

*Welcome to*



**Sweet Water**

**DANCE & YOGA**

# Who We Are & What We Do

Sweet Water Dance & Yoga is a mission-driven wellness center serving the South Bronx since 2014 with services and experiences that are inspiring, impactful and effective at improving the quality of life for our diverse and largely underserved community.

Over 700 clients pass through our doors each week (pre-Covid), served by a staff that has garnered near five-star customer service ratings across all platforms.

In a city where 60% of yoga studios, and 80% of dance studios didn't survive, Sweet Water used every ounce of Bronx grit to stand as one of the few surviving studios.



*Welcome to Sweet Water*

# ● Our Mission

Sweet Water's mission is to develop and support a culture of wellness in the underserved South Bronx community through culturally relevant and effective services, events and experiences that center wellness through movement, expression, connection and joy.

This mission informs every point of contact with us: from the design of our space, to our services and products, to our policies. Every aspect of our business seeks to affirm our clients' value and agency.

*Driven to Heal Our Community*



# ● Our Mission

Continued. . .



Wellness is Social Justice.  
In all things,  
Sweet Water purposefully  
centers the wellness  
needs of BIPOC, LGBTQ,  
migrant, marginalized, and  
underserved people.



At Sweet Water, customer service is not just about ensuring the next sale. For us, customer service is an exercise in affirming the world we wish to see. Every interaction is an opportunity to affirm our clients' dignity and wholeness with thoughtful policies and empowering interactions.

# Our Clients, Our Community: Our Bronx

- The Bronx is the youngest, and the least healthy of all of New York State's 62 counties, for 10 years & counting.\*
- Located in the poorest congressional district in the country, the South Bronx is mired in generational poverty and trauma.
- Rates of food insecurity, asthma, and diabetes top nationwide charts.
- Chronic stress caused by poverty, food insecurity, trauma & social injustice keep the Bronx suffering.

**The Bottom Line:**

*The borough on top is last in health*

\*According to a study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

# In plain black & white...

- *Living in poverty and with chronic stress triggers a survival response in the body that limits access to our full capacity.*
- *Living in survival and chronic stress stagnates quality of life and creates patterns and cycles that can feel inescapable, even across generations.*

