

March 25, 2020

To our Sitar Community,

I know we are lifting one another up with our loving community at this difficult time. I am also aware that you are extremely busy, and **I respectfully ask that you read and respond to the information below**, as it will allow us to communicate more effectively with you in the future.

We wish you and your loved ones well-being and peace during this uncertain and tumultuous time. We remain interconnected through thoughtfulness, strength, and hope—now and always.

With loving gratitude,

Maureen L. Dwyer
Executive Director

UPDATES ON POTENTIAL RE-OPENING

DCPS has announced that they will remain closed until April 24th and re-open on April 27th. **Sitar will follow the DCPS schedule if it aligns with public health officials' recommendations.**

Spring Semester

Public health recommendations permitting, Sitar staff will return on Monday, April 27th and we will open for **DAILY AFTERCARE ONLY** on Tuesday, April 28th.

As DCPS is not restarting until one week before Sitar's Arts Afterschool Spring Semester classes end, we will not resume our weekly arts classes and lessons for the spring semester. **If you have questions or concerns**, please email communications@sitarartscenter.org and we will make sure that the best person to respond gets in touch with you in short order.

Distance Art Education

While Sitar's facility remains closed, we are planning to offer opportunities to our community members to stay connected and continue to receive art classes. These will be open to our Sitar community, but in our enduring interest to provide equitable access, we need to know the current technology capabilities of our community, so we know how best to proceed.

Participating in this **QUICK SURVEY** would greatly help us determine what programming we can offer and how.

Sitar Community Virtual Meetings

We miss you and want to know how you are doing. We will host meetings for our various community groups to allow everyone a chance to hear from Sitar staff, hear from their fellow community members, and have their questions answered.

Our community meetings will be held online through Zoom. Community members can connect through a video enabled device using their browser or the Zoom app or they can call in to the conference line provided.

Our initial meetings will be "Town Hall" style to make sure we share information and understand our community's concerns. After we understand our community's needs and interests, we plan to hold regular "Café Sitar" meetings to provide an opportunity for community connection, interaction, and idea sharing. More on "Cafe Sitar" soon!

Town Hall Schedule

Parents and Guardians – Wednesday, April 1 at 6pm

Faculty and Volunteers – Thursday, April 2 at 6pm

Teen Students – Friday, April 3 at 6pm

Café Sitar Schedule

Dates and time to be determined after community input.

Connection information for each will be sent through email to the appropriate community members. If for any reason you don't receive this information by Friday, March 27 please reply to this email with a request for the connection info and state which Town Hall you'd like to attend.

Share Your Art

You don't need to wait for the Town Halls to share what you've been up to or how you're doing. Let us know online today how you've been staying busy. We know that many of you are still creating and producing art during this time and we would love to see what you've been up to.

Post your art on social media using #creativelyconnected and tag us on one or our social media platforms.

Helpful Links

We've received a lot of helpful information over the past few weeks that we'd like to pass on in case it's helpful for any of you.

Technology

- [Free Internet for Qualifying Families](#)
- [Arts Distance Learning from DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative](#)
- [DCPS Digital Learning Site](#)

Food and Nutrition

- [DC Food Project's Emergency Food Access](#)
- [DC Government's Food Resource Site](#)

COVID-19 Health Information

- [DC Health Link: Special Enrollment for COVID-19](#)
- [Advise from the World Health Organization](#)
- [When and How to Wash Your Hands from the CDC](#)

March 12, 2020

Good Afternoon Sitar Families,

There are no known cases of COVID-19 at Sitar, however in an abundance of caution, Sitar Arts Center has made decisions to protect our community of students, parents and volunteers.

Sitar Arts Center will close at the end of the day Friday, March 13th and will reopen Wednesday, April 1st, unless recommendations change from public health experts.

- ***Aftercare at Sitar Arts Center and the Sitar at Takoma Education Campus program will be open today and tomorrow March 12th & 13th.***
- ***All Arts Afterschool & Early Childhood classes are canceled from today, March 12th until March 31st***
- After Friday, March 13th, Sitar staff will be available via email as they will be working remotely
- All March events will be rescheduled

Please be sure to take care of yourselves and stay well. To help prevent the spread of germs, you should:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Stay home from work and school until you are free of fever, signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours and without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medications.

