



Message from the CEO: 82nd Street Academics 2025–2026

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

At 82nd Street Academics, we believe that **Joy is not a byproduct of our work—it is the very heart of it.** Each day, in classrooms, afterschool programs, summer academies, and family gatherings, we see joy unfolding: in a child’s first steps toward reading, in a parent discovering new opportunities for their family, in a teacher helping a student shine. This year, we are placing Joy at the center of everything we do. We call it *Strategic Joy*—love wrapped in strategy—and it will be our compass for 2025–2026.

Joy takes many forms in our community. This year, we are welcoming **new site directors** across many schools—leaders whose creativity, energy, and dedication will strengthen our sites and bring new opportunities for students. We are also forging **new partnerships** with **Concord Education and Vaughn College of Aviation Sciences**. These collaborations will open doors to enriched programs, engaging pathways, and exciting new futures for our families and youth.

To measure what matters most—the social and emotional growth of our children—we are introducing **Hello Insight**, a powerful tool that helps us see how young people are learning to know themselves, build relationships, and make wise choices. This reflects our belief that education is not only about test scores, but about preparing children for life with confidence, resilience, and compassion.

Our partnership with the amazingly wonderful **Jumpstart** is also blossoming. **Jumpstart** brings trained mentors into classrooms, boosting early literacy and creating a workforce pipeline that elevates young adults who serve. This dual impact—stronger readers and stronger community leaders—is what inspires us to say with pride that Jumpstart is now a cornerstone of our early education mission.

And because joy is often sparked by environment, we are thrilled to share that our **main site has been completely refreshed** thanks to the generosity of the **Amazin’ Mets Foundation**. From fresh paint, new furniture and supplies to cutting-edge technology—including interactive **IgniteTables from Hatch**—we have created spaces that are beautiful, modern, and designed for children to thrive.

But joy is not only about what happens inside classrooms. It is also about ensuring families have the supports they need to feel secure and hopeful. That is why we are strengthening ties with **NICE (New Immigrant Community Empowerment), CIANA, Voces Latinas, The Floating Hospital, Metro Health, and the National Association of Social Workers.** Together, we are building a circle of care that includes mental and physical health services, job training with free childcare, immigration legal support, family advocacy, and more. And we are moving these services directly into schools through **school-based MTSS support systems**, so families can find resources where they already feel connected.

None of this would be possible without our **extraordinary team of teachers, teaching assistants, site directors, custodial staff and our leaders.** Their daily dedication is what makes 82nd Street Academics a place where joy is not an accident, but an intentional practice. We are also grateful to the new schools and communities joining our network this year, as we expand our outreach throughout **Jackson Heights and beyond.**

Most of all, we pause to honor the **wonderful families and amazing children** who give us our purpose. You bring us immeasurable joy through your smiles, your laughter, your trust, and your love. It is our greatest privilege to serve you, and in return, you give us strength, meaning, and inspiration. 82SA is not only proud to serve this community—we are profoundly grateful to be shaped by it.

As we step into this new year, I want to emphasize that **Strategic Joy is not just our theme—it is our invitation.** We invite you—families, neighbors, partners, and friends—to walk with us, to share in the celebrations, to add your voice to this symphony of diversity and hope. We are committed to opening our doors wide, making sure that every child and family has a safe, engaging place to learn, grow, and be embraced by community.

The greatest joy is found not in what we accomplish alone, but in what we create together. This year, let us celebrate the children who inspire us, the families who trust us, and the staff and partners who make this vision possible.

With gratitude and joy,
Michael Selkis
CEO, 82nd Street Academics