Dear parents and guardians of PWILD participants,

Our names are Kaela Basmajian and Luca Dingman, and we are the current Program Directors of Project WILD (informally known as Klaudia Cabinlés). We’re both rising seniors and are ecstatic to have your child join us on Project WILD! We want to be completely transparent with you all, as you are being so generous in letting your kiddos leave home a week early, so we have composed a guide on everything there is to know about the trip.

Before we begin, we ask **that this information not be given to the participants**. There are parts of the PWILD trip that are detailed in this email that we reserve as surprises for the incoming first-years to make the trip fun and exciting. These surprises are meant to build community, memories, and friendships. If you were to show this email to your child, you may ruin the surprise for them and other students on the trip. In the event that you do decide to show this email to your child, we ask that they do not reveal these surprises to any of the other first-years. A separate email will be sent to your child with all of the information they need to know.

### Trip Timeline and Logistics

**Entry Testing**

All students need to complete an entry test when they arrive at Duke. Entry tests will be done on West Campus at Penn Pavillion. We expect the testing process to be a smooth and quick one and it should take less than thirty minutes - hopefully closer to ten.

Students should sign up for an appointment on August 9 using the following link:

https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/StudentEntryTesting@ProdDuke.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/

After completing their entry test, students can check in with East Campus Housing to move in. You will be able to change your appointment date and time if needed. A parking pass will be sent to you shortly before your appointment date.

**Arrival to Duke on August 9th**

Your child should arrive in Durham/Duke between 9am and 3pm. Here's how the different arrivals will be handled:

- **If we're picking up your child from the airport:** If your student is flying into RDU, there will be a student staff member waiting in baggage claim for them with a PWILD sign! From there we will shuttle your child and their luggage to Duke’s campus. *We will have flight numbers so we can track everything and adjust pickup accordingly if there are any delays*

- **If your child is being dropped off at campus:** Your first stop should be at Penn Pavillion on West Campus to complete baseline entry testing. After testing, head to the first parking lot on Brodie Gym Drive (this is a street off of Markham, one of the four streets enclosing East Campus). There will be lots of PWILD folks there ready to greet you starting at 10:00am! From there we will help your student check in with housing to move into their dorm.
• **If we're picking your child up from a hotel:** We'll text your child to figure out what time they want to be picked up. We might modify the time slightly to more efficiently pick up your child and other participants. We'll take all of their luggage with us!

**Luggage**

Here's how bringing your child's luggage to Duke should work:

• On August 9th, your child should only bring the absolute essentials for PWILD -- Don't worry, a packing list will be provided as guidance. Ideally, your child's items should fit inside a single large suitcase (or luggage of equal size). Your child will be able to store their suitcase inside of their dorm room on campus.

• At the end of the program, you and your child will have the opportunity to move the remainder of their belongings into their dorm room. Official move-in day for all first-years is August 17th. More information will be communicated by the Office of New Student Programs, so keep an eye for official emails from them or check their website.
  ○ **Exception:** If you, the parents/guardians, cannot meet your child with their belongings, please have your child let us know and we will work something out.

**August 9th**

On the first day, we will play games on the quad until everyone arrives. We will then divide everyone on the trip into groups of ten (typically 7-8 first-years with 2-3 trained upperclassmen). These will be the “crews” your child moves through the trip with -- these groups will camp, climb, swim, and hike together.

We will then spend the rest of the evening on Duke's campus, finalizing gear preparation for the coming week. This time includes checking personal and group gear, team bonding activities with each crew, and the opportunity to learn and practice the outdoors skills they'll need over the coming week. Additionally, there will be some downtime for crew members to foster relationships with each other.

**August 10th-15th**

Following the first day of preparation, incoming first-year students will be exposed to a range of experiences including hiking through the Duke Forest, yoga in the Duke Gardens, swimming at Eno River State Park, stargazing at the Duke Teaching Observatory, and learning to rock climb at Duke's indoor climbing wall. Additionally, Project WILD is partnering with several of Duke's most-loved professors to provide guided hikes through local parks and nature preserves. There will be several nights of outdoor camping, and community service opportunities to help maintain local hiking trails. It's unfortunate that our program is going to be unlike any other in Project WILD history... but it's also going to be unlike any other Project WILD in history, and we're very excited about the week we have planned for your child!

