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## Letter from the Director

Dear Fleur de Lis Community,

Some of the words and phrases I have heard to describe the times we are living in now include: “uncertainty”, “unprecedented”, “scary”, “sad”, “challenging”, and “the new normal”. We have all experienced so many changes in our everyday world and have probably experienced quite a range of emotions over the past several weeks. Personally, I find myself even missing what seem like silly little things, such as taking my laptop and working in a coffee shop or a spur of the moment trip to the grocery store because I just dreamed up a new idea for dinner. Special times, like gathering with family and friends around a fireplace or our dining room table have been replaced by FaceTime and Zoom get-togethers. One thing that helps me be in balance is remembering the people, places, and things that are so important and steadfast in my life. One of these is, of course, Fleur de Lis.

This edition of Laurel Leaves will look different to you. Instead of only sharing FDL news and updates from the past 6 months and offering a preview of summer, we have chosen to share reflections by girls, alumnae, and parents about the importance of camp. We hope you will find this celebration of Fleur de Lis and all the things we value most – connection and community, lifelong friendships, and the opportunities to grow and learn about ourselves – a welcome respite. Each one of us has so many stories of how FDL has impacted our lives, so these are just a few. We encourage you to reach out to friends and share your own stories.

We know that this pandemic has affected many of you personally, through the loss or illness of loved ones, through economic instability, and through isolation from those you love. Please know that your Fleur de Lis community is here for you as you navigate these difficult times. We encourage you to reach out to camp friends. We also invite you to share with us how FDL might support you. Please let us know how we can best care for you.

Our camp is steadfast and strong. Remember that we can call on what camp has given us to be just as steadfast and strong ourselves.

With all the best wishes for your health and happiness,  
-Lady MJ

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## Being Myself

I love camp so much and it really means a lot to me. Camp is about being who you are and finding yourself. I learned a lot at camp about who I am as a person. The environment is so welcoming and it did not take me long to make friends that I will have forever. Without them and without camp, I would be a completely different person. Camp taught me to embrace all my unique qualities and that it's ok to be different. At camp nobody cares about what you look like or where you're from or who you like. Fleur De Lis is a place where everyone cares about everyone and that means a lot. Camp has forever changed my life.

- Maddie Della Croce, 1st year mid

Fleur de Lis is one of my favorite places ever. It's my home away from home. It's also a place where I can be myself. I really had the time of my life last summer. As a camper who has only gone to camp for one year, I could go for two weeks. But I loved camp so much that I extended for a third week. And even that wasn't enough. I'm really looking forward to the next time I go to FDL. Even though I miss home when I'm at camp, I miss camp when I'm at home. I don't think I've been bored at all at camp. Singing songs, swimming, making art, I love it all. It makes this special place camp. But what really makes Fleur De Lis the magical place it is, is the wonderful people.

-Leah Suzuki, 1st year mid

## Confidence

I didn't always have the confidence I do now. The idea of standing up on stage, or being in a large group of friends scared me, though I tried to cover it up. I felt as though I was too awkward to fit in, and I worried that people wouldn't want to hear what I had to say. After moving from London to Connecticut soon after I turned six, and then switching schools again in two years, I found it easier to close myself off. I would sit on a swing during recess and read, and work on homework during snack. Although I had many people who I would call friends, I didn't truly feel like I fit in. Camp definitely began to change that for me. From my first day (July 8th, 2012!!), I was swept up in the camp crazy that we all know and love, starting with Glop Night. From the moment I arrived, there wasn't a second to doubt if it was fitting in, or if people wanted to spend time with me.

As summers progressed...

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## Perseverance

Grit is an interesting word. The first definition in the Merriam-Webster dictionary is Grit: “small, loose particles of stone or sand”. In this context, grit is usually considered an irritant and is not something we welcome in our eyes or in our shoes. The second definition describes something very different. Grit: “a firmness of mind or spirit, unyielding courage in the face of hardship.” In recent years, the term grit has become the buzzword as a highly desirable characteristic for young people entering top educational institutions, sports teams, and employment. Grit is the popular way of describing determination, bravery, resolve, and tenacity, in short, the perseverance to keep working toward a goal even when...

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## Independence

The dictionary defines “independent” as; *free from outside control, capable of thinking or acting for oneself, and not connected with another or with each other; separate*. It is, of course, the third definition which is so striking now and which makes us feel more lonely than independent. But it is also a reminder that part of what it means to be independent is being resilient—making do with what we have, digging deep into untapped wells, and yes, sometimes feeling very alone while we do so.

All of this is very much in contrast to what happens at Fleur de Lis Camp where community gets built, powerful personal connections get forged, and no girl is “separate” from the others. When we think about what independence means at camp, what we’re really talking about is the second definition which has everything to do with personal growth, strength, and individuality. It is the ability to...

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## Caring Community

Community is part of the magic glue that helps to form summers and beyond at Fleur de Lis Camp. We asked some of our FDL Camp Directors what they think about community. Here is what they have to share with us about that...

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## Deep Friendships

Each Friday of the past month we have highlighted FDL Friendships with #friendshipfriday on our blog. Alumnae wrote in sharing their stories of the incredible life-changing friendships they acquire at camp.

