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Dear Hiawatha Family,

We are all bearing witness to unexpected times and to an unprecedented shutdown of many segments of our society due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus pandemic. Just a few weeks ago, it would have seemed unbelievable that Hiawatha Music Co-op's Board of Directors would have to inform you of our decision to cancel the Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival for 2020.

But here it is: *The Hiawatha Traditional Music Festival is canceled for 2020.*

Please believe us when we say it was a well-measured and heart-wrenching decision process. We are grieving, just as we imagine you may be too. Our first priority had to be the safety of our members, attendees, volunteers, vendors, and musicians. That said, we felt it our duty under the circumstances to ensure that all remained safe by not hosting our large gathering this summer.

At this time, the City of Marquette has indefinitely closed the park system. This includes our festival site of Tourist Park, making it difficult to go forward with

planning without a concise date for when it will reopen. We also had to consider, even if the park does reopen, how many of the amazing volunteers that we count on to make Festival work, would be unable or unwilling to provide their valuable services this year.

There were so many integral parts to making this decision. We knew that in addition to public safety and the closure of Tourist Park, we had no guarantee that even if we moved ahead with the festival, it would actually be able to take place. The Board analyzed and reviewed financial data, and all things considered, we knew we would be facing a moderate to severe financial loss, as the Music Festival represents two-thirds of our annual operating income, as well as seed money for next year's festival.

All these factors were carefully considered, and as your Board, we voted unanimously that the decision to cancel would be best for all.

We know that when it's deemed safe, we will gather again as a community. It will be a time of music and celebration and a deeper appreciation for simply being together. Though we don't know yet how or when that will come to be, know that we are holding you all in our hearts and will keep you informed along the way.

For this time, Happy Hiawatha will continue on in all of us, as we know that the best way to love each other and our community is to be physically apart, yet bonded by our love of music.

In the meantime, we encourage everyone to support our musician family and community any way you can. Hop on a podcast, tune into a live digital concert, purchase recorded music, buy gift certificates, or make a financial donation.

Peace and Good Health to you all!

Sincerely,

The Hiawatha Board of Directors

Julie Foster-Lindquist, President

Josh Thompson, Vice President

Jose Garcia, Treasurer

Jeff Krebs, Secretary

Susan Bertram

Michael Reed

John Gillette  
Lee Ossenheimer  
Candice Blackstone-Larson  
Melinda Britton

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