennifer Keesmaat, Former Chief Planner for the City of Toronto; Ian Robertson, Chief of

Staff, Campaign Manager and Senior Advisor to Tim Hudak, Tony Clement, and Mike Harris; and TV actors Demore Barnes (*Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*) and Scott Speedman (*Felicity, Underworld*) among others.

HOW COVID-19 HAS IMPACTED MUSKOKA WOODS

Summer camps that operate in Ontario range in size and scope. Muskoka Woods is on the larger end of that range and operates as a year-round outdoor facility. As such, and in an effort to accurately understand the challenges Muskoka Woods faces and the economic impact of inaction, both in the short- and long-term, it is helpful to think of Muskoka Woods as a large, 365-days a year business and a significant employer that is facing a unique set of challenges and financial demands as the result of COVID-19. There are challenges, especially on the financial side, that are not only devastating in the short-term but could be catastrophic to long-term survival.

As a non-profit organization, the goal of Muskoka Woods is to fulfill its mission while being financially sustainable. This year, Muskoka Woods' operational budget is just under \$13 million and is sustained almost exclusively by the fees charged to guests. 60% of revenue comes from the summer program which runs from July to August. The remaining 40% comes from hosting school and church groups throughout the year.

COVID-19 has been a massive blow. It could not have hit at a worse time. The last group Muskoka Woods was able to serve on property was March 8th. The summer camp programs, and likely a good portion of the next school year, are write offs.

Here is Muskoka Woods' financial picture in brief, assuming status quo:

- In 2020, school and groups revenue will be down 81%, from \$4.5 million to \$860,000
- Summer camp revenue will be down 100% from \$7.6 million last year to \$0
- The projected year-end deficit is \$4.6 million

It is important to remember what these numbers really represent: Hundreds of staff Muskoka Woods can no longer employ; thousands of guests who won't be served; and hundreds of small businesses in Rosseau, Parry Sound, Port Carling, Port Sandfield, Huntsville, Bracebridge and other parts of Muskoka that will not benefit from the increased traffic flow Muskoka Woods generates for the region.

We have over 350 local businesses that we and our guests and their families work with and contribute to. Examples of local suppliers include Pride Marine Grop, Simcoe Building Centre and Hammond Transportation, Indian River Trading Co., Rexall Pharmacy (Bracebridge), Nighthawk Launderers, and dozens of local contractors.

HOW MUSKOKA WOODS IS CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGES OF COVID-19

We recognize that Muskoka Woods is better positioned than some other camps to manage this crisis due to some balance sheet flexibility. However, that flexibility is being quickly depleted. Muskoka Woods has taken drastic steps to quickly cut costs, keep as many staff employed as possible, and remain viable long term. We have made all efforts to conserve cash, approximately \$850,000 this year, including:

- Leading by example: I, John McAuley, President & CEO will not be paid for the next two years
- All full-time staff have taken a 15% wage reduction

- All full-time staff will be taking 4 weeks unpaid leave this year (a temporary layoff)

However, despite these savings, Muskoka Woods will still be significantly challenged. As a non-profit, Muskoka Woods has historically run as a very lean organization. Fixed costs, such as property tax, insurance, hydro, and other utilities, are considerable and require a minimum amount of income. By way of example, in a typical year, energy costs (hydro and propane) are \$700,000 (or approximately 5.5% of overall budget) and insurance and property tax is \$590,000 (or approximately 4.6% of overall budget).

Muskoka Woods has accessed the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (approximately \$850,000) which has allowed the business to avoid extensive layoffs in the short term. However, when it expires at the end of August, further layoffs will be required in order to reduce the significant projected deficit. These staff will only be able to collect the Canada Emergency Response Benefit for one month.

WHAT THE FUTURE LOOKS LIKE

The future is uncertain. There is currently no clarity as to when Muskoka Woods will be able to serve guests again, as well as what constraints the business will need to work through once operations are allowed to resume. There is growing concern that this pandemic will continue to impact the business through the remainder of the year and deep into 2021, further taxing an already constrained budget. It is unlikely that even a return to operations by next summer will allow for the camp to operate at full capacity.

