



December 9, 2020

Dear Family and Friends:

Last March, we never could have foreseen that the coronavirus was just the beginning of the sudden and unprecedented changes we were to make in our home, school, and work lives. Over the next weeks and months, we were repeatedly jolted by witnessing and experiencing worldwide chaos, upheaval, injustice, grief, and despair. We did our best to hold on, struggling to make sense of what was happening, coping and adapting, personally and collectively, while knowing there were no complete, clear answers.

And we did hold on. Throughout this incredibly difficult period, we have come together as a community in ways that show an unwavering commitment to what we value and what sustains us. There was never a doubt in our minds, as we quickly changed to remote learning and sheltered in place, that the core foundations of a Studio School education would prove to be vital: *the value of meaningful relationships, the important connection of the student and the teacher, the continued emphasis on both the individual and the group, coupled with children of all ages learning from each other, and the participation and partnership of parents and families.*

As the weeks and months have passed, the Studio School Approach has proved to be an excellent foundation for navigating the changes put before us. From March until today, our teachers have helped the children process the overwhelming reality and listened carefully to their perceptions and understanding of what they were experiencing inside. Impressively, the students have shown deep commitment to their schoolwork and have been incredibly creative in channeling their powerful feelings into projects, community events, and social activism.

During this seemingly endless time of uncertainty and change, the children continue to respond with resilience and courage. Shared experiences with teachers and one another have fostered valuable, precious inner resources for the children: hope, strength, empathy, perseverance, curiosity, originality, creativity, and drive. This is what we mean when we say, "*A Studio Education is from the Inside Out.*"

Our dedicated and tireless staff has risen to the considerable and unforeseen challenges this year and has made our successful return to school a reality. We opened on schedule in September and have consistently maintained in-person and hybrid learning in a safe and healthy environment. I am in awe of how well this school year is progressing. So many parents have remarked to me that returning to school has made a profoundly positive difference in their child's mood and outlook. Life and laughter have filled our building again.

This year has been extraordinary in a fiscal sense as well. In a normal, non-COVID year, tuition alone covers about 70% of the school's annual budget. We rely on meeting the remaining 30% through donations and fundraising events. Each year, your generous contributions support all areas of the institution, including academics, the arts, teacher training and development, operations, and financial aid, all of which are essential for maintaining and augmenting the invaluable experience that comprises a Studio education.

We have had major additional and unexpected expenses related to COVID-19, such as upgrades to our air filtration system, health and safety supplies, additional staffing, construction costs, and A/V equipment to make hybrid learning possible.

So, this year, we must ask you, if you can, to reach deeper. Some in our community are confronting unexpected financial strain; for others, the financial impact of COVID has been less substantial. What we ask is that everyone give to the best of their ability -- and for those with more capacity, we ask that you make the Studio School even more of a priority in your giving this year. Every contribution, small or large, helps us reach our goal of 100% participation from our community.

We are so grateful for the families and friends who have cared and partnered with us in our mission. In these difficult and tumultuous times of 2020, and with the unpredictability of what the future holds, your staunch support has shown a commitment beyond what we could have imagined. Your Annual Fund gift directly supports every student, instilling the core values of a Studio School education.

This year has shown that with strong vision and community support, we can thrive through change and imagine a path forward for progress and well-being. I look forward to our continued partnership as we work together for the bright future of our students and our community.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet C. Rotter".

Janet C. Rotter
Head of School

P.S. Donate now at studioschoolnyc.org or mail a check payable to:
The Studio School, 117 West 95th Street, New York, NY, 10025