



March 24, 2020

To: Grade 11 students and parents

Subject: A note from Shad's CEO to Grade 11 students and parents

I would first like to thank those of you who have acknowledged that we didn't have any choice but to make the difficult decision to cancel Shad 2020 as a result of Covid-19 to protect the health of the participants, team members and university partners.

I know you are extremely disappointed with the subsequent decision to not offer Grade 11 students a spot in the 2021 program. We understand the frustration and in some cases, anger that you are feeling. We are equally disappointed by the fact we won't be able to offer the program this summer. It takes 11 months of planning and coordinating with 19 university partners and countless other individuals to be able to offer an incredible one month experience for 1,100 students. For the first time in forty years students will not have this experience.

What we are doing:

I do want to assure you that we have not forgotten about you. We have a team at Shad who have been working on some exclusive programming that we were planning to announce to you later this spring once we had details confirmed. While these virtual sessions will not replace the program it will be exclusive to the Grade 11 cohort and will help connect you with each other and the Shad community. You can expect to get details about this programming no later than June 15.

In addition, at your request, we will provide you with a reference letter that you can use with your university and scholarship applications that will confirm that you applied for and were accepted into the Shad 2020 Program. Starting April 1st you can email 2020ShadReference@shad.ca and a letter will be generated for you.

I think you deserve answers to some of your specific questions and concerns:

Finite Spots Available

Several of you have asked why it is not possible to defer admission to Grade 11 students. We worked with some of our Program Directors and others to explore various options but have concluded it is not feasible to accommodate you as grade 12 students next year. We have a finite number of spots and Grade 11 students make up the vast majority of our cohort. Deferring admission to you would have significant ramifications on our capacity for several years.

We acknowledge you may find this decision unfair or unreasonable. In making our decision as to who would have to miss the program, we consulted our [program intended impacts](#) and objectives that clearly outline how we can have the greatest impact - and it is for students in grade 10 and 11. Shad's largest impact occurs when students are still able to go back to their home communities and have a significant impact during their final year(s) of high school. It is



also about opening up post-secondary options which are not necessary for Grade 12s as most have already accepted post-secondary offers by the time they would start the program. As some of you have pointed out, we did allow grade 12 students in the past. However that originated from a time when high school went to grade 13 in Ontario, where the majority of our programs were held. Gradually, we have been reducing the number of grade 12 students to the point that it was less than 10% of our cohorts in recent years. The design of the program has evolved to reflect this student makeup.

Shad community requires in person delivery

Offering the full program virtually was also explored, but a key component and part of the magic and lasting impact of Shad, is based on building a community that lives, eats, shares and physically bonds together for 27 days. Therefore, we concluded a full virtual experience was not possible. As noted above, we will however be providing some on-line programming exclusive to you.

Some of you have also asked if we could offer a second program in August or other times of the year. For many logistical reasons including access to facilities and team resources and capacity this is unfortunately not feasible.

We are a charitable entity

I would ask that you bear in mind that Shad is a charitable organization and we are all trying to do the best we can during this time of uncertainty. We do not have unlimited resources and cancelling this year's program will have a significant financial impact on our organization. We are working closely with our donors and funders to ensure Shad remains stable through the uncertainty of 2020 and into 2021 so we can operate for many years to come.

I realize that my letter today may not alleviate your feelings of frustration or disappointment but I wanted to explain our rationale to you. Some of you may still disagree with our decisions and I respect that but I would also ask that you consider that none of us at Shad set out to purposefully disappoint you. I realize it will be of little comfort to some of you but I assure you that we have agonized over this decision and have put a lot of thought into this unprecedented situation.

Thank you and I hope for you and your families continued health in light of the pandemic sweeping our nation.

Tim Jackson
CEO, Shad Canada