

March 9, 2006

Dear Parents:

At Camp Walden (New York), our primary focus, at all times, is the safety of your children and our staff. As educators, camping professionals, and most importantly, as parents ourselves, we felt compelled to write you this letter about a very serious topic. We hope that you will read it in the spirit that it is offered one of caring, concern and a sense of responsibility to share information with you on important topics that affect the safety of our children.

It has come to our attention that many campers have created on-line accounts at www.MySpace.com, www.xanga.com or similar sites that have recently been named as potential danger zones for luring away children or teens by sexual predators on the internet. These social networking sites are extremely popular among teens and young adults who post profiles, photos and BLOGS often answering dozens of questions about their likes and dislikes, revealing personal details for everyone, including predators, to see.

Mistakes may be as innocent as posting a pictures with their school in the background. In some cases, we noticed teens who specifically listed their home address. At this point, it would be best to assume that your child may use one or more of these sites and may be revealing sensitive information, or communicating with someone who does, without realizing it.

We strongly recommend that you take the assumptive approach and ask your child to show you their site and help them recognize and remove confidential information.

We recommend reading the following Newsweek article, which discusses the issue and presents some solutions in greater detail.

www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11065951/site/newsweek

The Internet is a wonderful tool with thousands of educational, entertainment and informational websites that can open up a new and exciting world to your children.

We encourage this exploration tempered with some reasonable precautions.

Stay safe and happy surfing!

PS. There is a wealth of information on-line with valuable tips from experts on how to protect your children. Below are just a few of the Internet sites that are working to help keep the Internet safe for our children:

CyberAngels - <http://www.cyberangels.org/>

FBI Internet Safety Guide - <http://www.fbi.gov/publications/pguide/pguidee.htm>

Web Wise Kids - <http://www.wiredwithwisdom.org/>