



**HARLEM CHILDREN'S ZONE, INC.**  
**BIENNIAL REPORT 2000-2002**

**HARLEM CHILDREN'S  
ZONE, INC.  
BIENNIAL REPORT  
2000-2002**

Letter from the  
Chairman of the Board **3**  
Letter from the  
President & CEO **3**  
HCZ, Inc. at a Glance **4**

HCZ History and Mission **5**  
HCZ Project Highlights **6**  
Harlem Children's  
Zone Project **7**  
Beacon Programs **9**

Neighborhood-based  
Prevention Programs **11**  
Building and Growth Plan **13**  
HCZ Financials **14**  
HCZ Funders **15**





## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



The difficult economic and investment climate is in stark contrast to the acceleration in activity taking place at The Harlem Children's Zone.

As our programs continue to permeate the 24-block area in Central Harlem to a greater and greater degree, one is starting to get the sense that the tipping point we have dreamed of for this devastated community could very well become a reality in the years ahead.

However, the difficult environment cited above presented HCZ and its Board with an important decision. For while our endowment has returned a positive 42 percent since the equity bear market began in March of 2000, we acknowledge that our current and future donor base has certainly been affected by the challenging investment climate. Should we, therefore, go ahead with our planned expansion of the Zone, or consolidate our gains in the current geographic area?

While we acknowledge that the financial challenge may be more difficult than we envisioned when we planned the expansion several years ago, three factors made the decision to stick to the plan very easy.

First, the remarkable progress of Geoff Canada and his team has not gone unnoticed. We believe there is no more exciting story in the entire not-for-profit community and apparently our donors agree; funding has grown dramatically despite the environment and the level of new interest in our project has never been greater.

Secondly, we have added seven new Board members, which will provide more depth in our fundraising efforts as well as advising HCZ. We plan to continue to strengthen our board and those currently serving are extraordinarily committed to the expansion of the Zone.

Finally, the very difficult economic environment makes the work at HCZ more important than ever. Poor communities bear the brunt of hard times disproportionately, and it is imperative that we not only continue, but accelerate our fight against poverty in Harlem.

The challenge ahead is formidable, but with the support you and others are showing we are confident we will exceed our goals. I want to convey just how grateful we are for that support, and assure you that we are more enthusiastic about HCZ than anytime in its history.

STANLEY DRUCKENMILLER  
Chairman of the Board

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



This letter marks an exciting moment of transition for Rheedlen Centers for Children & Families, Inc.—this is our first biennial report and it is also the year we decided to change our name from Rheedlen to Harlem Children's Zone, Inc.

Rheedlen may be changing its name, but our mission remains the same: *to improve the lives of poor children in America's most devastated communities.* My commitment to this agency, its mission, and the people we serve has continued to grow over time. In fact, in the 19 years that I have been at this agency, I have never felt more committed as we work to expand our services and reach out to a larger number of residents in Central Harlem. Over the next six years, HCZ, Inc. will expand to provide comprehensive social services to 16,000 children and adults, doubling the number currently served.

Growth is exciting, but it also presents challenges. How do we maintain the quality of our services as we reach more of the community? How do we develop the infrastructure to support

growth and incorporate new systems of management? HCZ, Inc.'s approach is to grow slowly, with expert consultation and deliberate care. We have collaborated with the Bridgespan Group on our Growth Plan, we are working with Philliber Research Associates to evaluate programs, and we rely on the experience of our Program Directors and staff—who have lived and worked in Central Harlem for many years. Our goal during this expansion continues to be to improve the quality of services for those we serve.

It is important that the work we do make a difference not only for those in our community but also for those in need across the country. We intend for our efforts at Harlem Children's Zone, Inc. to affect change at a local and national level, as well as the day-to-day impact on each person we serve.

There are many exciting new things happening at Harlem Children's Zone, Inc., yet we remain constant in our focus on improving the lives of poor children in the most devastated communities in America.

GEOFFREY CANADA  
President/CEO

## HCZ AT A GLANCE:

The HCZ works to:

- Support families in caring for their children
- Improve the academic outcomes of children
- Support positive youth development
- Increase resident leadership and involvement in the community
- Increase the use and availability of technology
- Stabilize city-owned housing and small private home ownership
- Improve the physical environment

HCZ, Inc. has grown dramatically over the past decade. During that time, the number of programs has increased from 6 to 15; the number of children receiving services from 1,500 to more than 7,500.

HCZ, Inc. served 12,681 children and adults in FY 2002.



# HCZ, Inc. History and Mission



Thirty years ago, the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ), Inc. made a commitment to the children and families of Harlem. Today, we continue our mission to improve the lives of poor children in America's most devastated communities.

The HCZ, Inc., formerly known as Rheedlen Centers for Children & Families, was the first non-profit organization in New York City to focus exclusive attention to the problem of truancy among the young. That program evolved into an integrated network of services and supports as we learned the need to shape environmental influences.