Seek medical attention if you have reason to believe you have been exposed to coronavirus or influenza. Call your healthcare provider before visiting a healthcare facility.

With gratitude,

Maureen L. Dwyer
Executive Director

March 9, 2020

We know that the coronavirus continues to be on the minds of many of our community members. We want to assure you that we are actively working to prevent and mitigate the spread of germs at Sitar and are seeking to share accurate and timely information with our community.

As you may be aware, the District now has at least two confirmed cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

As a result, several schools – [School Without Walls HS](#), Mundo Verde PCS, and District of Columbia International School – were closed today to clean and disinfect their premises as a precautionary measure. None of these schools have reported cases of individuals contracting COVID-19 and the vast majority of DC schools were operating as scheduled.

If DCPS ever closes for COVID-19 related reasons Sitar Arts Center will also close. If Sitar decides to close despite DCPS remaining open we will notify the community through email, social media platforms, and our website.

To prevent the spread of potential illness, students attending classes who exhibit symptoms of illness such as sore throat, fever, vomiting or nausea, will be removed from classes and parents will be called for immediate pick-up. Your student will be monitored by staff until parents/guardians have arrived.

According to the CDC some people are at a higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. This includes:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease

If you a part of a higher risk group the CDC suggestions that you should:

- Stock up on supplies
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others
- Avoid crowds
- Limit close contact with others and wash your hands often

Additionally, Sitar would like to add to this list that you should not worry if you are a volunteer that needs to cancel your class, a parent that can't take their child to class, or a student unable to attend class. Your health is what is the utmost priority.

Students and parents can notify staff they're unable to attend by calling our main line and speaking to the receptionist on duty at 202-797-2145. You can also email Jamie Barnes, Sitar's Registrar and Program Operations Manager at jamie@sitarartscenter.org.

Volunteers that need to cancel a class can contact A. Lorraine Robinson, Senior Director of Artistic Programs and Strategic Partnerships, by phone or email – 202-797-2145, lorraine@sitarartscenter.org.

Prevention is still a priority so the best thing each of us can continue to do is to follow the guidelines provided below by Mayor Muriel Bowser via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

To help prevent the spread of germs, you should:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if you have symptoms of acute respiratory illness.
- Stay home from work, school, and Sitar until you are free of fever, signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours and without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medications.

- Seek medical attention if you have reason to believe you have been exposed to coronavirus or influenza. Call your healthcare provider before visiting a healthcare facility.

Thank you for your help in keeping our Sitar community healthy by sharing the importance of the preventative steps above with your children, students, friends, and family members.

March 6, 2020

We love having a big community and understand that with that gift comes the responsibility to keep our students, parents, faculty, and community friends safe and healthy while at the center.

As of today, there are no confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Washington, DC.

But we are thinking ahead and preparing. One of the ways we help prevent illnesses is by having our cleaning service staff clean and disinfect Sitar more frequently during the cold and flu season. The focus during this time being to disinfect all touchpoints which are any surfaces above the floor, including, but not limited to, restroom surfaces and fixtures, tables, chairs, and doorknobs.

There are a number of things you can do as well to help prevent the spread of germs such as following the guidelines provided below by Mayor Muriel Bowser via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Prevention is our priority at this time, especially during the cold and flu season. Common coronaviruses can cause symptoms similar to a common cold, such as fever, cough, sore throat, and feeling unwell. The symptoms that are currently being seen with “coronavirus disease 2019” (COVID-19) are fever and respiratory symptoms such as cough and shortness of breath.

To help prevent the spread of germs, you should:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if you have symptoms of acute respiratory illness.
- Stay home from work, school, and Sitar until you are free of fever, signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours and without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medications.

Seek medical attention if you have reason to believe you have been exposed to coronavirus or influenza. Call your healthcare provider before visiting a healthcare facility.

Helpful Coronavirus Information Links

[CDC's Coronavirus Situation Summary](#)

[DC Government's Coronavirus Website](#)