Camp Friends, Camp Friends, La La La by Lady Bridget Scollan

Living with Camp Friends by Lady Elena Ramos

Sister by Lady Kate Gladstone

Friends, Friends, We Will Always Be by Lady Gwen Mahan Ryan

*Interested in sharing your camp friendship stories on the blog?  
Email your submission to [sarah@fleurdeliscamp.org](mailto:sarah@fleurdeliscamp.org)*

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## FDL Updates

### Summer 2020

Will we or won't we have camp this summer? That is the question that has been first and foremost in our thoughts and work for the past several weeks. We have been moving forward with hiring staff, planning program, and opening up our facility just as we do every spring. We continue to monitor health and safety guidelines from the ACA, CDC and our state and local health departments and the staff and Board are discussing the many different aspects of providing a safe, healthy and excellent camp experience for everyone. We know that this uncertainty is challenging, and we appreciate your patience as we work through making the best decisions for Fleur de Lis and our community. Please know there is nothing we would love more than to welcome you to wonderful summer at camp.

### Farmhouse Update

We want to let you know that the board has reached the decision to temporarily suspend the Farmhouse rebuild project and the Capital Campaign. This was not a decision reached lightly, and we spent time playing out several scenarios to best inform our decision process. At this time of uncertainty, we are mindful of how precarious the financial forecast is for everyone. It is unrealistic to be asking our community to make a three-year commitment to major donations during this time, and we do not want to take the financial risk of needing to borrow substantially to support this project. We are also mindful that construction jobs are being shut down and certainly don't want to begin a project and have to abandon it partway through.

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### #FDLmonth

Can you even believe that #FDLmonth was just over a month ago? So much in our

world has changed since that month began. Though we had an interesting turn of events in March, #FDLmonth2020 could not be stopped. (Curious about what #FDLmonth is? Read more [here](#).) We kicked off the 5<sup>th</sup> annual month of celebrating our community with an in-person Alumni event at a cidery in Boston. Quickly followed by more in-person meetups spanning the country (see below), all before social distancing was a regular phrase in our vocabulary.

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## FDL@Home

If you have been following along with Fleur de Lis these past few months then you probably have seen something from us in regards to FDL@Home. Originally a way we could show our support from a distance to campers, families, and alumni while you stayed home, FDL@Home has grown into so much more than we could have ever imagined. We love seeing the excitement around camp trivia, starting our mornings as a camp with virtual passwords, reconnecting over Zoom, and hearing about the letters being sent back and forth amongst camp friends. Our intention is to continue this support as long as it is needed. Should you have any ideas or suggestions for FDL@Home please [email us](#).

To learn more about FDL@Home and see more images of the virtual meetups head to our website.



**FDL@Home**

We are so grateful for the continued support of our caring Fleur de Lis community. Every “like”, comment, and repost on social media helps us reach a greater audience and share the magic of FDL with the world. The more people talk about us the larger our collective FDL family grows.

We recently spoke with a new parent who said she heard about Fleur de Lis from a friend of a friend’s Facebook post years back. For some reason, our name stuck with her and she decided to look us up once her daughter started thinking about summer camp. Just one single post made a new lifelong connection.

Thank you for keeping us in your minds and hearts. Your love and support are invaluable.

Continue to share and help Fleur de Lis flourish.

[Continue Reading to Help Fleur de Lis to Flourish](#)

## Alumnae News

I moved to Brussels mid-quarantine as the borders were closing! It was wild! Post-quarantine I’ll still be in Amsterdam 2x/week. If you’re in the lowlands for whatever reason, please look me up!  
- Lauren Konopacz FDL Alumnae 1998-2008, 2010

Maggie Cochrane (FDL Alumnae 2006-2007) recently graduated from nursing school at MGH Institute of Health Professionals. Congratulations and thank you for your service, Maggie.

Lady Lindsay Heller (FDL Alumnae 1992-2005, 2007 & Circle - 2017 - present) wrote a book of short stories “A Refined Young Lady”. Give it a read and you may recognize a place she mentions. You can purchase the book [here](#).

Paige Boyadjis (FDL Alumnae 2008-2019) is graduating and starting a job as a Program Manager at [The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation](#). Congratulations on all of your hard work, Lady Paige!

Sydney Russell (FDL Alumnae 2009-2017) finished her first marathon in Oak Island, North Carolina. Congratulations, Lady Sydney!

Hello FDL! Hope everyone is staying safe and healthy during these crazy times. I'm living for all the FDL Zoom meetings, daily passwords, and FDL trivia! In early March, just before all of this became our reality, some FDL alumnae had a lovely reunion here in Chicago! Bridget Scollan, Amy Bates, Hilary Robinson, Sarah Coburn, Annalisa Nardone, Lauren Shively, and Lizzie Smith flew to Chicago to visit Anna Nelson, Whitney Donaldson, and me. We had a great weekend soaking up dive bars, watching improv, shuffle boarding, and eating lots. We even got to celebrate Anna's birthday in style -- with special guests Robin, Gretchen, and Ellen Nelson! Since then, I've been able to catch up with lots of FDLers on Zoom and FaceTime -- attending Lindsey Varney's Tuesday night Zoom yoga class is always a highlight! I also spent a wonderful lazy day reading my sister, Lindsay Heller's, new book of short stories. Everyone should check it out for some laughs! Otherwise, my days are kept busy with work, lots of long walks with the dog, and (finally) putting together a travel album.

Missing everyone, and hoping everyone is staying well!  
xo Sarah Heller (*FDL Alumnae 1995-2006, 2019, Circle 2016-2019*)

**Babies that joined the FDL Family this year:**

Lindsay (Dow) Potter - son Hunter  
Megan (O'Keefe) Madden - daughter Caroline  
Lydia (Heffernan) Dunn - daughter Clare

**Update us on what has been going on in your life: [Here](#)**  
**Do we have your most up-to-date contact information? [Update Here](#)**

**Follow along with Fleur de Lis**



Fleur de Lis Camp | 120 Howeville Road Fitzwilliam NH 03447 | 603.585.7751

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