*The Bronx needs Healing*

# How We Heal

*Somatic practices that deliver*

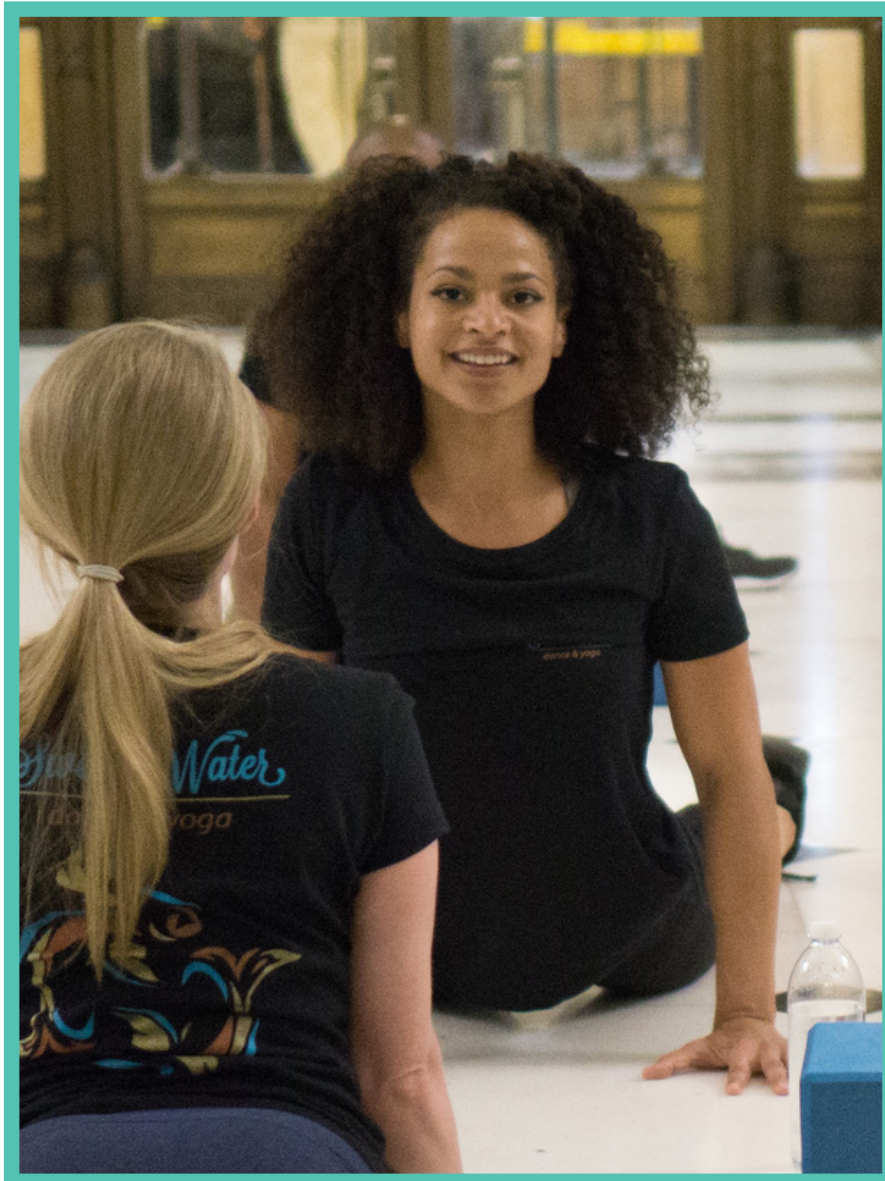


*Studies show that:*

- Somatic practices like yoga and meditation can heal the body and mind, reduce inflammation, repattern the nervous system and reverse the damage caused by chronic stress and adverse life experiences.
- Dance can improve brain function, heal depression, prevent neurological and cardiovascular disease, and create joy and fellowship rooted in wellness.

*A culture of wellness changes lives.  
At Sweet Water, our offerings have  
been changing lives for seven years.*

# Enter Sweet Water



*A space for Community, wellness, connection and joy*



# THE PROBLEM

*The ties that bind us*

## **PROBLEM 1: "Yoga? Thats downtown, right?"**

While we have a few gyms, wellness services just didn't exist in the Bronx. Wellness was not a consideration. You would have to travel into Manhattan for a quality class.

## **PROBLEM 2: "Yoga is for rich skinny white ladies in \$100 Yoga Pants."**

Wellness is commodified and expensive, leading to marketing and representation that centers whiteness and wealth. BIPOC and poor people feel disenfranchised from wellness practices, even those native to their ancestry. They don't identify & can't afford it.

## **PROBLEM 3: "I'm not a gym person."**

Fitness and wellness are conflated, and fitness, which is often entrenched in toxic perfectionism and aggression, doesn't address or even attempt to heal chronic stress or improve resiliency.



# The Solutions

*Wellness by Us for Us*

## **SOLUTION 1: "Yoga, in the Bronx, by Bronx folks, for Bronx folks"**

For 7 years, Sweet Water has operated out of a historic building between Yankee Stadium and the Bronx Courts. Instructors and staff live locally and model culturally relevant wellness from within our shared experience.

## **SOLUTION 2: "Representation, Competitive Prices & Accessible Services"**

Sweet Water's high-quality services are delivered by instructors that look, feel and sound like us, because we are US. Our services are competitively priced for the NYC market with reduced pricing available to SNAP recipients, public school teachers and social workers. Free and donation-based classes and community events are integrated into the regular schedule for broader access.

## **SOLUTION 3: "A Bronx Culture of Wellness"**

Rather than focusing on appearance, wellness consciousness focuses on developing resilience through consistent stress management and effective self-care. While Sweet Water offers opportunities to develop fitness, our focus is on healing chronic stress, developing resilience, and delivering an improved quality of life.



# Committed to The Bronx...

*We Can't Stop, We Won't Stop*

Through our not-for-profit arm, Bronx Kids Boogie, Sweet Water holds free community wellness events and actively fundraises, using our platform to bring awareness about, and resources to, wellness inequity in the Bronx.

# Bringing feel-good and healing

Clients come to Sweet Water because they feel centered, valued and served.

Their experiences are affirmed and met with effective tools that build resilience.

Feeling at home, they are growing, sweating and laughing in community.



**Our clients feel good  
- and there is nothing  
more healing than  
feeling good.**





# Sweet Water

**DANCE**

# Our Services





# Sweet Water

YOGA

# Our Services





# Sweet Water

BOOT CAMP

# Our Services





# Sweet Water

ROOTS & RIVERS KIDS

# Our Services







# Sweet Water

## YOGA TEACHER TRAINING

*Our  
Services*

Since the addition of our Yoga Alliance approved 200 Hour Yoga Teacher Training in 2018, Sweet Water has led six all-POC cohorts and graduated more than 60 new Bronx-based yoga instructors.

