



# CRAFTING AN ASTUTELY CREATIVE CRISIS RESPONSE

*Young Rembrandts CEO and founder highlights brand's response to COVID-19*

As an entrepreneur and a mother, I've learned to expect the unexpected. While a global pandemic was far from the typical roadblock, we've built a team at Young Rembrandts that is willing to adapt and move quickly in a crisis situation. As a childhood art education program, we were concerned about the impact COVID-19 might have on our franchise owners and the business. However, we've implemented a thoughtful alternative with demonstrated success among franchisees, parents and students alike.

## **Going Virtual**

The world we know is changing day-by-day, hour-by-hour. As a franchisor, we have a responsibility to respond and adapt to these new developments and equip our franchisees with the tools they need to properly weather the storm. At Young Rembrandts, most of our franchise owners operate out of elementary schools. So, when schools began to close nationwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we knew we had to move quickly.

When the idea to provide our students with a virtual class option was brought to our team, we were initially hesitant. How would we replicate the experience, the pride point of our program? Our proprietary program was not only designed to teach children how to draw, but to provide our students with a face-to-face, social interaction away from screens every week. Taking our classes online felt contrary to our brand. However, as the reality and gravity of the situation began to sink in, it became clear that a virtual class was the only way to stay connected with our students. We were fortunate to have the necessary resources to get the class up and running quickly, and now, Young Rembrandts students receive a link to a new lesson every week.

With many parents struggling to find resources to keep their children entertained, learning and engaged as they quarantine, we've had a wonderful response to the online classes. The lessons provide fresh, interactive and fun content for children that allows them to continue to develop their fundamental art literacy skills and academic knowledge. Plus, franchise owners nationwide have kept a good number of their students enrolled. That said, we are prepared to revise or change the program entirely. During a time of crises, flexibility is essential and you must

keep a pulse on the needs of your stakeholders in order to provide them with the most up-to-date product or service.



*Young Rembrandt student's art.*

## **Internal Support**

The Young Rembrandts corporate team holds weekly calls with the franchise system to discuss best practices, new programs, additional resources, etc. As the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic became more apparent, we upped the cadence of internal communication.

While it may feel excessive, our owners seem to appreciate the transparency and over communication during times of uncertainty. It is essential that franchisees see the home office as a resource, leader and feel your full support. And, when they feel supported, they will take it upon themselves to use their resources for the betterment of those around them.

For example, our franchisee in Northeast Ohio is offering the 10-week virtual Young Rembrandts course to foster families in Cleveland for free. As she states, the COVID-19 health crisis can be difficult for any child to deal with, but for a child who has already experienced trauma; this time can be especially triggering. In Denver and Atlanta, our owners are offering the Young Rembrandts program to senior living facilities so that those who are feeling isolated or disengaged have an interactive and creative outlet. These acts of goodwill amongst many others, remind us that even during uncertain times, we are all in this together.

In sum, the uncertainty of life as a franchisor can be intimidating. However, if you

are willing to evolve, communicate and act quickly in a crises situation, you have a better chance of coming out stronger on the other end. At Young Rembrandts, we appreciate our owners, parents and students who have shown compassion and resilience during this difficult time and we look forward to continuing to provide a program that adds color and light to the world.

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Link to article: <https://bit.ly/2Y6jn0f>