

A Walk in the Children's Zone®



An Afterschool Student Indulges His Love of Learning

Taking a walk through the Harlem Children's Zone® on a day in FY 2015, you would no doubt start at our new Promise Academy® I school building and community center in the St. Nicholas Houses. There you would see high-school students in our Bard Early College program analyzing a poem, middle-school students extracting DNA from strawberries, and first graders reading a book with the school social worker about perseverance.

As you step outside to make your way up to the Harlem Armory on 143rd Street, you would stop to admire the newly blossoming bulbs planted by a team of residents and students in our afterschool programs. At the Armory, pre-kindergarten Harlem Gems® would be learning how to play tennis, while gymnasts practice on the balance beam and adventurous young athletes tackle the climbing wall.

At P.S. 133 on 5th Avenue, you would find Peacemakers quizzing elementary-school students for a spelling bee, while a few blocks away at our College Success Office, staff would be busy helping our 881 college students advance toward the ultimate goal for all our 13,083 youth—college graduation. College advisors would be discussing possible majors one-on-one with advisees, while workshops on study strategies, financial literacy, and interview skills take place down the hall.

Swinging down to 117th Street, you would discover pre-K scholars developing hypotheses to conduct their first science experiments, while moms and dads pick out bedtime books to bring home. One block up at TRUCE®, high-school students would be finalizing the layout of the literary magazine as the film club makes edits to a new documentary and the fashion



A Promise Academy Student Blossoms with Individualized Support

club puts the finishing touches on their designs. Across town at the Employment and Technology Center, you would be thrilled to overhear a high-school senior giving his student advocate the good news—he just got a full ride to New York University—while uptown at A Cut Above, middle-school girls learn how to code.

You would see all this and more before reaching Promise Academy II and the newly named Geoffrey Canada Community Center on 125th Street. The middle-school chess team would be plotting their next moves, while the jazz band practices for a performance on the plaza at Lincoln Center and high-school students board a bus for a tour of college campuses. Finally, if you peek inside the gym, you would catch a glimpse of our newest group of parents graduating from The Baby College®—where the journey for our children and families begins.



A Gymnast Takes Flight at the Harlem Armory



An Aspiring Scientist Trains His Focus in the Lab

The Best Prep for College? Going to College.

The best part about going to UCLA was meeting people from Texas, Minnesota, and even other countries like China and Italy. I learned that it doesn't matter where you come from; it's about what you bring to the table. I also took courses in Business and Psychology. Staying in dorms and taking college classes allowed me to get a sense of the college experience and take a big step in preparing for my future.

—Hawa, UCLA Blueprint Summer Program

I always had a fear that I wouldn't be able to relate to other people at college, but at Cornell I made lifelong friends who completely changed how I see things and showed me that getting out of my comfort zone can be good. What I liked the most, though, was the deep thinking in my college-level English course. Now I know that college is the place for me.

—Ashley, Cornell Summer College Program

13,083 Kids—and College Is for Every One

HCZ® is an institution with deep roots in the community and a wide wingspan. During FY 2015, we worked with 26,865 youth and adults across 38 program sites, providing comprehensive services at scale and free of charge. While the breadth of our birth-through-college pipeline is unparalleled, what we have built here in Harlem, in partnership with parents and residents, is even greater—a culture of success in which our kids can excel for generations to come.



An HCZ College Student Gets Help Refining Her Resume

Sustaining this culture takes tireless dedication and strategic evaluation. With our nationally recognized, data-driven model in place, this past year we continued to deepen and strengthen our work. We tracked 600 goals and dug deep to make sure that everything we are doing for our kids helps them edge one step closer to earning a college degree, landing a lucrative job when they graduate, and leading a rich, rewarding life.

Success in College—and Beyond

This past year, we celebrated the graduation of 99 HCZ students from college—70 from 4-year schools and 29 from 2-year schools. In total, our College Success Office worked with 881 HCZ students at 207 colleges and universities across the country, providing academic and personal support, financial guidance, and career readiness workshops and services. We also helped 192 HCZ college students secure paid internships at 67 organizations, giving them an opportunity to build their resumes, make connections, and increase their competitiveness in the job market.



99 HCZ Students Graduated from College in 2015

Across our afterschool programs, 93% of our high-school seniors applied to and were accepted to college. And this summer, we sent 67 high-school students to college-preparatory programs at elite schools such as Cornell University, UCLA, and Carleton College (see sidebar). Students gained exposure to college life and the rigors of college-level coursework while earning college credits, meeting people from all over the world, and building the character and confidence they need to succeed in and beyond college.

The HCZ Pipeline Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

At HCZ, we make the same pledge to every child we serve: *we will do whatever it takes to help you get to and through college.* In 2015, we worked with 1,810 students in grades K–11 at our two Promise Academy Charter Schools and 8,808 students in traditional New York City public schools through our in-school and afterschool programs. That includes 2,728 youth in our Peacemakers Program, which provides all-day in-class support and teaching assistance at the seven public elementary schools in the Zone.