The choices before Muskoka Woods are imperfect and have considerable long-term consequences. The business is rapidly burning through cash and will need to borrow considerably in the years ahead. A decision to take on debt or pull money from things like the annual upkeep budget simply means Muskoka Woods will be pushing the problems of today down the road.

Muskoka Woods anticipates needing to reduce its capacity further limiting the ability to earn revenue, as well as adapt food service and cleaning protocols to comply with workplace safety standards. There is no certainty that guest groups will return immediately once Muskoka Woods is permitted to open. Social distancing restrictions, concerns about travel and transportation, such as the number of people who can be on a school bus, may mean camps, even those the size of Muskoka Woods, are no longer an economically viable option.

Muskoka Woods anticipates incurring significant debt to not only maintain the existing facilities but reorganize and rebuild some of those facilities to adapt to the new normal, whatever it may be. For example, a complete reconstruction of the health care center is required to make it more robust and appropriate to deal with the new normal. That cost alone is approximately \$600,000.

We expect having to make similar investments in many of the 75 buildings on property. This means resources presently set aside to not only meet other annual capital development demands but grow the business will need to be redirected. For context, Muskoka Woods spends over \$500,000 a year just to maintain the current capital infrastructure.

WHAT MUSKOKA WOODS NEEDS TO SURVIVE AND RECOVER

It is not Muskoka Woods' first choice to come to the government for help. An ask for support is a last, but unfortunately very necessary, resort. As outlined, Muskoka Woods has taken significant steps to try to manage the pandemic. Going forward, we conservatively estimate the need for a cash grant of \$2.5 million or \$4.5 million in loans. Muskoka Woods is prepared to further engage with the Ontario Government as needed to not only ensure the short- and long-term viability of Muskoka Woods but also the community and region we operate in.

Appendix A: Supportive Statements from Notable Canadians

“My wife Eleanor and I have been involved with Muskoka Woods since 1985. We have spent at least one week on the property every summer and watched it grow into what it is today; a place like no other for our youth today. We have seen the positive impact on developing young men and women for leadership that is so needed in our country. John and Lori McAuley have been the visionaries behind the growth and development of their very capable and gifted full-time staff team.

Muskoka Woods has had a great impact on our children and great grandchildren as well personally. Our youngest daughter was a summer staff member for two years. Six of our seven grandchildren have been campers. Two were full time summer staff and one spent two years on full time staff. Three have taken the month-long CEO training and the youngest will do this next year. All of them would say it was monumental in their development of their skills and leadership ability.

We have been strong financial supporters from the start and will continue to be as we feel we are investing wisely to raise up quality leaders for this great country of ours. We have encouraged many of our friends to get involved also. They have a very strong board of directors that are such an asset. The impact we have experienced with Muskoka Woods is not only the investment of young campers lives but also within the community around them. Employing many summer staff and being a significant asset to many Canadian businesses, Eleanor and I fully endorse all of them.”

Paul Henderson
Retired NHL Player

“When you find a place and group of people that have such a positive impact on young people in their formative years, you want to be apart of it in some way. That is Muskoka Woods for our family. After personally spending 29 summers at Muskoka Woods as a guest, summer staff and part of the Executive Team, I can honestly say that the impact of Muskoka Woods has prepared me for a life in politics and beyond. I’m even more happy that my kids are all now involved carrying the torch so to speak and having the same experience as I did.”

Iain Lovatt
Mayor of Stouffville

“My name is Dr. Karyn Gordon and I am the founder of DK Leadership a professional counselling and coaching service. My field of expertise is in high-performance leadership coaching with a special focus on emotional intelligence and well-being. As a wife, mother, counsellor and motivational speaker, I recognize the important role organizations like Muskoka Woods play in the lives of Canadians.