At the start of its fourth decade, the HCZ, Inc. has become a national standard-bearer for this simple but far-reaching idea: it is difficult, often impossible, to raise healthy children in a disintegrated community.

Without local institutions that draw families and young people together around common interests and activities—religious, social, and recreational organizations, effective schools, safe and well-used public spaces—even the most heroic child rearing is likely to fail.

By gathering and organizing members of the community around activities of common interest—particularly the

healthy development of children, but also strengthening local institutions and improving the physical environment—even the most devastating conditions can be reversed.

The HCZ, Inc.'s goal is to bring about that transformation in Central Harlem, where poverty and unemployment are many times higher than national averages, education and student achievement fall well below U.S. and New York City levels, and the rate of foster care placement is among the highest in the state.

Behind this mission are two tenets: First, children from troubled communities are far more likely to grow to healthy, satisfying adulthood (and to help build a better community) if a *critical mass* of the adults around them are well versed in the techniques of effective parenting and are engaged in local educational, social, and religious activities with their children. Second, the *earlier* a child is touched by sound health care, intellectual and social stimulation, and consistent guidance from loving attentive adults, the more likely that child will be to grow into a responsible and fulfilled member of the community. Intervention at later stages is still important—and must be adjusted as the person progresses through the

various stages of youth. But later intervention is more costly and less sure of success. Families will need these later efforts to a lesser degree and in declining amounts if the earliest intervention is effective.

These twin principles—a critical mass of engaged, effective families, and early and progressive intervention in children's development—have led HCZ, Inc. in recent years to concentrate more of its activities on the families in a 24-block region of Central Harlem called the **Harlem Children's Zone Project**.

While the mission of the Harlem Children's Zone, Inc. may be large in scope, its implementation is accomplished through careful attention to detail and a willingness to engage problems on a long-term basis. The HCZ, Inc. neither expects nor produces overnight miracles. Nor do we believe that we can redevelop a community single-handedly. However, we do have an immediate and substantial impact on the children and families involved with our programs. The Harlem Children's Zone, Inc. believes that if the positive impact we have on children is maintained and expanded, we can serve as a beacon to a neighborhood and thus become the impetus for the renaissance of a community.

## HCZ PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2002

■ **The Baby College** provided services to 785 participants: 305 adults expecting a child or raising one between 0-3 years, as well as 480 children (305 between the ages of 0-3) by offering a curriculum, designed in collaboration with Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, that teaches parents about the specific stages of child development.

■ **Harlem Gems**, a Universal Pre-Kindergarten program, provided 40 four-year-olds with the skills necessary to enter kindergarten ready to learn. This program has a student/teacher ratio of 4:1, and all children were taught basic French and Spanish words. Workshops for parents were held on reading and talking with children in ways that promote growth and active learning. Results from pre- and post-testing show that 79% of the Harlem Gems students have higher post-test scores and percentiles (Bracken Basic Concept Scale).

■ **TRUCE** (The Renaissance University for Community Education), a comprehensive program for adolescents, fostered academic growth and career readiness through the innovative use of the arts, media literacy, health and multimedia technology for 160 youth.

■ **The TRUCE Fitness & Nutrition Center** provided free services, which



include nutrition classes and an array of exercise classes, to 274 youth and 87 adults in Central Harlem.

■ **Community Pride** is a resident-driven neighborhood revitalization program that has created 259 tenant-owned apartments since 1993. In addition, Community Pride collaborated with more than 1,200 residents to coordinate volunteer efforts, manage their buildings, facilitate meetings, organize tenants, and develop block associations.

■ **The Family Support Center**, a storefront walk-in center for families in crisis, provided 166 adults and 338

children with family strengthening services to help prevent foster care placement.

■ **The Employment & Technology Center** provided access to technology and employment training to 190 children and 599 adults. The ETC's Job Center for Youth provided youth between 14-18 with year-round employment training, internships, summer employment, academic support and job placement.

■ **Parents Help Center** worked in collaboration with P.S. 149 to provide drop-out prevention services, parent involvement activities, and an emergency food pantry for 319 children and 435 adults.

■ **Harlem Peacemakers** (85 in total) worked in the HCZ Project's public school classrooms as well as in other HCZ Project program sites serving 1,080 children. The Harlem Peacemakers also operated Freedom Schools at each of the three HCZ Project elementary schools providing students with a literacy-based experience during the summer months.

■ **The HCZ Community Advisory Board** is made up of 45 community residents who have met on a regular basis since 1997.

# HCZ Harlem Children's Zone Project



## A New Social Service Paradigm

The Harlem Children's Zone Project is a multi-year comprehensive community building initiative in Central Harlem designed to improve outcomes for poor children and families who live in a 24-block area in Central Harlem, which extends from 116th Street to 123rd Street and from 8th Avenue to 5th Avenue.