Exceptional education and academic support are at the core of our K–12 programming. To get our students college-ready, we provide individualized, Common Core-aligned academic case management, tutoring, writing instruction, test prep, and help with the college application and selection process. At our two Promise Academy high schools, 96 students in grades 9–11 participated in our Bard Early College program. During FY 2015, the program expanded to offer credit-bearing, college-level courses as well as pre-college courses, enabling our students to save thousands of dollars in tuition later by earning college credits now while still in high school. In addition, 91% of the seniors in our high-school afterschool programs took trips to visit college campuses.

While we provide comprehensive academic support, we also know that the trick to keeping kids engaged is to build on their passions. We offer a phenomenal variety of athletic and enrichment activities taught by specialists with deep expertise and a gift for helping our students tap their potential.

Programs for Every Student’s Passion

- Chess
- Coding
- Karate
- Robotics
- Dance
- Jazz Band
- Fashion Design
- Creative Writing
- Filmmaking
- Yoga
- Gardening
- Cooking
- Tennis
- Soccer
- Lacrosse
- Track and Field
- Golf
- Swimming
- Choir
- Volunteering
- Orchestra
- Theater
- Gymnastics
- Basketball

We also provide character education, family support, and health and social services to help our kids build a strong foundation and develop the grit, perseverance, resilience, and coping mechanisms they need to weather any challenge well into the future.

In nurturing the whole child, the HCZ pipeline adds up to something far greater than the sum of its parts—a whole community of talented young people who share our investment in seeing Central Harlem thrive and can serve as role models for the next generation of HCZ youth.



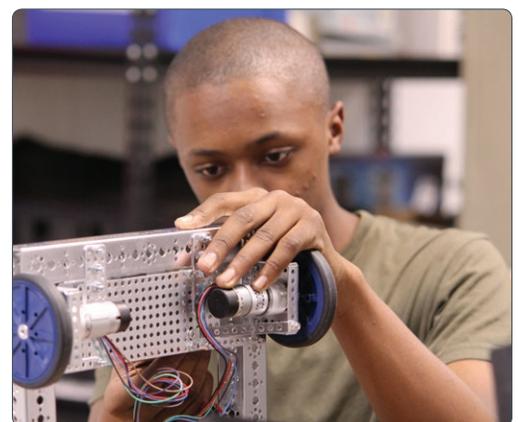
HCZ Students Are Creative...



Competitive...



Collaborative...



and College-ready.

Early Childhood Education: Starting Early, Engaging Families

In 2015, 404 parents and caregivers graduated from The Baby College, our 9-week cycle of workshops offering lessons in infant development, health and nutrition, safety and discipline, and parent-child communication. Since launching in 2000, 5,400 parents have graduated from the program. That means 5,400 kids with a strong start—the oldest of whom are making their way through high school and all of whom reflect our strategic focus on intervening early and engaging a critical mass of children and families.

Partnering with parents and ensuring they receive the support, guidance, and resources they need are critical to our efforts to foster school readiness throughout our early childhood programs—The Baby College, Baby College GRADS, Three-Year-Old Journey, Get Ready for Pre-K, and our four Harlem Gems Pre-K sites. Gems parents spend time in the classroom on “Mommy Mondays” and “Father Fridays,” participate in family music, fitness, and cooking classes, and help their young scholars with homework. This past year, 99.5% of our Gems (201 out of 202) were assessed to be school-ready or better.



Harlem Gems Look Toward Bright Futures on “Career Day”



An HCZ Dad Celebrates Graduation from The Baby College



HCZ’s Family Support Center has helped **1,047** families stay stable and avoid placing their children in foster care since 2010



5,400 parents and caregivers have graduated from The Baby College since its launch in 2000



HCZ’s free Tax Preparation Program helped **3,504** residents earn **\$5.3 million** in tax returns in 2015



19,000 books and **14,000** toys were distributed to HCZ children of all ages during the holidays thanks to Simon & Schuster, Pearson, and Hasbro, Inc.

Geoffrey Canada Community Center: A Symbol of Hope for the Whole Community



In October, HCZ announced the naming of our Promise Academy II school building and community center on 125th Street the Geoffrey Canada Community Center. Since opening in 2004, the building has served as a bastion of learning, a safe haven for children, a resource for families, and a symbol of our investment in the community—not to mention a place of fun, joyful celebration. The Center was packed to capacity at our annual gospel concert in December with 150 students performing for an audience of 675 families and residents.

Geoff’s vision was always to create an organization with the longevity to support a whole community of children. The Geoffrey Canada Community Center is a memorial to all that we have accomplished under Geoff’s leadership and a monument to our continued devotion to realizing this vision. Geoff put it best at the dedication ceremony:

“We’re not going to lose any of these kids. We’re going to save them and, by saving them, we’re going to save America.”

