

# REAL SIMPLE

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John Hancock presents Pivotal Conversations

## Empower Play

With the launch of their Women's Expressive Theater (WET), Sasha Eden and Victoria Pettibone hoped to challenge gender inequality and create more opportunities for women in the arts. But as their successful non-profit organization began to outgrow its makeshift workspace in the bedrooms of their small New York City apartments, it became clear that they were depriving themselves—and WET—of the opportunities needed to thrive.

When a longtime inspiration and advisor, producer Daryl Roth, asked why the women didn't have an office, she not only validated their need for physical space, she also empowered them to have a new level of respect for the work they were doing.

Sasha Eden: "When you're running a non-profit, the whole concept is taking care of a 'bigger picture.' Sometimes you forget that, if you don't take care of the core company *and* yourselves in the process, you cannot support that larger picture."

Daryl Roth: "It's like being a mother and putting your child first. The last thing to get satisfied is yourself. So a physical office didn't feel as important as raising money for the other things WET really needed."

Daryl encouraged Sasha and Victoria to work an office space into their budget, to raise money, and to make it happen. "You deserve an office," she said. "It's time."

Daryl Roth: "My motivation was to help them feel that what they were doing was valuable and honorable. Having an office means hanging up your shingle and putting yourself in business officially. Once you get set up, you can be more powerful—and feel stronger—going forward. The hard part is making that first step and deciding that 'okay, we need this, too.'"

Victoria Pettibone: "What made the difference to us was that the advice came from Daryl, an extraordinary businesswoman who knows the delicacy of our industry. There was a validation that made it feel possible, and a trust that it was good. Once we were given her respect, the next step was manifesting it in an office space—and giving WET a true home."

Savvy bartering skills and the generosity of supporters helped move WET out of Sasha and Victoria's bedrooms and into an incredible professional space. Everyone agrees that the results have been unbelievable for the growing non-profit.



From left to right: Sasha Eden, Daryl Roth, and Victoria Pettibone. Inset: scene from WET's production of "BFF" by Anna Ziegler.



Sasha Eden: "The work tripled in the first month. Our focus—the way we handle our day-to-day, our ability to build a strong support system—is now much more developed so we can better fulfill our goals."

Daryl Roth: "It's been a natural progression; Sasha and Victoria have grown the seeds that they had sowed initially. It feels to me that, everything they were really good at in the beginning, they're even better at now."

WET's world premiere of "Perfect Couple," a play written by Brooke Berman and directed by Maria Mileaf, is running in June and July 2008 at the DR2, Daryl Roth's theater in New York City. For tickets and information, visit [www.wetweb.org](http://www.wetweb.org).

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