



November 28, 2022

Dear Pine Islanders,

I often recall the abject fear, tempered by a little hopeful anticipation, that marked my arrival as a ten-year-old for my first summer at Pine Island. On a brisk June morning in 2010, I arrived at the mainland dock with my father. We were both exhausted from the trek from my hometown of Washington, DC, and I was very anxious: how would I survive six weeks in an open-air tent? Would I be able to make new friends? How could I go six weeks without seeing my parents? And I certainly could not envision a happy summer without electronics.

As countless worries raced through my head, I was approached by an experienced 15-year-old camper. As I watched the KWS taxi families to and from the island, dreading my turn, he spoke of many seemingly otherworldly traditions: head waiters, perches, the 100% dip. Though well-intentioned, these stories only increased my anxieties, and I continued to grow more and more nervous until he offered a promise: to take me under his wing and show me the ropes so that I would have the summer of a lifetime at Pine Island. As he said this, the KWS reached the dock, and it was our turn to head to the island. With newfound confidence, I turned to my father and said, "You can go home now, I'll be fine." Unbeknownst to this older camper, perhaps even to this day, this reassurance ended up not only being the turning point for my summer but also a major turning point in my life.

As a five-year camper and two-year counselor, I feel immensely lucky and privileged to be a part of this special community. My seven summers spent on Great Pond were defined by personal growth and played an instrumental role in my development into the man I am today. I learned the value of perseverance after paddling through long, rainy days on the Allagash. I learned the importance of teamwork while playing the King's Game, the perennial highlight of my summer. I learned the importance of personal accountability after forgetting my rain gear on a particularly wet hiking trip. Above all else, however, Pine Island taught me to cherish friendship and connection to one's community.

Today it is increasingly difficult for young boys to learn these essential values, as they are faced with countless distractions: social media, homework, the demands of athletic and other extra-curricular activities, ubiquitous cell phones, video games, and alarming news headlines. In their busy world, it is difficult to find time to invest in genuine connections while upholding their obligations. For so many, my three younger brothers and me included, Pine Island offers a remedy by providing a respite from these distractions and the opportunity to join a group that will undoubtedly evolve into a tight-knit community of friends by the end of the summer.

I like to think that this experience is facilitated by a "Pine Island Time Machine" of sorts (also a great campfire skit idea for any current campers or staff reading this letter). The experience that campers receive today is hardly different from that of 1902, our opening summer. Pine Islanders still drink water from a pump, spend afternoons paddling around Great Pond, and achieve an occasional change of scenery by climbing a mountain in the Northeast's beautiful wilderness.

These traditional, rustic experiences teach valuable lifelong lessons of perseverance, personal accountability, and friendship and allow campers to return home in August transformed: more independent, more mature, and more confident.

Though the experience provided has remained consistent, PIC's corresponding operational expenses have not. The cost of maintaining the island, feeding the camp community, keeping up our waterfront, properly equipping our trips and activities, and hiring a world-class staff continue to rise. We work hard to control costs and hold our tuition increases to a minimum to keep the cost of camp within reach for our families. Thankfully, due to generous supporters throughout the Pine Island community, our annual budget is always balanced through donations to the Annual Fund. When you give to the Annual Fund, you're donating new tents and stoves for our tripping program, new paddles and oars for activities, diesel to keep the *KWS* chugging back and forth from the island, and so much more. When you give to the Annual Fund, you ensure that Pine Island can continue to offer the transformative experience it has been for over 120 years.

My summers at Pine Island always ended with a poignant flood of emotions and some tears. Even as a grown man at the conclusion of my final summer as a counselor, I was never ashamed by this. Whether the happy tears swelled in my eyes as I sang along to "Oh, My Sweet Pine Island" or chanted a final "Akka Lakka" from the *KWS* after the Farewell Feed, I was always in good company - with young friends and older colleagues, many also tearful, who had helped mold that summer's unique community and create another great summer.

The charitable support of the Pine Island community has provided life-altering experiences to me and many others. Thank you for your generous consideration. I hope you will join me in contributing to our Annual Fund.

Akka Lakka!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Noah Donoghue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Noah Donoghue

*Annual Fund and Alumni Relations Coordinator*

*Camper 2010-2014, Staff 2018-2019*