**Duke Move-In on the 17th**

Students will return to their assigned dorms following the final night of programming, Sunday August 15th. The official first year move-in is August 17th, which allows your student a day to rest and recharge in order to ease the process of moving in and adjusting to campus life. While you and your child can move in the remainder of their belongings on the 16th (one day early! woohoo!), we recommend you wait until the 17th because:
1. Your child will be tired and smelly (after camping for up to 4 days straight!) and will just want to shower, eat, and sleep; and
2. On the 17th, FACs (First-Year Advisory Counselors) will haul all of your child’s stuff to their rooms for you (aka you don't have to carry your child’s mini-fridge up three flights of stairs).

If you have any additional questions about moving in, please contact those listed in the **Location and Emergency Duke Contact** section below.
Safety of your Child on the Trip

Staff Training and Certification
Project WILD prioritizes safety for participants and staff above all else and has had over four decades of experience running our program. We have 44 trained staff members (Duke upperclassmen), all of whom are CPR/First Aid certified, and they will help safely facilitate your child’s experiences over the course of the week.

In addition, our staff have also participated in a semester-long Duke course on outdoor experiential education, during which they learned about and practiced the skills needed to foster a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment. Furthermore, we hold a mandatory multi-day staff training for all of our staff prior to the start of the program when we will review all of these important concepts and skills.

In terms of transportation, each crew will have its own van to aid them in travelling around Durham. All drivers have been licensed for a minimum of three years, passed a background check, and have successfully been certified through the university’s defensive driving program. Instruction includes lessons on safe driving practices and Duke’s additional safety policies, as well as practice behind-the-wheel with an instructor.

Phone Policy and General Safety
Even though Project WILD is operating out of Durham this summer, one of our goals is still to help incoming first-year students distance themselves from their phones and social media to engage more meaningfully with their fellow crew members. To that end, there will be times when we will ask your child to leave their phone with their crew leaders during certain activities. With regard to safety, each crew leader will still have a cell phone on them to use in the event of an emergency, and your child will know where and how to access both their crew leaders’ phones and their own cell phones if needed. All of this will also ensure that Duke, through the office of New Student Programs, is able to get in touch with staffers and participants at all times. Additionally, staffers will check-in regularly with the Program Directors to make sure the crew is doing well. Lastly, your child will be given a whistle to wear at all times, which can be blown in the event of an emergency in order to alert crew leaders so they can help.

Medical Treatment
Project WILD will be operating in the Raleigh-Durham triangle area for the duration of this year’s program, enabling swift transportation in the event of an emergency to world-class medical institutions in the area (including Rex Hospital, Wake Med, UNC Hospital, and of course Duke Hospital). Duke Student Health is also available for non-emergency treatment. In either case, your child’s designated Emergency Contact(s) will be notified.

Emergency Duke Contacts
If you need to get in contact with your child due to some emergency during the trip, you can contact the following people:

● New Student Programs
  Email: studentorientation@duke.edu
work: 1+ (919) 684-3511

- **Jordan Hale, Associate Dean / Director of New Student Programs**
  Email: jordan.hale@duke.edu
  Phone: 1+ (919) 684-8573

- **Carina Carpenter, Assistant Director and Project WILD Advisor**
  Email: carina.carpenter@duke.edu
  Phone: 1+ (513) 379-1231

If Jordan and Carina are unavailable, please contact DUPD or the Dean On-Call:

- **Duke University Police Department (DUPD)**
  non-emergency number: 1+ (919) 684-2444

- **Dean On-Call Pager**
  1+ (919) 970-4169

After contacting any of the above numbers, we (the Program Directors) will be notified and will get in touch with your child. Your child will then call you, using either their cell phone or a staff member’s cell phone. Please note that this process may not be immediate, and we’re thankful for your patience.
Selected Activities Overview

Rock Climbing
Each crew will have one day of indoor rock climbing at the Wilson Gym climbing wall, which is managed by Duke’s Outdoor Adventures (OA). The wall is staffed by our two Climbing Directors, who are both paid climbing instructors through the OA program, as well as a non-student, Duke administrator to supervise all activity at the wall. These individuals will be in charge of safety for both staff and participants at the wall. Belay-certified Project WILD staffers will also be at the wall to help the crewlings with their climbing and to assist the Climbing Directors.

In terms of gear, participants will be given proper equipment, including safety harnesses and climbing shoes, to wear while rock climbing. Every child’s safety gear will be looked over by a minimum of two program staff members before they are permitted to begin climbing. As with every activity on the trip, your child will be able to choose their level of participation. There is no penalty nor judgment for anyone who decides not to participate.

OA policy requires all minors using the wall to provide a parent-signed waiver. Please fill out the attached waiver and return to us, so OA has it on file, should your child choose to climb.

