



Dear friends of BYs,

This summer, Boston Youth Sanctuary (BYS) has carefully considered what the 2020-2021 school year will look like at BYs given the evolving COVID-19 landscape. As many of us have done, we at BYs have put a lot of thought into our capacity to provide safe, effective care that prioritizes the best interests of the children and families we serve in this new environment.

It is with a heavy heart that we share that **BYS will not be able to reopen in the fall this year and will instead pause programming, effective September 1, 2020, until further notice.**

The health and safety of BYs children, families and staff are our first priority, and, unfortunately, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are unable to responsibly deliver the services we provide virtually or in-person. To provide the quality and depth of services necessary for BYs' unique trauma-informed and community-based model to be effective, BYs requires transportation, group play, individual support, high child to staff ratios, shared community space, and other services that require close physical proximity. As after school providers, these challenges are exacerbated by the lack of certainty about how schools will operate this fall. Given the ongoing pandemic and uncertainty around when it will be safe to gather as a community again, BYs must pause our typical programming to figure out how to adjust our care in this new reality.

While we are on pause, BYs will take this opportunity to rebuild and restructure so that we can come back stronger than ever. We will monitor the COVID-19 environment and reach back out as soon as we know more about reopening. For those of you who refer children to our care, we will not be accepting new referrals until the program is reopened. If you are in need of recommendations for other trauma-informed community resources, please feel free to reach out in the meantime.

Boston Youth Sanctuary (BYS) is meant to be just that--a sanctuary--and we have come to realize that it is only by pausing and taking the time necessary to adjust our model in this new reality that we will be able to be a true sanctuary again in the future.

We greatly appreciate your support and partnership as part of the BYs network and could not do the work we do without you. As we say in our daily closing ritual, *We honor ourselves. We honor each other. We are BYs.* We consider it our honor to partner with each of you and consider you all part of the larger BYs family. We hope to stay connected and partner with you again in the future.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions at jkarp@bostonyouthsanctuary.org.

Stay well and take care,

Jana Karp
Executive Director, Boston Youth Sanctuary