

## Helping 12,000+ Children Succeed—One at a Time

*At the Harlem Children's Zone®, we often describe our work as helping to ensure the success of our youth.  
So what does success look like?*

2014 marked Shantay's 10th anniversary with HCZ. She joined one of our afterschool programs when she was 11 years old at the recommendation of her aunt, who had seen HCZ's positive impact on family friends. Then a 6th grader at a traditional NYC public school where 6th and 7th grade classes were combined, Shantay struggled to keep up. At HCZ, she was assigned an Advocate who connected with her teachers and family to develop a strategic plan, provided one-on-one support, and carefully tracked her progress. Shantay also joined HCZ's award-winning karate team, sharpening her focus and discipline, and, by the end of the year, she had made the honor roll.

With the support of HCZ, Shantay transitioned smoothly to high school, finding a crucial creative outlet in the wide array of arts activities at her afterschool program. But things took a turn in 11th grade. She had trouble at home and struggled to balance her first part-time job with schoolwork. Her program attendance slackened and her grades suffered. As Shantay puts it, "things went downhill." What made the difference? According to her, it was HCZ's committed staff: "I dropped out a little, but they kept reaching out and followed through. They connected all the supports—family, school, my program." Thanks to their perseverance—and with college application season just around the corner—she got back on track.



2014 College Grad Shantay Advises an HCZ College Student



CEO Anne Williams-Isom and President Geoffrey Canada

The first in her family to apply to college, Shantay found the prospect overwhelming. But HCZ "helped with everything"—with identifying schools, writing applications, finding the right fit, and making a smart decision that would enable her to attend a 4-year school away from home without accruing lots of debt. She started at SUNY Buffalo State in 2010 and, as other HCZ students followed her lead, became a Campus Connector through our College Success Office (CSO), mentoring 25 HCZ students. Having switched majors a number of times, Shantay found that her new role helped clarify her ambitions. With her sights set on a career in higher education administration, she graduated from Buffalo State in May with a 3.6 GPA and started a master's program at Stony Brook University this fall. In addition, Shantay works as a College Advisor at CSO, where she is proud to serve, as so many HCZ staff have for her, as a stakeholder in the success of our youth.

### HCZ BY THE NUMBERS



**26,989**  
Children & Families



**954**  
Students in College



**100%**  
Pre-K Gems School-Ready

**And so  
much  
more...**

## Where Do HCZ Students Go to College?

American University  
Amherst College  
Bard College  
Bates College  
Boston College  
Bowdoin College  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Clarkson University  
College of New Rochelle  
CUNY Hunter College  
DePauw University  
Dickinson College  
Emory College  
Fairfield University  
Fordham University  
Franklin & Marshall College  
Gettysburg College  
Hamilton College  
Hampshire College  
Hofstra University  
Howard University  
Long Island University  
Middlebury College  
Morehouse College  
New York University  
Northeastern University  
Occidental College  
Pace University  
Pennsylvania State University  
Providence College  
Queens College  
Reed College  
Rutgers University  
Spelman College  
SUNY Albany  
SUNY Buffalo State  
SUNY Stony Brook  
Syracuse University  
Temple University  
University of Connecticut  
University of New Hampshire  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of Pittsburgh  
University of Rochester  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Utica College  
Vassar College  
Wheaton College

## What Does Success Look Like?

It looks like Shantay and an ever-growing cohort of resilient, career-driven college graduates becoming productive, self-sustaining adults and helping to inspire the next generation of HCZ youth. And this is how we are achieving it: by giving consistent, individualized, round-the-clock support to each and every one of our youth and their families and carefully evaluating their progress to make sure that we are fully meeting their needs. Indeed, we track 600 goals each year to ensure that our kids are steadily advancing toward the ultimate goal of college graduation.

During fiscal year 2014, we worked with 26,989 youth and adults—including nearly 1,000 college students. With our cradle-to-college pipeline of best-practice programs filled to scale and brimming with talent, we are not only on our way to breaking the cycle of generational poverty here in Central Harlem, but also standing strong as a model for struggling communities around the country and the world.



A Pre-K Gem Enjoys Music Education with Mom

## A College Degree, a Competitive Edge



1,200 High-School Students Participated in College Prep

Everything we do at HCZ is aimed at getting our youth to and through college. Last year, 92% of seniors across our high-school programs were accepted to college. Our College Success Office worked with 954 students at 165 colleges and universities across the country (see sidebar). And by year end, we had 100 new college graduates—66 from 4-year schools and 34 from 2-year schools.

This year, CSO instituted an in-house social services team, established a team of College Coaches to support high-school seniors through every stage of the application and transition process, and held numerous workshops to help students strengthen their soft skills, study habits, financial literacy, and career readiness.

In order to further prepare our youth to compete in today's global economy, we also helped them gain valuable work experience during school breaks. This summer, 292 of our college students participated in paid internships at 133 organizations throughout New York City. In addition, we sent nearly 50 high-school students to college programs to help them prepare for the academic rigor of college, delve deeper into their areas of interest, and build grit and perseverance.



