

March 3, 2020

To the participants of our upcoming Tours and Programs,

First and foremost, we wish to express our enthusiasm and excitement for our 2020 and 2021 special programs. We are confident that each of these programs will operate as planned. Your participation will educate and inspire your students in a marvelous way.

As we are again confronted with a new strain of the flu virus, we believe it is important that we know and teach the facts to our student participants and reassure them and their parents so all can be informed in order to make decisions based on facts rather than fear. That being said, the safety and security of our participants has always been and continues to be our highest priority.

We will monitor and comply with recommendations from government agencies including the Center for Disease Control, World Health Organization, and State Department with regards to the safety of our traveling participants. If a participant or group elects to cancel their tour, they will receive eligible refunds consistent with and as described in the cancellation schedule of the Letter of Agreement. We have and will continue to recommend that participants purchase travel insurance. There are many different companies that offer plans. It is up to each participating group or individual to determine whether or not to invest the additional funds to secure a plan with terms and coverage that would be suitable for them.

It is important that we all understand what we can about the Coronavirus and recognize the present situation for what it truly is and is not. With over twenty-five years of experience in providing music travel programs of this nature, we have witnessed similar outbreaks before. While it is true that each outbreak is unique the patterns are similar. The West Nile virus, the SARS virus, the Bird Flu, the Ebola virus, the Zika virus and today it's the Coronavirus.

To provide some perspective, the 2009 Swine Flu infected over 22 million Americans with over 10,000 deaths. The advice to the public was simply to go about living our lives and be more diligent with our personal hygiene. The vast majority of the population was never at risk of contracting the virus. Interestingly, we have become accustomed to the annual flu and rarely see the statistics associated with infection and death. The CDC reports the following statistics for the common flu in a typical year: 32 to 45 million illnesses, 14 to 21 million medical visits, 310 to 560 thousand hospitalizations and 18 to 46 thousand deaths. The bottom line, according to the CDC, is that the risk of Coronavirus to Americans remains very low. We should continue to be diligent but to go about our lives.

There continues to be no travel restrictions in the USA as well as to most of the world except for a few areas experiencing high levels of infection. Chances of catching the common flu are far greater than this new virus. The CDC along with other government agencies and officials indicate that even if infection were to occur chances are very likely it will cause mild symptoms that can be treated at home.

As parents ourselves, we understand that the health and well-being of our children is paramount. While we are confident that the risk is very low, decisions to travel or participate has always been in the capable hands of parents and administrators. Feel free to contact us with any questions or if you need additional information. The Center for Disease Control at [CDC.gov](http://CDC.gov) will continue to provide updates on the virus. Today it is reporting that over 50% of the cases have recovered so far.