

Yes! And....Collaborative Arts Summer 2020

How did we make the decision regarding virtual summer programming?

First-- not easily. Summer Theatre Camp is our marrow. We have been offering opportunities for young people from all over the Philadelphia area to come together, sweat, learn, create friendships and art since 1998. We love what happens when a group of kids meet themselves and others at the juncture of their imaginations, skill and will. Plus, it's just tons of fun-- and if there is something we could all use right now it is fun.

The foundation of our work and mission is to create the space for young people to collaborate together and the foundation of healthy collaboration is safety. [The CDC guidelines](#) as well as their [Decision Tree](#) lay out all the safety procedures and protocols required to minimize risk. Staggered arrival times, taking temperatures and asking questions before entering, each person having their own supplies, maintaining social distancing, intense and constant disinfecting and managing of personal hygiene, air flow... we could put all of these protocol in place, and we would, if we thought this would make that collaborative space safe enough.

Much of the research about how the Covid-19 Virus is spread talks about some important factors. [This article from NPR](#) (link) talks about "time, space, people, place". Essentially that " The more *time* you spend and the closer in *space* you are to any infected people, the higher your risk. Interacting with more *people* raises your risk, and indoor *places* are riskier than outdoors." So again, if we could spend more time outside, with a smaller group of kids for a shorter amount of time we could mitigate some of those risks.

There are two more main factors that we considered in making our decision. The first is the example and studies that show how choirs and religious services increase the risk of infection exponentially. Singing together means breathing deep and this is exactly how the virus spreads. Even choirs that practiced social distancing in rehearsal increased infection rates.

So, no breathing deeply together?

Literally and metaphorically that is what we do. We dance, we move through space quickly, we breathe deeply and project our voices. Even if we put every protocol in place, and diligently follow every recommendation-- will we also not take the deep

breathes? Will we each sit in our own square on the floor, with our own packet of crayons? Avoid connection? Do nothing that would cause our breath to mingle?

Lastly we can't offer everything we want to the young people we serve this summer and so how do we decide which parts we will keep? Yes! And... 's Mission and Core Values are to create the space for young people from a diversity of backgrounds and experiences to learn from and about each other and themselves using the collaborative arts. The space required to take those risks- to share yourself, your ideas and dreams- must first be safe physically and emotionally. We have come to the conclusion that the space we can create online is much more conducive to that process, with all of the factors before us. Over the last three months, in Studio Class and our Shadow Company program, we have developed lessons, structures and tools to enable young people to connect, collaborate and create together. Sharing the weight and the buoyancy of creating something new out of our individual and collective experiences. This summer our goals will be to continue that same mission in a new way, while we wait for the day when we are able to be together in real time, space, people and place.

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