

Memo to the Board

July 3, 20XX

To: The Board of Directors of Camp Colorado
From: [Name], Director, Camp Colorado
Re: Update on Yesterday's News Stories

On Wednesday, July 2, Camp Colorado suffered a tragic loss. Jimmy Black, an eight-year-old boy in our program, died when a park bench rolled over on top of him.

Campers, staff, volunteers, and parents are in shock over this loss.

That evening, the local media wrote and televised a number of stories about the accident and our camp. These stories tell some of what happened, and they also bring in irrelevant information about past problems with licensing. Currently, we are fully licensed, as well as accredited by the American Camp Association.

We are fully cooperating with the Mountain County Sheriff's investigation and with the State Department of Social Services, the agency that provides our seasonal permit and oversees our safety inspections. In addition, we immediately launched our own internal inquiry with the assistance of our insurance carrier, WeeCare.

Although none of the investigations are complete at this time, what we know of the incident indicates that it was a totally unforeseeable accident.

Camp Colorado's trip site was a municipal park with two open fields and a barbecue area. Around 2:00 p.m., counselors gathered the campers for roll call, before returning to camp. Nine leaders were present for 34 children. While attendance was taken, the bench a few of the children were sitting on rolled backward and landed on top of one of the children.

The staff immediately called 911 from their camp cell phone and performed first aid to their level of certification—exactly as our emergency procedures dictate. Emergency responders arrived within six minutes, but, unfortunately, nothing could be done to save the child's life.

The Denver Times and the Mountain County Register have both published stories regarding Camp Colorado's past problems with licensing. Although we maintain that those issues have been remedied, are not relevant to the story, and only serve to add more stress to our camp families, they ran the stories anyway. Both papers have reported that no one has indicated our camp is at fault.

At this time, our camp is focused on providing support for the children, parents, and staff that have been impacted by this tragic event. Tomorrow evening, we will host a celebratory dinner in honor of Jimmy's life. His counselor is planning a memorial service, and campers and staff will have the opportunity to share with one another. A grief counselor will also be on site. Jimmy's parents have expressed their appreciation for our outreach, but they do not plan to attend the dinner. They have, however, arranged for a special fireworks display for the campers—in honor of Jimmy on one of his favorite holidays, July 4th. We are acquiring the necessary permits.

We deeply appreciate the calls of support and the offers of assistance. Colleagues from as far as the East Coast have faxed us letters and information they have used when tragedy strikes.

Our current talking points are attached. Please remember that we all need to speak with one voice and one message during these difficult times. Calls from the media should be directed to [camp spokesperson's name], our spokesperson on this crisis, at (111) 222-5555. Additional information will be sent as it becomes available. If you have specific questions, please contact our director, [name], at the number provided.