

# HARLEM CHILDREN'S ZONE

## FY 2012 REPORT



### FROM CRADLE THROUGH COLLEGE

While the Harlem Children's Zone® tracks hundreds of goals each year, there is one overarching goal for all of our work: getting children successfully through college.

In a devastated community such as Harlem, the process of lifting up children to change their odds of success must begin at birth and be sustained through each phase of a child's development. For children in HCZ's comprehensive network of programs, going to college is the explicit and implicit expectation – it is simply in the air.

The process starts with The Baby College®, which teaches child development techniques to new and expectant parents. It continues in the Harlem Gems® pre-kindergarten program, where classrooms are named after Ivy League colleges.

#### *Our Dual Pipeline of Services*

Children can then go through one of two paths in HCZ's dual pipeline of services: we work with them in either our Promise Academy Charter Schools or through our in-school and afterschool programs at all the traditional public schools in the 97-block Zone.

For HCZ, college readiness is more than just good test scores in English and math: it means ensuring that our young men and women are caring, confident and exposed to culture, history, and the nuances of the world around them; it means equipping them with the tools to become self-sustaining adults who are ready to give back to the country that gave them an opportunity to succeed.

To counter the effects on children living in a neighborhood where failure is the norm, we are working at an unprecedented scale to create a critical mass of change – offering our services free of charge to more than 11,700 children and 10,800 adults in fiscal year 2012.



### IMPACT ON OUR CHILDREN

#### *More and More Students in College*

This past year, through our College Success Office (CSO), we have been able to provide support services to our 800 college students, many of whom were the first in their families to go to college. CSO expanded its Campus Connectors program, which pairs underclassmen with upperclassmen for mentoring.

Through CSO internships, students are able to gain meaningful work experience as well as earn money. This past summer, 283 students interned at 116 organizations. Several students also interned at HCZ itself, learning about the nonprofit sector and acting as role models for younger students.

#### *High School: 96% College Acceptance*

This year marked a milestone at HCZ: our Promise Academy Charter Schools graduated their first class of high school seniors – and 100 percent were accepted to college. They came a long way: when this first graduating cohort started with us in sixth grade, 75 percent were below grade level in English and 60 percent in math.

Across the entire agency, 96 percent of our high-school seniors were accepted to college - and won over \$20 million in scholarships.

HCZ employs a unique Academic Case Management (ACM) system that uses individualized strategies to help students meet academic and developmental goals. Some 3,000 middle-school, high-school and college students are

assigned an advocate who creates an action plan with goals and student responsibilities. Services range from tutoring to standardized-test preparation to wellness counseling.

In all of our high-school programs, in all ways, the touchstone is “college readiness.” That means rigorous honing of English and math skills, but it also means working to develop well-rounded young men and women. More than 860 HCZ students participated in college trips to get a taste of university life.

Students participated in community service projects. And our staff worked to ensure that our children are health-conscious as well as fluent in the arts and culture.



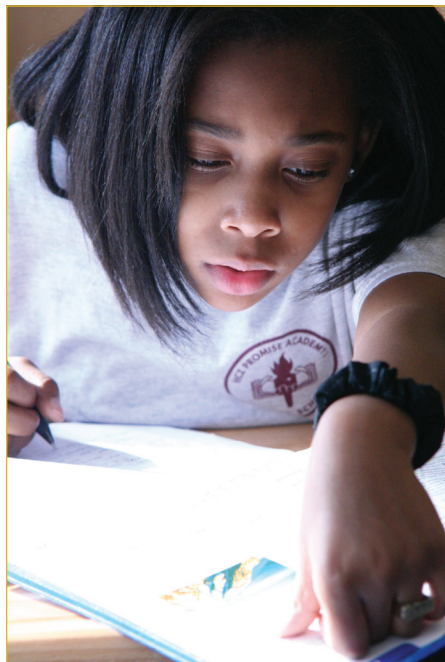
### *Middle and Elementary School: Strengthening the Foundation*

Our middle-school programs similarly make sure that students are preparing themselves for college. Because our charter schools have a longer school day and year, students have time to master the basics, but also can take science, music, the arts and sports.

At Promise Academy II, where the scores on state tests were higher than the average of the state and city overall, the students also excelled elsewhere: The orchestra won the top award at the Music in the Parks Festival this year, and the chess team captured first place in the N.Y. State middle school reserve division.

Among our afterschool programs, TRUCE Fitness and Nutrition continued to support middle-school students academically as well as help them learn to live a healthier, active life. The program’s karate team brought home 190 trophies in competitions.

