



November 2024

Dear Pine Islanders,

As I reflect on my first season as a director of Pine Island, I am reminded of one of my favorite moments of the summer. At one point in July, we needed to do some maintenance on our water pump. Our fantastic new Facilities Manager, Peter, had to pump nearly 500 gallons of water out of the well in order to do this work. The water exited the well via a hose, and it drained over the pathway next to the South Perch into Great Pond. As I walked by the stream now coursing across the island, I noticed a series of bridges, dams, and eddies that had been built into the flowing water. Small pine-needle boats and acorn-cap watercrafts drifted down the newly formed waterway, and a camper from the Range stood by the shoreline, digging canals and tributaries with a sharp stick. I asked what had possessed him to become an amateur civil engineer, and his answer was enlightening: “I was bored and decided to do something about it, so I started this project. Now look at what I’ve created!”

Boredom: one of the many marvelous inconveniences that Pine Island Camp has to offer. With so much free time for independent decision-making and agency, our campers are forced to find ways to entertain themselves by building relationships, discovering new passions, and developing creativity. This is what I saw on that July day. By removing modern distractions like cell phones, tablets, video games, and the internet, we push our boys to think outside the confines of the toxic sludge that is social media and doomscrolling. But, this can be uncomfortable. In fact, discomfort is one of our greatest assets. We live in a world that teaches our children that comfort – as much as possible – is the ultimate goal in life. But at what cost? The pursuit of comfort is making people miserable. It’s stripping away opportunities to grow and be pushed by challenges. It’s allowing us to settle for less and to not seek personal betterment and self-actualization.

Pine Island is such a fantastic experience for our boys because we encourage them to embrace discomfort and in the process find a way to eschew the temptations of comfortable modernity. By seeking out the challenge of a hiking trip across Maine’s many peaks, they learn how to be more resilient and gritty. By pursuing the discomfort of rowing for the first time, they develop diligence and physical strength. By embracing the novelty of living in a canvas tent with three other boys, they become more independent and empathetic toward the experiences of others. Isn’t this our ultimate goal, the development of the boys who will become the well-adjusted men of our future communities?

Continuing the work we do here starts with you: our current campers and their families, our venerated alumni, our current and past staff members, and the many friends of the camp. I hope you will join me in making a generous, tax-deductible gift to Pine Island’s 2024 Annual Fund. There are many organizations worthy of your hard-earned dollars, but I ask that you consider the impact PIC has had on your life and the effect it can have on the lives of future campers. It means the world to us to have your support.

Thank you, and Akka Lakka!

Alex Toole, *Director*