Every summer for the past 7 years I have had the privilege of sharing my personal and professional passions with young people at Muskoka Woods as part of their high-school accredited CEO program.

The CEO program stands for Challenge, Experience, Opportunity and is a phenomenally run 4-week experience hosted and developed by Muskoka Woods in partnership with educators and industry professionals like myself. The time I spend with these 16-year olds is something I cherish and look forward to every summer. In light of the news of summer camp closures, I have experienced sincere professional disappointment recognizing the reality that thousands of young people will not get to enter

the life-changing gates of Muskoka Woods but there is personal disappointment partnered with that reality as well. I have 2 young twin boys who I have sent to Muskoka Woods for 7 years who love their time at Muskoka Woods because of the impact it has on them as individuals. I can speak to the genuine growth in confidence, friendships made and fun experiences that my boys have gained as guests. I can also attest to the impact Muskoka Woods has on communities, schools and families because of the amazing work they do with young people. They are more than just a summer camp for kids, they are educators, leadership experts, advocates for the development of young people and major contributors to the well-being of our children.

I have heard of Muskoka Wood's request for financial aid and cannot urge you enough to consider this organization seriously. Should you have any further questions or clarifications please do not hesitate to contact me directly. I look forward to hearing of the many future successes of Muskoka Woods through the financial support of the government."

Dr. Karyn Gordon
CEO & CO-Founder of DK Leadership

"Every summer, 10-16 Indigenous youth from northern Ontario leave their community to have an experience like they've never had before. Muskoka Woods has come alongside Burning Stone Ministries for the last several summers, to give these youth a chance to see their world can be different through building new skills, stretching their comfort zones and realizing their true potential. This week at Muskoka Woods is the highlight of the year for these kids and through this program, many have developed leadership skills and are hoping to one day work on staff at Muskoka Woods."

Karen Ward
*Director of Programs
Burning Stone Ministries*

"Muskoka Woods believes 'that fun plus reflection equals confidence.' In the midst of Covid19, it could be said, that our society, our impressionable youth, have lost confidence. The confidence to be able to achieve, to learn, and grown with one another is precious. Our children, have lost the freedom to enjoy many activities that will help to shape them into the leaders of today and for the future of our country. Our family, has engaged with Muskoka Woods since 1978, when my father was asked to take part in a vision that would create a place to change lives, through epic fun, equality, ingenuity, dedication, and integrity. Summer camp and retreat experiences, not only prepared me for future endeavors as a leader in society and now the military, it provided a place for me to make mistakes. A place to learn with the support of others, to be challenged, encouraged, and affirmed. I was thankfully able to work there in the 1990's, and now my children attend. Muskoka Woods has graciously supported us as I serve the country. They have enabled my family to be together, and enjoy the Muskoka's in a way that we could not afford. Our oldest daughter, now 16 years old, was encouraged by the leadership staff to excel. Through the confidence gained she now has completed 3 years as a Jr Ski Patroller, and will complete her training to be a life guard, and plans to apply to work and give back at Muskoka Woods in 2021. Supporting Muskoka Woods is supporting generations of youth that will change our world."

Capt. Rev Michael T. Bowyer
Royal Canadian Corp of Chaplain Services

Appendix B: Muskoka Woods Operations and Programs

Muskoka Woods is a non-profit Christian youth development organization that welcomes everyone to an experience for a lifetime. Since 1979, located on the shores of beautiful Lake Rosseau, we specialize in summer camp, school trips, group retreats and leadership development for all ages. We exist to inspire youth to shape their world.

Muskoka Woods offers a fun, safe and welcoming environment for all youth. At the heart of this offering are staff that share a common desire to help young people realize their full potential. We are committed to making fun experiences the foundation for building new friendships and self-confidence. Our staff make this possible by fostering a sense of community and encouraging youth to reflect on their experiences in order to draw life lessons from them.