With their training complete, our graduates are helping to heal their communities, armed with restorative and trauma-sensitive techniques that are proven effective in helping to heal chronic stress disorders prevalent in our community.



# OUR IMPACT



Since opening, Sweet Water has served our special brand of wellness to over 7000 unique clients, across 5324 families and households. Over 4100 of these families are in the Bronx alone.

That is 4100 households of primarily brown people, primarily immigrants, primarily lower to middle-class incomes that have benefitted from the wellness practices we've made available. Over 4100 Bronx families that trust us with their family's wellness.

# 2020



On March 16th, 2020, in response to the Coronavirus pandemic, New York State mandated that all non-essential businesses close their doors.

As a result of local mandates, Sweet Water remained closed for 13 months, reopening in April 2021.

**During its closure, Sweet Water lost close to 500K in revenues.**

While Sweet Water was able to obtain some relief through Federal, State and Local disaster recovery programs, such relief resulted in a 566% increase in debt load.

# 2021



Since the pandemic, Sweet Water has availed itself of all available support, and has received business recovery grants of over \$100,000.00.

Additionally, as a result of a recent campaign championed by **Humans of New York** creator, Brandon Stanton, Sweet Water was able to generate over \$100K in sales in 10 days earlier this fall. This campaign alone resulted in global awareness of issues affecting single mothers, Bronx wellness, and Sweet Water itself.

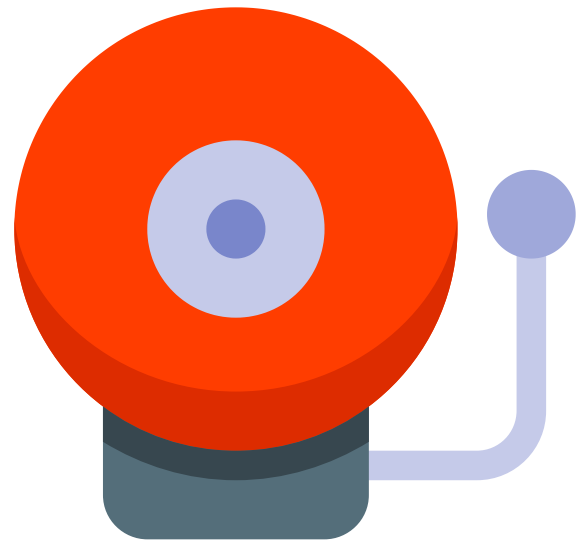
With our now global community of supporters, Sweet Water survived the pandemic, but Covid-safety mandates and licensing requirements have made our current home untenable for us.

# Expansion Plan

After seven years in business, Sweet Water is leaving its home at the Orange Door on Gerard Avenue with an expansion plan that includes:

- Expanding our Children's Program to include Premium Child Care Services
- Relaunching our Virtual Offerings for a now Global Audience
- Launching our Corporate Wellness Campaign
- Relaunching our Wellness Tourism Offerings\*  
\*launched in 2019 & interrupted by the pandemic.
- Launching a lifestyle products brand via an onsite retail store & on e-commerce.
- Developing a Performance Venue for in-house, as well as independent, performances and exhibits.
- Relaunch our Family Wellness Education program through our not-for-profit arm, Bronx Kids Boogie.





# Time to Ring the alarm...

Sweet Water has proven itself a staunch survivor committed to securing its legacy of Bronx wellness for generations to come. To that end, we are seeking leads into:

1) An interim commercial space of 2500 sq. ft. or more, in a well-balanced Bronx location for two years while we develop a permanent location in the Bronx,\*

\*Manhattan locations will be considered as a last resort if and where it makes business & creative sense.

2) Access to investment, financing and/or grants for purchasing land and developing our own building in the Concourse neighborhood, and

3) All the PR, Marketing & Business Consulting required to support the proposed transition and expansion to profitable results.





# At the heart...

*After seven years in business, it is clear that our community is our wealth. It is in service and support of one another that we find access to our greatest potential.*

*As the founder of Sweet Water Dance & Yoga, I know I never thought I would be dedicated to improving health and wellness in my community. I was supposed to be a lawyer! I started out wanting better for myself and my son but ended up doing better for Bronx families. We couldn't be prouder of where we come from, or where we're going!*



# CONTACT

t: 718-992-2484

m: 646-228-0492

c: [yosara@sweetwaterdanceandyoga.com](mailto:yosara@sweetwaterdanceandyoga.com)

[www.sweetwaterdanceandyoga.com](http://www.sweetwaterdanceandyoga.com)



@swdythebronx



@swdyonline







*Thank  
you!*