



“The first river you paddle runs through the rest of your life. It bubbles up in pools and eddies to remind you who you are.”
- Lynn Culbreath Noel

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October 2020

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Greetings, Red Canoe Family!

As anyone who has done much canoeing can attest, paddling with the wind is a breeze (pun definitely intended). With close to no effort, you’ll still make progress toward your destination.

But paddling into a headwind? That is a different story. Despite your best efforts, it’s difficult to make progress. And when you stop to rest for even a moment, any gains your efforts have produced simply evaporate. It’s frustrating. It’s tiring. But when you finally *do* reach your destination, you’ll have a story to tell – and a lot of pride for having earned the right to tell it.

When we rounded the bend into 2020, we could feel the distinct sensation of a strong, steady tailwind. By every metric, 2019 had been a successful year; thanks to our generous supporters, we exceeded our fundraising expectations. For the summer of 2020, we pledged \$29,220 to support nine Camp Wabun campers, \$6,000 to the Chicago Voyagers and additional scholarships for several First Nation campers. We were confident that our mission was on target – and on track.

But as 2020 progressed, the winds began to shift. By early March, the Covid-19 pandemic had grown from a theoretical threat to a global crisis. While the headwinds were just forming, it was quickly becoming clear that day-to-day life was about to change. As the pandemic continued, we were struck by the toll it was taking on our friends, our neighbors, and on the communities of the children our scholarships support.

Then, in May of 2020, the nation’s collective conscience was awakened by the murder of George Floyd. Since our inception, Red Canoe has actively engaged in thoughtful conversations about diversity, equity, and access. But for all of us, George Floyd’s death drove home how little we truly comprehend about the insidious, real-world manifestations of our nation’s long history of racial injustice. As an organization and as individuals, we pledged to redouble our commitment to listening, learning, and taking an active role in the pursuit of

social justice. With Wabun closed for the 2020 season and Chicago Voyagers operating at reduced capacity, we were left with no option but to plan for 2021.

An additional blow in September was the passing of Red Canoe Foundation's former Board Chair, ardent supporter and beloved friend, Libby Moore. Libby connected directly and deeply with people and with the Earth. Her gifts both grounded her in the present and propelled her to embrace future possibilities. She stepped lightly and was passionate about leaving the world a better place. Her energy leaves countless people and many organizations, including Red Canoe, much improved. Libby was deeply committed to our mission to provide access to wilderness experiences for youth of all races; we will continue the work she cherished, while keenly missing her encouragement and wise guidance.

Now, despite the likelihood that we'll continue to face stiff headwinds in this year's campaign, we're heartened by our recent donors' continued support, energized to reconnect with past donors, and eager to reach supporters we've yet to meet. So, in an effort to serve our mission and the commitment we've made to provide transformational wilderness experiences for young people, we're intensifying our efforts, and setting our fundraising sights even higher.

Over the coming weeks, we will be digging deep to defy the headwinds and push our 2021 appeal forward. This year's goal of \$100,000 is an ambitious one, but for the youth who will benefit from the experiences our scholarships fund, it is essential.

There are several ways to contribute. To make an online donation today, click on the DONATE button at redcanoefoundation.org or scan the QR code below on the right. Or mail your check directly to the address below. To speak with me about company matching, investment disbursements, estate planning, and other forms of giving, please call 608-469-4752.

So, in advance, thank you for your support. We know you are aligned with our mission and we are grateful for everything you do to make it a reality.

With appreciation,



Gail E.K. Coleman
Executive Director



Maddy Vertenten
Chair of Board of Directors



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