# The Pipeline: Two Paths, One Goal—College Readiness



Shining on Stage



Getting the Shot



Hitting the Mat



Cooking for Health

At HCZ, we are supporting the entire child and an entire community of children. Last year, we worked with 1,700 students at our two Promise Academy Charter Schools and 8,100 K-12 public school students through our in-school and after-school programs, including 2,200 students through our Peacemakers Program, which provides teaching assistance and all-day support at the seven public elementary schools in our 97-block Children's Zone®.

While K-12 students take one of two paths through our pipeline, the end goal for every single one is exactly the same—college readiness. Education and academic support are just the beginning of what it takes to help them get there. Our comprehensive pipeline includes arts and enrichment, character education, athletics and recreation, health programs, family support, and wraparound services for every child—kids like Jamaris.

3<sup>rd</sup> grader Jamaris spent years moving from one family member to another after his mother was incarcerated. During these transitions, his behavior underwent dramatic shifts, often culminating in severe outbursts in school. With the help of one of our Social Workers, Jamaris connected with a therapist who helped give him some much needed stability—until, that is, his mom was released and he and his sister were returned, the same day, to her care. Jamaris promptly began acting out in school and, though his mom was deeply committed to supporting both of her children, she struggled with the shock of having left toddlers and returning to school-aged kids. The Social Worker collaborated with Jamaris's therapist to find ways to incorporate the tools he had developed in their weekly sessions into the school day, while also coordinating with a Caseworker at one of HCZ's foster care prevention programs to ensure that his mom received all of the support she needed during this major transition. With full wraparound supports in place, Jamaris's behavior improved exponentially and he even made the honor roll, earning him a spot on the school's highly coveted Top Performers wall.

In order to help build our kids' confidence and character, focus their energy, cultivate their passions, and keep them engaged, we offer a host of enrichment activities in our afterschool programs, from karate, yoga, cooking, and countless sports to chess, filmmaking, robotics, fashion design, dance, jazz band, music production, and theater—not to mention creative writing, Alicia's personal favorite.

Alicia, a high-school freshman, had been struggling in English and, with a 65 average, began to seriously doubt her own abilities. But our staff knew the problem wasn't Alicia or her academic potential—it was finding a way to help her think about writing as a powerful

means of self-expression, not just something she had to do for school. An English tutor at Alicia's afterschool program encouraged her to write for its new student-run literary magazine. The opportunity to write about issues close to her heart helped Alicia to find her voice and, in time, her academic performance improved. Newly confident in her critical abilities and enthusiastic about writing, Alicia brought her English grade up to 95.

What makes achievements like these possible is the tireless commitment and inventiveness of our staff—people like Alicia's Tutor, Jamaris's Social Worker, Shantay's Advocate, and now Shantay, who know that, with the right support and opportunities, our kids are capable of extraordinary things.

# Starting at Birth: The Path to School Readiness



Helping a Child on His "Three-Year-Old Journey"

A child's education starts long before the first day of school. In order to help ensure that every child in our Zone has a strong foundation, our pipeline begins with The Baby College®, which teaches infant development and parenting skills to new and expectant parents. During 2014, HCZ's Baby College graduated 470 parents, bringing our grand total of graduates to more than 5,000 over the past decade.

A series of early childhood programs—Baby College GRADS, Three-Year-Old Journey, and Get Ready for Pre-K—offers seamless support to keep our kids and parents progressing toward the next big step: Harlem Gems®. Last year, 100% of the 209 students at our four Gems Pre-K sites were assessed to be school-ready or better. Plus, we introduced a number of new activities to deepen our work with our Pre-K dads and strengthen their involvement in the learning process, including special volunteer days and father-and-child cooking classes.

## Creating a Healthy Harlem

Thanks to Healthy Harlem, thousands of kids throughout the Zone are not just moving more and eating better, but also developing healthy habits, self-esteem, and strategies for dealing with stress that will serve them well throughout their lives. 4,600 youth across 20 sites participated in Healthy Harlem, engaging in fun fitness and athletic activities each day, plus creative nutrition education, from cook-offs to gardening. In addition, 1,500 adults participated



4,000 Youth Took to the Track at Our 2014 Summer Games

in fitness and cooking classes, community support groups, and monthly farmers markets. And our kitchen staff prepared 1.4 million healthy meals and snacks for students and staff at our two Promise Academy schools and Gems sites, 96% from scratch and all low in sugar, salt, and fat.

Each week, over 1,000 kids engaged in sports at the Harlem Armory, practicing gymnastics, running track, climbing the rock wall, and playing tennis, soccer, basketball, and golf. This past summer, 4,000 youth, from our Pre-K Gems to our college students, participated in Summer Games, our annual organization-wide track and field competition, and 135 students competed in our "World Cup" soccer tournament. To our immense pride, 22 student athletes, ages 8–18, competed in national Junior Olympic track and field competitions this year, setting a total of nine new personal records, including one for our girls relay team. Kharyn, a recent high-school graduate from one of our afterschool programs and now a college freshman, brought home not one, but two bronze medals.