Water Sports: Canoes and Standup Paddle-Boards
Each crew will also have an opportunity to go canoeing and stand-up paddle boarding. As with climbing, this activity will be supervised and assisted by Outdoor Adventures. OA will provide gear, safety equipment, and basic instruction on how to control the respective boats. For safety reasons, all participants will be required to wear a life jacket regardless of swimming ability. In terms of location, these water sports will happen on the Eno River, which is a smooth and safe environment to learn how to canoe and paddle board.

Solos
Modeled directly from Outward Bound (https://www.outwardbound.org/), this experience is designed to give participants the chance to take some personal time to think and reflect before entering one of the most challenging experiences of their lives – their first year of college. Each crew is assigned a designated time of the trip and a less-trafficked area of Eno River State Park for their solos to avoid any unwanted visits by other crews or hikers. The crew leaders will set up a base camp, then select small, individual sites nearby for each participant. These sites are chosen to be “a whistle’s distance” away from the crew leaders’ base camp, so the crew leaders will be able to hear and respond to a participant if there is an emergency. Each participant is then given a campsite to themselves, where they may choose to spend up to six hours alone. They are given a notepad and pen, so they may write, journal, and draw; they are also encouraged to take with them anything they might want or need from their packs. Every few hours, crew leaders will make rounds and quietly check on each participant to ensure they are safe and secure. The crew leaders will also deliver the participants full meals and other necessities throughout the day as needed – solos are not about survival.
Participants are in no way required to participate in solos. Each participant has full choice over their involvement. They may choose to opt out entirely, to participate in full, or to divide their time between base camp and their solo site as they feel comfortable. Detailed information about the solo experience will be sent to your children in an email closer to the trip, so they have time to reflect on how they want to spend this time. There is no penalty nor judgment for participants who decide to not participate in solos. For those who opt out, they will still be given a notebook and encouraged to take some time apart from the crew leaders (but still in basecamp) in order to reflect.

We understand that it can be concerning to imagine your child in solitude in the woods, but we assure you that your child will be safe. We train our staff extensively for this experience, and we have safety protocols in place to ensure quick, informed, and proactive responses should anything happen. Our solo sites have all been scouted to ensure their safety -- both from environmental hazards (bees’ nests, dead trees, etc.) and from other through-hikers. Furthermore, the solo sites have been selected to be near at least one road so that we may respond to an emergency with the utmost speed, while preserving the isolation of the experience.

For many participants, solos are the most formative and precious part of the Project WILD trip. Time for reflection has become increasingly rare in our fast-paced, highly-connected world, especially during the first year of college. With everything to explore and learn in classes and activities, first-years often forget to look inward at their values and who they are becoming. Solos were thus designed to give your children time to reflect on what is truly important to them, so that they may enter Duke with a clear vision of who they want to be and what they want to do. We hope that the experience of solos – the unlimited, unrestricted space to explore their own identities – inspires them to continue to reflect throughout their freshman year, college, and life beyond.

Again, all of this information will be released to the participants in an email before the trip. Please do not show them this email.

Lastly, here is a great article by Outward Bound describing solos. We highly recommend that you read it because it will provide more information on the experience, the philosophies behind the experience, and its benefits.

https://www.outwardbound.org/blog/what-is-solo/
PWILD Philosophies

Challenge by Choice
Our program has several philosophies, which will be revealed to your children to help with group dynamics for the trip, but the most important and most relevant to you as parents is Challenge by Choice. While the program seeks to expand the horizons and capabilities of participants and staff, we make it very clear that no one ever has to do anything they don't want to do or are uncomfortable with doing. Whether it's rock climbing, sharing stories about your life experiences, or anything in between, we allow participants to engage in the trip as much as they are comfortable and no more. For some first-year students, their experience on Project WILD may be nothing out of the ordinary, for a few it may be the first time they've ever slept outside, and for many it's somewhere in between. We want you to know that our staff is composed of students just like your children; we all remember what our first trip was like, the high points and the low points, and we will do our best to talk with participants and understand any concerns.

In Closing
We understand this email contains a ton of information and that you may have unanswered or follow-up questions. We encourage you to email us for clarification, as it is important to us that you understand what this trip will entail for your children.

Thank you for reading the whole email; we know it was a marathon. We are so incredibly excited to meet all of your kids, and we hope that after our program you will all be hearing about what an awesome experience they had!

Kind regards,

Kaela and Luca
Program Directors, Project WILD