Muskoka Woods is located on 1,100 wooded acres with 2,800 feet of stunning frontage on Lake Rosseau. Facilities include over 70 buildings including spacious dining halls, meeting rooms and comfortable cabins as well as 10 tennis courts, 2 beach volleyball courts, a 15,000 square foot gymnasium with a 10-route indoor climbing wall, three large playing fields, an indoor skate park, driving range and Canada's highest ropes course.

Our Summer Camp program serves over 4000 guests each summer ages 6-17 (coed). Children choose between 60 activities (e.g. waterskiing, radio broadcasting, tennis, baking). For ages 15-17 we offer a four-week leadership program where students can earn a grade 11 high school credit.

Our Schools and Groups program welcomes 25,000 guests from September to June. Program offerings include over 20 fall, winter and spring curriculum-based leadership activities to choose from. Unique to this program is a 4000 square foot Leadership Studio that caters to smaller school and retreat groups specializing in leadership development

Appendix C: Muskoka Woods Youth Foundation

SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS

NEIL LOVATT MEMORIAL FUND

The Neil Lovatt Memorial Fund (NLMF) puts summer camp within reach of deserving youth from at-risk communities who would not otherwise have the financial means to attend. We work alongside respected agencies and organizations to select specific youth to come to Muskoka Woods.

Our Timbergrove Lodge, built in 2010, allows our partner organizations (9 groups of 24 per year) to bring up a group of youth with their own leaders during our regular summer program. This unique cabin offers our guests an opportunity to continue building their relationship with a common meeting room and campfire pit.

The NLMF also provides an integrated camp experience to approximately 75 deserving youth from the Muskoka and York Regions.

Established: 2002

Total # of Recipients: 2649 youth

Timbergrove Lodge Partner Groups:

One Voice One Team:

Help Empower Youth to Utilize their extraordinary leadership skills and talents to better themselves and their community.

Youth Unlimited London:

Compass Basketball program uses basketball to build relationships, create mentoring opportunities, provide a safe environment where players feel loved and encouraged.

Youth Unlimited Hanover:

The Deck Drop In Centre for kids 8-18 provides youth with a safe place to hang out.

Youth Unlimited St Thomas:

Campus Life is a drop in program designed for youth in grades 6-12.

Youth Unlimited Stratford:

Provides mentorship and leadership development to kids in the Stratford public school system.

Urban Promise:

Providing mentorship and leadership development programs to children living in Toronto Community Housing neighbourhoods.

Kerr Street Mission:

Provides youth development programming through engaging activities, leadership experiences, positive adult and peer mentors, as well as healthy community connections.

IEmergence:

Provides youth from the Mishkeegogamang First Nation with a week at Muskoka Woods to build leadership skills that allow them to return home, and run a 3-week summer camp program for their community.

JAMIE GROVES BURSARY

Jamie Groves was a natural leader, serving as a lifeguard in summer 1993. Sadly, a few months later, he was diagnosed with cancer and passed away at 19. The Jamie Groves Bursary Fund was created in his memory, funding hundreds of bursaries to exceptional summer camp staff. Financial support makes it possible for these young adults to work at camp, rather than seek alternative summer employment to offset the cost of post-secondary education.

Established: 2004

Total # of Recipients: 597 Staff Bursaries (\$819,325)

MACKENZIE'S HOPE

Mackenzie Lynn Masson, born October 6, 2000, was taken by cancer on October 16, 2012. She knew of many opportunities for kids with cancer to attend camps, however, none that benefited their siblings.

She adored her little brother Jamie and wanted siblings of children with cancer to be offered an opportunity to experience what she loved best: Muskoka Woods. The "Mackenzie's Hope" fund was founded to honour her wish.

Established: 2012

Total # of Recipients: 223 youth

CANADIAN HEROES

When a parent serves in the Canadian Armed Forces, children are left behind to cope with the heartache and stress of missing their mom or dad for months at a time. The Canadian Heroes Fund serves the children of our troops who would not otherwise have the financial resources to attend summer camp, by providing a bursary to allow them to attend.

