



From Childhood Through College A Lifelong Bond of Love and Learning

Tiffany is a proud Promise Academy graduate, HCZ scholar, first-generation college graduate, and second-generation immigrant, who grew up with her parents and sister in the St. Nicholas Housing Development—one of the most marginalized communities in New York City. The fourth-grade girl who joined HCZ's after-school program at P.S. 154 in 2004 and enrolled in our Promise Academy Charter School two years later has made remarkable strides and beaten many stereotypes—the stereotypes that say a young woman from the projects will not go to college, not pursue a career, and not build her own independence.

Tiffany was raised by loving and caring working-class parents, who set new roots in St. Nick after emigrating to the U.S. from Ecuador in the 1980s. Her mom and dad did everything in their power to support their daughters, but were struggling with language barriers throughout Tiffany's childhood and could not always help her with homework and school projects. Yet, education and cultivating a love of learning were always at the heart of Tiffany's upbringing. "My parents instilled in me and my sister that education is everything," she says. "They came to the U.S. to build better lives and make sure their children had opportunities and a good education."

Her parents' determination paid off—when Tiffany won the Promise Academy lottery, she did not only win a ticket to a high-quality education, but also to a whole new world of possibilities that had previously been out of her reach. She was exposed to culture, sports, and international travel. She de-

veloped professional skills by representing HCZ at high-profile events including a White House press conference. She took her academics to the next level and graduated high school at the top of her class in June 2012. And she worked with dedicated staff to secure internships and select a college that would support her ultimate goal—to pursue a career in animal medicine.

Tiffany earned her bachelor's degree from City College in January 2017 and is now attending Veterinary Technology School at LaGuardia Community College while working at an animal hospital in Harlem. She credits much of her success to the deep commitment of her HCZ family of teachers, mentors, and advisors, who were by her side at all times to offer support and challenge her to aim higher. "That's what I love the most about HCZ," she says. "The staff push you to always do your best and the bonds you build last a lifetime. They are strict on us because they want us to succeed—and when we do, we are going against the odds. It was my parents' dream for me and Mr. Canada's dream for all of us to see us to and through college. I'm proud I made their dream come true."



Tiffany is excited to work in animal medicine—a field that is close to her heart. During her time with HCZ, she interned with several animal parks and clinics, including the Central Park Zoo.

What's HCZ's Secret Sauce for Getting it Right for Every Kid, Every Time?



Starting in middle school, all HCZ students are assigned their own Student Advocate, who monitors academic and social-emotional progress, coordinates supports, and collaborates with parents and school staff to ensure each student is staying on track in school and setting their sights on college.

Caring: We love all our kids. We believe in them and make sure they know it. We make sure they stay on top of their schoolwork and that they're happy and healthy at home. We inspire them to reach beyond what they think is possible. We provide a listening ear when they want to talk. And we are on call 24-7, 365 days throughout the year to step in if they need our support.

Commitment: We're committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure that each and every one of our kids gets to and through college. We support them at all ages and in all areas of their lives through our pipeline of programs and two charter schools. We work with the community and evaluate our programs to make sure our strategies are relevant and effective. And we hire passionate and dedicated staff, who go above and beyond to ensure our kids can learn, grow, and follow their dreams.



College exposures begin early at HCZ—our Harlem Gems pre-kindergarten classrooms are named after colleges and universities.

College Expectations: We instill in our students from day one that they will go to college and that we will help them get there, no matter what. We provide the academic, social, and emotional supports they need to reach their goals. We send them on college tours, where they can experience the campus environment and learn about college life. We help them identify their best-fit colleges and select the right school. And once they're off to college, we keep in touch with them often to ensure they adjust to life on campus and have the resources they need to stay enrolled and earn their degrees.

Teaming Up for a Stronger Community

No man is an island—and the same holds true for HCZ and each of our children in the Zone. Having worked with kids and families in Harlem for 47 years and counting, we know that to best support our students, it's essential to know all the stakeholders in their lives and work with the people who surround them when they're not at HCZ, but at school, at home, or elsewhere in the neighborhood. That's why our staff—from program aides to CEO—are on a first-name basis with teachers, parents, pastors, and other people who are close to the children we serve. That's why we partner with schools, families, and neighborhood organizations to ensure our students can stay safe, healthy, and focused on learning. And that's why we work closely with our 130 Community Advisory Board members, who live and work in the Zone, to stay informed of the needs of our kids as well as the broader community. By coming together with families and neighbors from all walks of life, we are building a strong, inclusive Central Harlem, where every child has the chance to succeed.



We remain committed to adding supports in the most vulnerable pockets of our Zone, including the St. Nicholas Housing Projects, where HCZ built our K-12 Promise Academy I Charter School and Westside Community Center in 2013. Children who live in St. Nick receive priority in the lottery to enter our state-of-the-art charter school.

