

May 1, 2020

Dear Furry Weekend Family,

To begin, here is a TL:DR addressing some misinformation that we are aware of:

- Roll-overs are still available and were suggested as a way to protect your membership
- We felt that partial refunds were better than NO refunds
- Our theme, props, artwork, and assets from 2020 will carry over to 2021
- No FWA 2020 funds have been spent producing Furry Weekend At-Home
- No FWA 2020 funds have or will be spent on stipends to members of the organization
- FWA has never paid a salary to any members of our organization
- As a 501(c)(3) organization, we are always transparent with our spending. All records are published annually after our fiscal year ends

We wanted to share an update about Furry Weekend Atlanta, our cancellation, and where we stand as an organization during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the hardest situation most of us have ever faced. We met several times leading up to the cancellation of the event trying to decide on the best course of action, until it became evident that we had to cancel the event.

On March 16, we officially canceled FWA 2020 and explained to our attendees that you would have 3 options for your membership. You are able to roll over your membership, donate your membership, or apply for a refund once we explored the possibilities.

Our policy has always excluded refunds past the cut off date. This is because past that date, we know that a majority of those funds have been spent on the upcoming convention. For FWA 2020, that date was March 7, 2020.

Although the cut off date had passed, and our policy would not normally allow for refunds, we felt that we needed to explore the options of refunds. We wanted to look at all possibilities in order to help those people most affected by the pandemic. This was very important to us.

After looking into the numbers of refund requests and those who have not chosen to make a decision on their membership, we knew that our only option was to offer partial refunds. There simply were not enough remaining funds to give everyone a full refund.

We want to be clear that anyone who has donated funds, or their registration, to FWA after the cancellation announcement is donating towards FWA's future. It would not be fair to spend

donations on refunds when you are choosing to protect the future of FWA and our charity: Animal Park at the Conservators Center.

On the topic of memberships and donations for FWA, we know many of you have asked for transparency in our spending. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, our spending is always disclosed with the IRS, and that information is available to the public for full transparency. Our fiscal year ends in June, and as such we have yet to close the books for FWA 2020. Once we have closed our books for 2020 and we have filed with the IRS, these records will be available for public viewing. Until then, we would like to address where your registration money goes.

With one or two months of pre-planning, FWA uses 10 months of the year to purchase material for decorations, theming construction, props, engagement projects, merchandise, and office/meeting supplies. FWA needs hundreds of hands, so we also host volunteer recruiting events, as well as staff appreciation events. The staff and volunteers of FWA work year round to make this convention happen. We work very hard, and do tons of research to ensure the money is spent as efficiently as possible.

A few months prior to the start of the convention, we begin executing contracts, fund guests, and pay deposits for entertainment and rental equipment.

As a non-profit we put almost all of our funds towards the event we host that year - with only a small operating fund forwarded to the following year. The reality is that we use 100% of early membership registrations to fund the convention that year and this is why we have always had our policy regarding refunds.

If you are interested in more details on our spending, we will address this further during a segment on Furry Weekend At-Home.

Lastly, we have received questions on stipends which are given out by our organization and want to clarify their purpose. Our executive staff and directors have twice received stipends (out of 15 years) after completing a successful convention year. Stipends are given when the organization is capable of doing so, and due to these unprecedented circumstances stipends for 2020 are not even a consideration.

These stipends are not a salary, but are meant to help alleviate out of pocket (and non-reimbursable) costs spent volunteering so much of their time for FWA. These costs would include things like supplies, food for volunteers, and other small expenses that do not get filed for reimbursement.

Directors would have received less than \$20 a week for year round volunteering with FWA. Our directors freely choose to spend money on donations, purchases, and supplies for FWA out of the goodness of their hearts and this stipend only covers a small amount of these expenses. We wish we could do more for our Directors, Coordinators and all staff.

We know that some of you have asked about the future of FWA. We are doing our best to ensure that we can continue to engage and provide for the furry community past the COVID-19 pandemic. We are full steam ahead for Furry Weekend Atlanta 2021, The Enchanted Forest, and we can't wait to see you all there!



Tiger Paw
CEO - Furry Weekend Atlanta, Inc.



Tiger Nick
COO - Furry Weekend Atlanta, Inc.