Initiated by Tom Caldwell of Caldwell Financial Securities in 2008, the Canadian Heroes Fund has given the sons and daughters of military families the opportunity to attend Muskoka Woods as summer guests. Each child represents at least one parent in active duty from CFB North Bay, Ottawa, Borden, Petawawa, London, Kingston or Trenton.

Established: 2008

Total # of Recipients: 806 youth

PROJECT 52

Muskoka Woods staff provide life coaching, leadership training and spiritual support at critical times in the lives of its Summer Staff year-round. Having a community to belong to can make a big difference to their mental, emotional and spiritual health. Often away from home, when young people are making life-altering decisions, Project 52 staff are there.

The Project 52 Fund supports the year-round work of staff in schools, churches and on university campuses throughout Ontario and Quebec.

RESILIENCY PROGRAM:

The Resiliency Program connects The Leadership Studio at Muskoka Woods with a school in southern Ontario to inspire at-risk youth to shape their world. This program is designed for students in grades 7-12 who struggle with chronic absenteeism, conventional classroom instruction, family dysfunction and other social or emotional challenges.

While these youth are at great risk of not graduating, their teachers have identified them as having incredible potential for growth and development. The Resiliency Program Fund has allowed dozens of at-risk youth to gain leadership skills, which will shape their lives and our world

Established: 2011

Total # of Recipients: 148 students (approx. 20 students participate each year in 2 retreats)

EXCEPTIONALITY FUND:

The Exceptionality Program at Muskoka Woods gives children and youth with disabilities (including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder) the opportunity to experience camp, by providing them with the support they need for a successful week at camp. These inspiring boys and girls discover new possibilities and uncover their hidden potential at Muskoka Woods. They are integrated, to the extent possible and appropriate, into camp programming by the Exceptionality Program Staff, befriended by their cabin mates, celebrated and are encouraged to try new things in a safe camp environment.

Established: 2009

Total # of Recipients: 271 youth

Appendix D: Muskoka Woods Exceptionality Program

Overview of Program

The Exceptionality Program offered at Muskoka Woods gives children and youth with disabilities (including those with Autism Spectrum Disorder) the opportunity to experience camp. These inspiring boys and girls discover new possibilities and uncover their hidden potential at Muskoka Woods. They are integrated, to the extent possible and appropriate, into camp programming by members of the Exceptionality team, befriended by their cabin mates, celebrated as they bravely perform on stage and are encouraged to try new things in a safe camp environment.

Number of Exceptionality Guests

From June 29th - August 30th, 2019 there were a total of 49 guests* aged 6-16 who participated in the exceptionality program at Muskoka Woods (representing a total of 63 guest weeks). Upon parental conversation with our Special Needs Consultant, guests participating in our program would be categorized as a Level 1, 2 or 3 depending on support required.

**These numbers do not include participants who volunteered in our job-coaching program. This summer 3 participated in this program through the summer with support workers.*

Level 1 - 1:1 support provided from first thing in the morning to when the guest returns to their cabins in the evening. Staff support guest through each of their individual activities throughout the day as well as during their cabin activities in the evenings. Staff do not support in self-care such as toiling, bathing or dressing.

Level 2 - Transitional support, also 1:1 however support is limited to transitional periods throughout the day. Staff will support guests on their way to each of their activities, however guests will stay at the activity on their own with the activity instructor. Exceptionality staff will also support during any free time during the day as well as during evening program. Support is offered from morning until guests return to their cabins in the evening

Level 3 - Staff will support guests by checking in on them or their counselors at various different times throughout the day or week. Level 3 guests are independent throughout the week, however if issues arise, we are available to talk it through with the guest or counselor if needed and brainstorm solutions on how they can move forward in a positive manner.