To support the 3,200 elementary-school students in the nine traditional public schools in the Children’s Zone, HCZ sends AmeriCorps workers, or Peacemakers, to assist teachers during school and then work with students after school.



So our students will be more fluent in the arts, HCZ began a partnership with the renowned Harlem School of the Arts. The partnership offers programming in music, theater and the arts for hundreds of students.

### *Starting Education Early*

HCZ’s work to get children through college begins as early in their lives as possible. In fiscal year 2012, more than 450 parents graduated from The Baby College® workshop series, which teaches parenting skills that foster optimal brain and language development. The Baby College GRADS program, which works with 110 families, organizes regular small-group sessions where parents learn the simple ways to positively interact with their babies so they can develop their young brains.





Across all of our Harlem Gems® pre-kindergarten programs, 99 percent of our 204 children were assessed as “school ready” or better. Our newest Harlem Gems program at HCZ’s Singleton Center completed its first full year, and 100 percent of its children were school ready.

### *Improving Children’s Health*

Ensuring our children are ready for college and adulthood also means keeping them healthy. In response to the epidemic of obesity and its health effects in poor neighborhoods such as Harlem, HCZ has launched a Healthy Living Initiative to ensure children get more exercise and eat healthier foods.

As operator of the Harlem Armory, we have been able to provide sports activities for 1,000 children a week – from rock-climbing to tennis to golf. We have also begun teaching children to swim, and offer dance and gymnastics through partnerships with other organizations.



Last year, our kitchen staff made 980,000 healthy breakfasts and lunches for our Promise Academy and Harlem Gems students.

This year we continued two agency-wide athletic competitions. More than 4,600 children, from pre-k through high school, participated in our “Summer Games” track-and-field meet, and more than 400 competed in our “World Cup” soccer tournament.

### *Focusing on the Toughest Cases*

To bring our collective experience to bear on the most challenging situations, the agency created “HCZ Stat.” In this quarterly forum, program directors and senior managers focus on the problems faced by specific students and discuss actions that staff can take to help them.



When Morgan Bello’s mom got a call from Promise Academy Charter School about her son on the first day of sixth grade, she thought it was going to be the same old story.

Morgan had been to five different schools and had been labeled as a troublemaker at each. At Promise Academy, however, the staff engaged him and mentored him and slowly he transformed himself from class clown to model student. He became the captain of the school’s championship basketball team and a mentor to younger students.

In June 2012, Morgan put on a cap and gown with the rest of the graduating seniors. Having won a \$20,000 scholarship, he is now attending Utica College, where he is readying himself for a career as a middle-school teacher so that he can help inspire children like himself.

## IMPACT ON HARLEM

### *An Economic Engine for the Neighborhood*

In addition to providing free education, social-service and health programs to our children and families, HCZ also provides free tax-preparation services. In fiscal year 2012, we helped 4,167 filers receive more than \$6.8 million in refunds – money that goes right back to help our families and community. HCZ is also one of Harlem's largest employers: almost half of our 2,600 employees live in Central Harlem or the surrounding community. In this way, HCZ is helping local businesses thrive, further stabilizing the neighborhood.



### *Working to Prevent Violence*

Tragically, the neighborhood and its families continue to be hit by violent incidents and shootings. Our 18th annual Children's March for Peace in August had more than 4,000 children and adults marching through the streets of Harlem, calling for an end to the violence in the neighborhood. We also expanded our Safety Knights program, where staff members create corridors of safety on local streets to prevent violence and to help the children feel safe on their walk home, and have enlisted local businesses to become safe havens for our youth in the event they feel threatened on the street.

### *Keeping Families Whole*

HCZ's foster-care prevention programs work with families that are in such a state of crisis that they are at risk of having their children placed in foster care. Our social services team of 80 staff members works to strengthen families confronting domestic violence, substance abuse and eviction.

## IMPACT ON THE NATION

HCZ's unique approach and unprecedented success have made it a model for communities across the country. With the creation of the federal Promise Neighborhoods initiative, communities are receiving federal grants to start up comprehensive networks like ours. Through its partnership in the Promise Neighborhoods Institute, HCZ is advising 51 communities that either won federal Promise Neighborhoods grants or were high scorers in the selection process.



In addition, our Practitioners Institute held workshops and site visits for more than 60 communities across the U.S. and 14 countries.

## LOOKING FORWARD

In the coming year, HCZ will continue to build on our successes with our students and families, and deepen our work in the community. We will have more than 900 students in college. We will open a new building to house our Promise Academy I Charter School and a community center, launch a greatly expanded and intensified Healthy Living Initiative, and begin an exciting new partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Visit us at [www.hcz.org](http://www.hcz.org)