## Raising the Bar, Changing the Game: Bard Early College



This year, we launched the cutting-edge Bard Early College program at Promise Academy I—the first-ever on-site partnership between Bard College and a charter school. After a rigorous application process, 46 Promise Academy freshmen and sophomores were enrolled in intensive pre-college courses aimed at fostering their critical thinking and writing skills.

During 2015, we will expand the program to serve a total of 100 students at Promise Academy I and II and, most notably, to offer credit-bearing courses, giving our students an invaluable opportunity to save thousands of dollars in tuition later by earning college credits now while still in high school.

With Bard Early College, we are changing the game for our kids—creating an immersive college experience, reducing their college debt, and preparing them to compete for top-tier universities and top jobs. For our 1,700 Promise Academy students, college is no longer just a goal—it is just down the hall.



# Rebuilding Community

Helping our children succeed and rebuilding community go hand in hand. One is simply impossible without the other. This year, the HCZ community celebrated a major milestone—our 20th annual Children’s March for Peace. With 4,200 students, families, and staff marching together through the streets of Harlem, chanting and calling for peace, it was an inspiring, powerful demonstration of our steadfast commitment to keeping our kids and our community safe.

We continue to deepen our roots in the St. Nicholas housing development, where we opened our new Promise Academy I school building and community center in June 2013. This year, we held a number of fun, community-building events—from handing out treats to 300 kids on Halloween to hosting a Thanksgiving dinner for 400 residents—and are working closely with residents to ensure that the needs of our most vulnerable children and families are met. In April, we started holding monthly Healthy Harvests in the St. Nick courtyard, distributing free fruits and vegetables, sharing information about our services, and offering cooking and fitness demonstrations to hundreds of residents.

Making sure all our program staff have the expertise to respond to crises as they arise is a crucial component of our work. In addition to providing frontline support and referrals, our Social Services Mobile Team held workshops to equip staff across the Zone with specialized know-how to address our kids and families’ needs in real time, from housing to health care to social services.

## HCZ: A POWERFUL ECONOMIC ENGINE

**In fiscal year 2014, HCZ helped 3,356 residents receive \$5.4 million in tax refunds through our free tax preparation services, giving our families, local businesses, and the community a much needed economic boost.**

## The Zone Goes Wireless

This past year, HCZ students had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to design the marketing materials for the new Harlem Free WiFi Network, the largest continuous free outdoor public WiFi network in the country. Students from eight sites competed.



With 360i’s and Showtime’s support, we finalized the winning campaign and printed 50,000 posters and fliers in three languages. Over the past six months, HCZ staff have publicized the campaign throughout the Zone, raising widespread awareness about this important new resource. Generously sponsored by The Fuhrman Family Foundation, Harlem Free WiFi covers 95 blocks, from 110th to 138th Streets, between Frederick Douglass Boulevard and Madison Avenue, and is helping to bridge the digital divide for nearly 80,000 Harlem residents.



The HCZ Community Marches 4,200-Strong at Our 20th Annual Peace March

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## Leading the Nation

HCZ's impact stretches far beyond the boundaries of our 97-block Zone. In January, Promise Academy students and staff traveled to Washington, DC, to join President Obama on stage at the White House for the official announcement of the latest federal initiative inspired by the HCZ model—Promise Zones. 9th grader Kiara Molina had the honor of introducing the President, giving him, in his words, "one of the best introductions I've ever had." The initiative aims to help create jobs and increase economic security in 20 communities to be announced over the next three years.



Promise Academy Helps President Obama Launch the New Promise Zones

This past year, HCZ President and CEO, Geoffrey Canada, was doubly recognized for his unprecedented achievements as a leader in education, youth and community development, and the fight against poverty. He received the prestigious National Freedom Award from the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, Tennessee, and was named #12 on *Fortune's* list of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders.

HCZ's Practitioners Institute held workshops for visitors from 36 communities across the U.S., as well as 16 international groups, interested in replicating our unique, holistic approach. Through our partnership with the Promise Neighborhoods Institute, we also continued to provide pivotal guidance to 70 communities around the country working to build their own cradle-to-college pipelines, including the 48 federal Promise Neighborhoods grantees.

## The Year Ahead: Getting It Right for Every Single Child, Every Single Time

In February, Geoff announced that he would be handing over the chief executive reins to Chief Operating Officer Anne Williams-Isom at the end of the fiscal year. During her five years as COO, Anne has expertly led HCZ's 2,400 staff, overseen the entire pipeline of programs, and helped maximize our use of data to improve the outcomes of each and every child we serve—from our newborns just entering The Baby College to our college students preparing to transition to the competitive workforce.



CEO Anne Williams-Isom Celebrates Graduation with Our Gems

In 2015, under Anne's leadership as CEO, we look forward to continuing to do what we have always done: make sure that we are getting it right for every single child, every single time, by deepening and strengthening our services as needed across the Zone. We also look forward to expanding our innovative Healthy Harlem initiative to full scale, serving 7,000 youth and 3,000 adults. Plus, we will have 881 students in college—not to mention another 11,000+ youth preparing to follow in their footsteps.

*Over 12,000 kids from Central Harlem on their way to leading meaningful, rewarding adult lives?  
Now that is what success looks like.*