



Dear SSST Families –

As we conclude our twelfth year at South Shore School of Theatre and the second year of pandemic theatre, I could not be more proud of the work that Allison Horváth-Tucker and our amazing team of instructors have accomplished during this trying time. I am always amazed at theatre artists' resilience, but now more so than ever. I have also personally arrived at that stage in many entrepreneurs' journeys at which I realize it is time to move on and hand the reigns over to someone whose pathway is still aligned with the mission of the business. As many of you know, I left my full-time position at Eastern Nazarene College in 2021 and moved to Newport, RI where I now run the theatre program at Salve Regina University. While the logical replacement for my position was Allison (who was working part-time at the college), ENC chose not to hire her despite her knowledge of the students, her technical skills, her advanced educational degrees, and her ability to direct and produce a full season. It was heartbreaking for all of us in the theatre department when ENC hired someone else after Allison made it clear she would not remain hidden about her sexuality and her beautiful marriage to her wife. Since that time, we have been in conversation with each other as well as ENC about the company's future at Cove Fine Arts Center. After many conversations, meetings, and temperature-checking, here is where we stand at this juncture.

I will be stepping down officially as the company's executive director at the end of the 2022 summer programming. Allison will be taking over at the helm as South Shore School of Theatre's executive director and owner. I am so excited to hand the company over to someone who shares the philosophy in children's theatre programming to meet every child where they are, help them achieve something great they can be proud of on and offstage, and give every child a moment in the spotlight. She is more than equipped and knows our families and their needs well. We will be moving on from our relationship with ENC and will begin looking for a new home. I have been grateful to those at Eastern Nazarene College who have supported us over the years and made it possible to grow and flourish.

I leave this position with peace and joy. I started SSST because Quincy families spoke to me about the need for professional, equitable children's theatre programming in the area. I have always been someone to hear about a need and ask if I can make a difference. After five years, we were serving over 150 families in the South Shore area, offering year-long acting, dance, voice, and musical theatre programming, and creating opportunities in technical theatre and leadership skills to teens. When Covid-19 struck, we continued to offer strong and productive quality classes and productions. I think this speaks to the entire community and philosophy we have fostered at South Shore School of Theatre. From families to students to instructors, we all kept our desire to bring theatre to each other and audience members while respecting the necessary safety protocols above all else. On a personal note, I have been moved by the family I gained through this community. Thank you for offering support during the last decade, whether

that be in conversation about social justice work, my PhD experiences, family, or difficult transitions. I am stepping away at the time I know is right, but I know like many of you who have students who have graduated and gone off to college, SSST will always be a home I can return to and that means the world.

Allison will need just as much support as she takes over this business and I know you will offer that in any way you can. She has been the School Director for five years now and has been the operating manager for the last two. I have full confidence that she will seamlessly take the school into beautiful new directions. Nevertheless, she takes over at a time in which we are losing our primary performance and classroom space. The focus for the last couple of months has been to complete the school year's productions and get ready for our exciting summer musicals. In full transparency, we did work on proposals for ENC in an effort to mitigate any disruption to programming during this transition, but unfortunately, none were accepted. She will be actively looking for classroom, rehearsal, and performance space for our fall classes and beyond. We know we are not the only theatre company or children's theatre school who does not have a permanent home, but we are hopeful that the right relationship is out there looking for us just as we are looking for them. Additionally, we will be removing our equipment, set pieces, props, and costumes and looking for storage during this search. I ask boldly yet humbly that if anyone in our SSST family has information about potential spaces for any of the above, please contact Allison.

We have remained strong and together as a company meeting the theatrical education and performance needs of the Quincy area and South Shore because everyone has always assisted in small ways without feeling taken advantage of or being asked to contribute more than offered. Students, guardians, and friends alike have volunteered to make costumes, built and strike sets, donate tools, organize our costume and props rooms, plan parties and more. I know that South Shore School of Theatre can have another successful twelve years if we continue with the same philosophy.

Thank you for the memories. Those who know me best know that's what I treasure in life as a gift above anything else. You have all given me a bounty of gifts and I will forever cherish them.

Thank you for your continued support,
Tara Brooke Watkins, Executive Director, 2010-2022