DEEPENING OUR COMMITMENT TO CENTRAL HARLEM

In FY17, HCZ served **27,573** kids, families, and community members across our pipeline.

461 families were able to avoid foster-care placement thanks to our Preventive programs.

Our free tax preparation program helped **2,985** families earn **\$4,718,103** in refunds.



Our Cozy Corners are equipped with books, photos of our kids' family members, and cushions in calming colors and materials.

Zen in the Zone

It's one of our core beliefs that emotional wellness goes hand in hand with academic achievement and personal growth. Supporting children's well-being has been at the heart of what we do since HCZ's early beginnings in the 1970s, and we consistently work to address the growing range of emotional health issues that our kids often face, including depression, anxiety, and the effects of early childhood trauma and toxic stress. In FY17, our social work staff provided counseling and referral services to 1,067 students and 347 parents across HCZ's pipeline of programs. But our efforts did not stop there. We also continued to make strides in our work to integrate mindful practices and self-care tools in our programs to help students and staff manage stress and the demands of school and work.

Our mindful living initiatives are infused across the HCZ pipeline and range from "Cozy Corners," where our pre-K children can retreat when they need quiet time; to yoga classes, where students can balance rigorous academics with movement and meditation; to self-care workshops that help college students make healthy choices and cope with stress while pursuing their degrees. New mindfulness initiatives in FY17 were largely focused on helping our kids foster a positive mindset and reduce anxiety, and included a month-long campaign at our Promise Academy Charter Schools that introduced students to basic breathing techniques and how they can support academic outcomes, physical health, and emotional wellness.

Healthy Bodies Promote Healthy Minds!

Through our Healthy Harlem initiative, 14,754 children and adults participated in regular sports activities and nutrition education in FY17 to keep fit and energized while working toward ambitious goals. Our evaluation partner, Mathematica Policy Research, is publishing findings providing strong evidence that Healthy Harlem has made significant contributions to promoting healthy lifestyles among HCZ students. Below are just a few examples of how our kids stayed healthy and active at our Harlem Armory state-of-the-art gymnasium, which engages over 1,000 participants each week in fun and innovative sports and fitness activities.

 **226 kids**
played tennis

 **329 kids**
played basketball

 **400 kids**
participated in
conditioning
training

 **105 kids**
played soccer

 **266 kids**
practiced gymnastics

When the Sky is a Starting Place, and Not the Limit

This spring, our 84 Promise Academy seniors—100% of our 12th grade class—graduated high school after years of hard work and dedication. Not one eye was dry at our graduation ceremony in June, where we celebrated our Class of 2017 together with their families, teachers, principals, after-school staff, and HCZ community. We are immensely proud of our graduates and look forward to seeing them grow into future business leaders, educators, lawyers, healthcare professionals, politicians, marketing mavens, and more—100% of our graduating Promise I and II scholars were accepted to college and many of them received competitive internal and external scholarships. HCZ will follow them through college graduation and beyond as they continue their journeys toward further successes and productive, fulfilling lives.



Tahvis M. graduated as valedictorian of his class at Promise Academy II and is continuing his education this fall at Morehouse College.

Connecting the Dots Between College and Careers

College graduation is the goal for each of our students, but the next step after college—starting a career—takes more than just a degree. To make sure our kids can make the most of their education and enter the workforce with confidence, we work tirelessly to ensure they graduate from college with career plans, their own professional networks, and hands-on work experience under their belts. Starting in middle school, we expose students to an array of career paths and explain the steps to pursue them. We walk them through the ins and outs of job search, résumé-writing, and the art of acing an interview. And we actively tap our networks to connect them with professional mentors and internship opportunities in their field of choice. In 2017, 208 HCZ college students spent their summer working in competitive, career-building internships across several industries—Bachir, Danielle, and Brandon are three of them.



"Interning at 360i helped me increase my network and gain skills in media and advertising. Through meetings, work assignments, and day-to-day conversations, I was able to pick up industry language and work on campaigns to build brand awareness and visibility for clients. I came into the internship with expectations of learning about ad agency life and structure. I'm leaving with knowledge of what kind of employee I am, as well as what I bring to the table." — **Bachir D.**

"My internship at Abernathy MacGregor was an excellent opportunity to build experience in strategic communications. I worked with the Crisis Management Team and assisted clients with preparing for current or future crises. One skill I acquired is a better understanding of how to work with clients and how important it is to pay attention to themes instead of numbers during a crisis. I look forward to applying everything I learned when I return to school and in future internships." — **Danielle G.**



"After interning at Viacom last year, I wanted to stay in the entertainment business and working at Showtime seemed like a great next step. I got to see the inside of a premium cable channel and learned how networks gain subscribers. Through one of my projects, I came up with marketing strategies for a new original series and presented my ideas to a room full of executives. Overall, my internship was a great experience and I could see myself working at Showtime when I graduate." — **Brandon D.**

STEAMing up our Classrooms!