Number of Exceptionality Leaders

Muskoka Woods contracts an off-site Consultant who is responsible for the screening, selection, and placement of guests into summer programming. This person is on-site 3 times during the summer. Once for training, and 2 other full weeks. Their main role while on site is to work with the seasonal

Director to ensure the program is running effectively. When they are not onsite, this consultant is available via telephone and email to help support the staff as well as continue working with guest parents.

Seasonally, in 2019, Muskoka Woods hired 14 positions within the exceptionality program.

- The seasonal Exceptionality Director (1 position) works in conjunction with our Special Needs Consultant to provide leadership to the Exceptionality team.
- The seasonal Exceptionality Coordinator (1 position) works in conjunction with the Exceptionality Director provide administrative support as well as counsellor relief working with guests.
- Finally, there are Counsellors (12 positions). These counsellors were responsible for working directly with their assigned guests.

Evidence of Success

- Inspiration Garden continues to be a quiet space for exceptionality guests to use throughout their time at Muskoka Woods.
- Successful inclusion of guests in full camp programming (from Cake Decorating to wide games).
- A guest who has grown and developed through the Exceptionality Program and became a staff member with no support required.
- Increased confidence (impact, activities, etc.)
- Workplace job shadowing program - more guests finishing their time at Muskoka Woods as a formal guest, but moving into our volunteer program
- Refining the database of guests and their time spent with Muskoka Woods to better serve them year over year.
- Utilizing “Heritage 1979” allowed for respite for families with children with accessibility needs.
- Moving the coordinator role onto the summer director team – allowed for more training, preparation and also coordination with the other program directors.
- Bringing the Coordinator (administrator) in a week before the counsellors allowed for additional training and preparation with the Director before staff week started.
- Fewer “surprise” guests this summer as we continue to refine our screening process – allowing our staff to better prepare to serve the guests who need support.
- Special take home “passport” with photos of guests and memories of the week was sent home weekly for guests to share with their families.

Programmatic Improvements

- Opportunity to improve the integration of guests into the cabin environment. Some of our guests struggle with evening routines and also socially in the cabins – would like to explore how we can improve this and also train counsellors in this area.
- Opportunity for respite for families on property. The current capacity of our VIP buildings would not allow for a parent to stay on property.
- Qualified staff continues to be one of the areas of improvement/need.

- Increased training around different diagnoses and also helping our staff gain a greater understanding of how to work with our guests is needed.
- Opportunity to benchmark from other camps who have thriving programs (Pioneer).
- Need to get more detailed information from parents on their children, before they arrive at camp (improve intake process).
- Opportunity to resource the Inspiration Garden with additional program materials.

Annual Program and Schedule

1-Week Schedule Sample

Camp Activities During the Day

As noted above, Muskoka Woods is a fully integrated camp experience, which supports to the need for each individual child. Appendix 1 demonstrates a schedule for a Level 1 Autistic Guest who requires full support. The guest would integrate fully within camp programming (based on the schedule her parents have selected) however, if she was not feeling well, or did not want to participate, the Exceptionality Staff would provide alternative programming. Examples of alternative programming would be: visit the Inspiration Garden (Snoezelen Room, media room, outdoor water feature, swing, etc.); move to a quiet space temporarily; use technology that has been sent as an aid, or go for a walk.

Meal Times & Evening Program

Each guest is assigned a cabin where they would stay/sleep and interact with other guests. Depending on the need of the guest, as stated above, support and changing the schedule may be required for meal times in the dining hall. If a guest needs to eat alone, the Exceptionality Staff would be able to move the guest to a more quiet place.

Evening Program (activities that happen after scheduled activities) vary from day to day. Based on the child, guests will come and participate in the evening program (i.e. camp wide games, talent shows, scavenger hunts, capture the flag, etc.), and some guests will not participate but will want to watch. Other guests may want to help on the microphone or organizing with the Section Heads. Other guests may want to go back to the Inspiration Garden, all of which can be accommodated based on the need of the children