The HCZ Project represents a new social service paradigm—one intended to overcome the limitations of traditional approaches by systematically coordinating two related areas of work: programs focused on addressing the needs of children and families, and targeted efforts to rebuild the basic community infrastructure.

What began as a strategic plan in July 1997, has evolved into an on-the-ground, resident driven community building initiative to create positive opportunities and outcomes for the 3,000 children who live in the HCZ Project.

The Harlem Children's Zone Project intends to work towards an agency-wide objective through a strategy that focuses on these four goals:

- **Critical Mass**—focusing on all children within a clearly-defined geographical area and providing a compre-

hensive set of neighborhood-based programs and services addressing critical needs of children at five key stages of development;

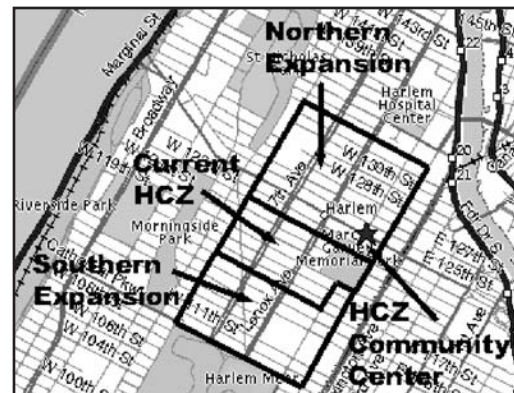
- **Early Intervention**—developing levels of intensity for program interventions that vary by age, being greatest at earlier stages and declining for later stages as children progress toward adulthood;

- **Community Support**—creating supplementary programs and services

directed toward improving community conditions that, if not addressed, are likely to undermine the developmental progress of HCZ's children;

- **Evaluation**—continually measuring performance and outcomes agency-wide. Our Director of Evaluation works with Philliber Research Associates (an independent evaluation consulting company) to gather and analyze data, which help us determine the quality and efficacy of our programs.

**The HCZ Project has a population of 12,867 people, 86% are African American and 12% are Latino. Forty-five percent of HCZ Project residents have an income of less than \$10,000 a year and the unemployment rate in the HCZ Project is 23.5%.**

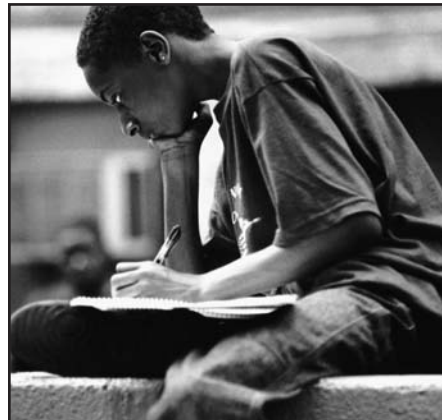


The work of the Harlem Children's Zone Project currently focuses on a 24-block area in Central Harlem, which extends from 116th Street to 123rd Street and from 5th Avenue to 8th Avenue. The HCZ Inc.'s goal is to expand to the north and south, and by 2009 to serve approximately 16,000 children and adults.





# HCZ, Inc. Beacon Programs



The Harlem Children's Zone, Inc. was one of the original ten creators and innovators of the Beacon programs, which began in New York City. The HCZ, Inc. enhanced the basic model by adding programs that involve and empower parents so that they can better ensure the safety of their children and keep families intact.

Our two Beacon Programs, Booker T. Washington Center 54 Beacon at Middle School 54 on West 107th Street in Manhattan Valley, and Countee Cullen Community Center at PS 194 in Harlem, are comprehensive youth and family service facilities open year-round during the school day, after-school, and into the evening. They provide a safe and structured educational environment that serves as an alternative to involvement in substance abuse and street violence. The intent of the Beacons is to provide a variety of services aimed at promoting positive outcomes among young people ages 5-21.

In 2002, the Countee Cullen Community Center Beacon served 2,669 children and adults and the Booker T. Washington Center 54 Beacon served 2,640 children and adults.

Our original Beacon program at Countee Cullen Community Center/PS 194 has been nationally recognized as a model of excellence, and replicated

across the country. Our Beacons have received national recognition from federal and state funders, and members of the Clinton administration cabinet visited Countee Cullen prior to the creation of 21st Century Schools.

By co-locating Beacon Schools and our prevention programs, HCZ has enhanced the ability of both programs to strengthen families. Families in either program gain access to both child and youth development programs and the counseling and other supports of our prevention programs.

In addition to the two that co-locate with Beacon Schools, another prevention program is located within the Harlem Children's Zone Project, which offers an extensive array of community supports to families in preventive services.

**"At the Booker T. Washington [Beacon] computer lab, I learn more advanced stuff with educational games, so it helps me answer questions in class."**

**—PARAM, 10 YEARS OLD**