Achieving success in tomorrow's workforce requires skills that go far beyond basic academics and discipline—that's why we're always one step ahead making sure our kids are well-rounded and have opportunities to explore multiple future paths, including those related to Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM).



Two elementary students exploring leaves and chlorophyll in science class.



Our Promise Academy string students practice several times each week to hone their skills and prepare for performances.



Two of our after-school filmmakers reviewing footage during a shoot.

Success with HCZ Begins Early and Lasts a Lifetime

- Our Harlem Gems pre-K kids read a total of **26,300** books in FY17.
- **153** high school juniors attended **pre-college programs** on college campuses across the United States.
- Our high school seniors were awarded a total of **\$15,876,524** in grants and scholarships.
- **97%** of our graduating high school class gained admissions to at least one college.
- **700+** HCZ scholars have graduated from college since 2011.



Our A-Game Goes Beyond Academics

Success at HCZ is in no way limited to getting to and through college. Our young athletes, chess masters, performers, artists, and musicians continued to make a name for themselves in FY17 at a wide array of competitions, tournaments, and selective programs—below are just a few of their noteworthy accomplishments.

Karate Kids: Our “PowerZone” Karate Team won an impressive 419 trophies at regional, national, and international competitions, including 195 first-place prizes and 7 grand championships.

Chess Champs: At a statewide chess competition with a total of 1,145 young players participating, one of our 7th graders won 1st prize in the middle school category, and our elementary school team finished in 7th place.

Trampoline Tricksters: One of the members of our Armory Gymnastics Team won 1st prize for her age group in Trampoline and Tumbling at the prestigious New York State Championships for Gymnastics.

Musicians in the Making: Two Promise Academy students were awarded full scholarships to attend a competitive summer program at the Manhattan School of Music, which hosts aspiring young musicians hailing from all over the world.

Rugby Rock-Stars: Our Booker T. Washington Flag Rugby Team capped off the season by winning 2nd prize in a regional tournament with over 1,000 youth participating, and retained their ranking as the 2nd best elementary flag rugby team in NYC.



Our chess players had a busy year, bonding as a team and building valuable problem-solving and strategic-thinking skills while representing HCZ at several tournaments and championships.



Rugby is not only fun and competitive—it helps promote leadership and teamwork skills among our kids and challenges them with rigorous physical movement and activity.

Helping our Kids Stay Healthy and Happy

In March 2017, HCZ broke new ground in our work to ensure our kids have what they need to be healthy and ready to learn, by opening our second school-based health center, located at Promise Academy I. Thanks to our two health centers, students can receive free, high-quality medical, dental, and mental health services without having to leave school premises. We provide a comprehensive menu of free services that include routine check-ups, vision and hearing screenings, and treatment for chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and asthma—severe conditions that are far too common among the youth in our Zone. Our health centers greatly underscore HCZ's promise to our kids that we have their back no matter what when they need medical attention—regardless of their demographics, health insurance, or ability to pay.



HCZ's two school-based health centers served 2,132 students at our Promise Academy Charter Schools in FY17.

Our Impact is Local, National, and International

HCZ's impact continues to grow beyond the Zone—our scale and the phenomenal success of our kids have established HCZ as a leading change agent in the fields of education, health, and social policy, and programs based on our model have been created to benefit families in hundreds of communities nationwide and internationally. In the U.S., our work has inspired several government programs, including former President Obama's Promise Neighborhoods, through which communities in 24 states and D.C. have received federal funding to plan and build their own birth-through-college pipelines. HCZ is working through multiple initiatives to support these efforts by sharing guidance and best practices with U.S. and international groups that are invested in replicating our model. At the core of this work is our own Practitioners Institute, where delegations from all over the world can attend workshops spanning up to three days to learn about our pipeline, organizational framework, and how we grew to serve Central Harlem at scale by observing program activities first-hand and learning from HCZ staff who are in the trenches working with our kids and families.

In FY17, HCZ's Practitioners Institute hosted workshops for **30** visiting groups, including international delegations from the Netherlands, Singapore, Australia, and Brazil.

We continued to support **69** U.S. communities that have been awarded federal Promise Neighborhoods grants to develop their own birth-through-college pipelines.

Since 2005, the Practitioners Institute has held workshops for **493** U.S. communities and **176** international delegations representing **72** countries.

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

At HCZ, Families Come Together Every Day to Learn, Celebrate, and Strengthen Their Bonds



Drawing with Dad is a great way to bond, while building curiosity, creativity, and a love for learning.



Families and friends meeting up to pick up free fresh produce, learn about healthy food options, and build community at HCZ's Monthly Harvest.



Winning a Best Student Award is even more exciting when Mom joins in to share your success.



One of our 2017 Promise graduates celebrating with three generations of family.