Keeping Harlem Healthy and Strong

At HCZ, we are helping to build a strong, healthy, resilient community in which the safety and well-being of our kids always come first. In 2015, our Healthy Harlem initiative reached scale, engaging over 7,000 students in regular physical activity and nutrition education, including fun activities like “two-bite” taste tests for our Gems and cook-offs for our older students. More than 3,000 adults participated in fitness and cooking classes, support groups, and our farmers markets. And our Food Services team prepared 1.45 million healthy, nutritious meals, all low in fat, salt, and sugar and 96% from scratch.

This summer, 4,000 HCZ youth of all ages competed in Summer Games, our annual track and field competition and, in November, HCZ was represented by nine runners in the New York City Marathon—including our CEO, Anne Williams-Isom.

The hub of our efforts to promote widespread well-being is the Harlem Armory, a 50,000-square-foot athletic facility on 143rd Street. The Amory hosts our HCZ teams and intramural leagues; gives our students the chance to play sports such as tennis, soccer, golf, basketball, gymnastics, baseball, softball, volleyball, lacrosse, and track and field; and features a climbing wall, a batting cage, and free community fitness and cooking classes. The northern anchor in the HCZ network, the Armory also serves as the endpoint of our peace march. This year, after marching 4,000 strong through the streets of Harlem for our 21st annual Children’s March for Peace, students, parents, staff, and residents poured into the space for a pep rally with moving original performances devoted to this year’s timely theme—justice.

Deepening Our Roots in the St. Nicholas Community

2015 marked the second anniversary of our new Promise Academy I school building and community center in the St. Nicholas Houses. The building is a nucleus of activity and a valuable resource for the entire St. Nick community—teeming with nearly 1,000 students each day, plus hundreds of neighborhood children, families, and residents participating in free community classes and events on nights and weekends (see sidebar). To stand before this bright, welcoming state-of-the-art facility presiding over 129th Street as students and professionals funnel in for a day of high-quality education and hard work is to see and feel firsthand the difference that two years can make.



Seedlings in the HCZ Garden

To make sure we are meeting the needs of our most vulnerable families, we have created a St. Nick community advisory board; children who live in the Houses receive a preference in the Promise Academy lottery; and the Healthy Harlem team gives out free produce and information about the vast range of HCZ services at our monthly Healthy Harvests in the St. Nick courtyard.



Healthy Harlem Cook-off

St. Nick by the Numbers

3,158

HCZ children and adults participated in programs and events in the St. Nicholas Houses

1,590

St. Nick residents participated in programs across HCZ sites

350

people picked up free fruits and veggies at each St. Nick Healthy Harvest

300

community members came together for our annual St. Nick Thanksgiving Dinner

300

kids and families rang in the holidays at our annual St. Nick Winter Wonderland



4,000 HCZ Students Brought Their Best to Summer Games

Leading the Nation in Long-Term Change

The issues we are tackling at HCZ are national issues. Our first obligation is always to our kids here in Harlem. But from the beginning, we have also aimed to collect extensive, usable data about what works, both so that we can continue to refine our own pipeline and so that struggling communities nationwide can learn from our success. This is exactly what we have done.

In 2015, HCZ continued to serve as a national model and prominent thought and policy leader, sharing strategies and lessons learned with educators, community organizers, elected officials, and policymakers from around the country and world. Our Practitioners Institute held workshops for visitors from 36 U.S. communities and 16 international groups and, through our partnership with the Promise Neighborhoods Institute, we continued to provide technical support and guidance to 70 U.S. communities working to replicate our model, including 48 communities that have received federal grants through President Obama's Promise Neighborhoods program. 2015 was also the second year of the President's new Promise Zones program, the most recent federal anti-poverty initiative inspired by HCZ's comprehensive, place-based approach. In April, the President announced eight new Zones to join the initial five announced in January 2014.



A Promise Academy Middle-School Graduate Moves One Step Closer to College

Finally, CEO Anne Williams-Isom was appointed to the Advisory Council of the newly created My Brother's Keeper Alliance, which stems from President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative and is committed to building ladders of opportunity for boys and young men of color.



CEO Anne Williams-Isom Lets the Class of 2032 Know the Sky Is the Limit

“Our children have amazing potential and we all have a part in helping them fulfill it.”

—Anne Williams-Isom,
Chief Executive Officer

The Year Ahead: All HCZ Kids, All the Way

In 2016, we look forward to drawing on the resilience, evaluation, and innovation that have always been our hallmarks so we can keep listening to the data and fine-tuning our pipeline to meet the needs of our kids and community in real time and the long term. We will have 913 students in college and an entire neighborhood full of children getting the education, opportunities, and support they need to follow their lead.

If you were to take a walk through the Harlem Children's Zone in 2016, you would see what we feel so proud and fortunate to see each and every day—thousands of young people fulfilling their amazing potential and helping to change the narrative both here in Harlem and for all our nation's children.



Marching 4,000 Strong at the 21st Annual HCZ Children's March for Peace

To learn more about HCZ, visit our website at www.hcz.org.