

## **Our Position on Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the health of STRIDE**

Like most non-profits and many small businesses, STRIDE has been hit pretty hard by the current pandemic situation. All of our programming involves transformative in-person experiences and we've had to cancel everything to meet the state and federal mandates for non-essential business. I hope this message will bring clarity for you to understand what we're prioritizing and how our staff and budget are directly impacted.

The world we know has changed. But STRIDE staff is facing adversity and will overcome it through the same principles we teach to all of our participants: STRIDE Creed (Condensed): *I will ...always stay positive. I will not say or think the words "I can't"....I will ...have strong character. If I fall, I will get up.... I will be there to lift (teammates)physically and emotionally. I know that what I do reflects on STRIDE, my parents, and my community who support me.*

I did not furlough any staff. Megan, Pat and I work remotely, while Joe continues to maintain our office by working there alone. As you probably know, we operate on the good graces of individual donors and fundraising. During this time, we had to cancel the Great Race, and reinvent the upcoming 5K race to become virtual.

We have been awarded the PPP Cares Act Loan for 60 days Payroll with thanks and help from Pioneer Bank.

There has never been a more important time to get our message out, and I believe it resonates with these times. During this temporary hiatus from programs, our STRIDE team is continuing to work, plan and prepare for future programs and events. Stay tuned here weekly to see what we're up to! We are adapting! As we move into the new normal, we are finding ways to keep our teams and activities together.

**Now comes the hard part.** Unfortunately, we'll be doing this important work with a much smaller budget than ever before. Our team will focus on the programming we can count on in 2020-21, including all of our online initiatives as well as our fall in-person experiences. That same team will also help position us for success in 2021.

The good news is that I started this organization with a paid staff of **zero** for 23 years. Now with a small and mighty team of four, I am very familiar with the work it takes to build from the ground up.

I have instilled a frugal approach to our organization for all of us, and we have operated for years with little overhead, counting on in-kind donations, and spend-thrift approach to keep our programs vast with a modest budget. I am honored to do this work alongside such a talented group of people! We will survive!

Mary Ellen Whitney, CEO