



Friends,

**We have just enjoyed a wonderful event – Skyline’s Tour de Food. It was our fifth annual Tour, and it will be – at least for now, in its current form – the final one.**

The Tour de Food welcomed a few dozen participants in its first year, then grew into an event for a couple hundred folks over the following years. The response from participants has been overwhelmingly positive, even with a couple of literal and figurative bumps on the road. We had the freezing rain of the 2014 event to contend with, and the Taco truck which broke down and never made it in 2016. Nevertheless, we had hundreds of cyclists safely negotiate roads of varying quality with only a couple of falls and one or two scraped elbows.

The farmers and artisans with whom we partnered have become terrific friends to Skyline, and for some of them, the opening of their places to our participants represented a courageous and new move. We are thankful to them all for joining in the adventure.

Skyline’s maintenance and kitchen staff outshone their typically wonderful efforts and results, and the Tour de Food loomed large on our calendar as a day for them to show off their talents to great effect.

Our volunteers have been indefatigable. From food preparation to writing and proofing maps; from installing road markers to fetching purchases: Skyline called for and was answered with an immense wave of kindness and generosity of time. The joy with which our volunteers have given their energy to this event is an extraordinary blessing.

Behind all of this has been Shana Henry, Skyline’s Program Director & Volunteer Coordinator. As her spouse, I have some bias here, but Shana’s efforts and gifts to establish and grow this event are the kind of feat that can only be accomplished when held together by immense personal passion. And Shana’s passion for local food economies and community building is unrelenting.

All so good! Why give it up?!?

Well, we decided a few weeks ago that this would be our final Tour de Food, in the context of one of those “good problems to have...”. When we started the Tour de Food in 2012, our summer camp registrations were a steady 250-ish per year. In 2016 we reached, after consistent growth, just over 600 registrations. With that comes a much larger load before, during and after each summer camp season.

The size and timing of the Tour de Food event is too big, at the wrong time. Our post-summer work and our pre-summer planning, not to mention our busy fall season of retreat groups, all compete for our finite capacity. And of course, the Tour de Food's timing is seasonally necessary.

So it may be that we push through this current period of growth to a place where we have additional staff and volunteer resources, and can return to the Tour de Food in a way that doesn't weigh down the achievement of our primary purpose (camp!). In the meantime, we will certainly be developing a new Fall event, which will accompany our Winter Fun Day (February) and Open House (May) as days in which we invite you all to come and bless this beautiful place with your presence.

Thank you to all who have made the Tour de Food a successful event; it's a nice thing to be able to end on a high note.

With thanks,

Matt Henry,

Executive Director

September 30, 2016