



Harlem Children's  
**Z O N E**

FALL 2019

# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

*Kindu Brown doesn't remember any of his teachers; he is the teacher that his students won't ever forget.*

A typical day doesn't exist in Mr. Kindu's kindergarten classroom – anything and everything is fair game to ensure his kids are having fun and learning, from chants to puppets to dancing to masks to games. His signature high-energy approach creates an atmosphere where students feel comfortable, energized, and ready to work hard and play hard.

Kindu starts with the belief that you must love what you do – that kids and parents can tell when you're not giving 100% – and that no kid is average – that everyone is capable of great things. At the start of each school year, he focuses on “doing the little things... building relationships, preparing them to act as a Promise Academy scholar should, and once that standard is set, it's time to be great.”

Kindergarten is not just the beginning of their academic lives – ABCs and 123s, the joy of reading and counting, but also the first step to “broaden students' minds to believe they can do anything.” To accomplish that, Kindu often reworks his game plan to tailor his teaching for “the different ways kids learn and to get them to where they need to be, knowing there is no limit to what they can do.”



trouble and instilled in him discipline, preparation, and mental and physical agility.

Kindu says, “I am my students, I know what they are going through.” Therefore, his number one priority is to be the kind of male role model that he needed as a child. Everything about Kindu's style of teaching is a reflection of who he is: he looks the part in a suit and tie, plans for success, reads the room to make immediate adjustments, takes unconventional approaches, and gives his all every day.

“I am my students, I know what they are going through.”

Kindu had a troubled upbringing in The Bronx with a strained relationship with his parents and was a self-described “tough student” who didn't respect authority figures. What saved Kindu was football – it gave him something to focus on to stay out of

All eyes are on Kindu as he lays the foundation, which his kids will build upon for the rest of their lives – not only the academic lessons they learn in his classroom, but also the character and grit they need to be successful in life.

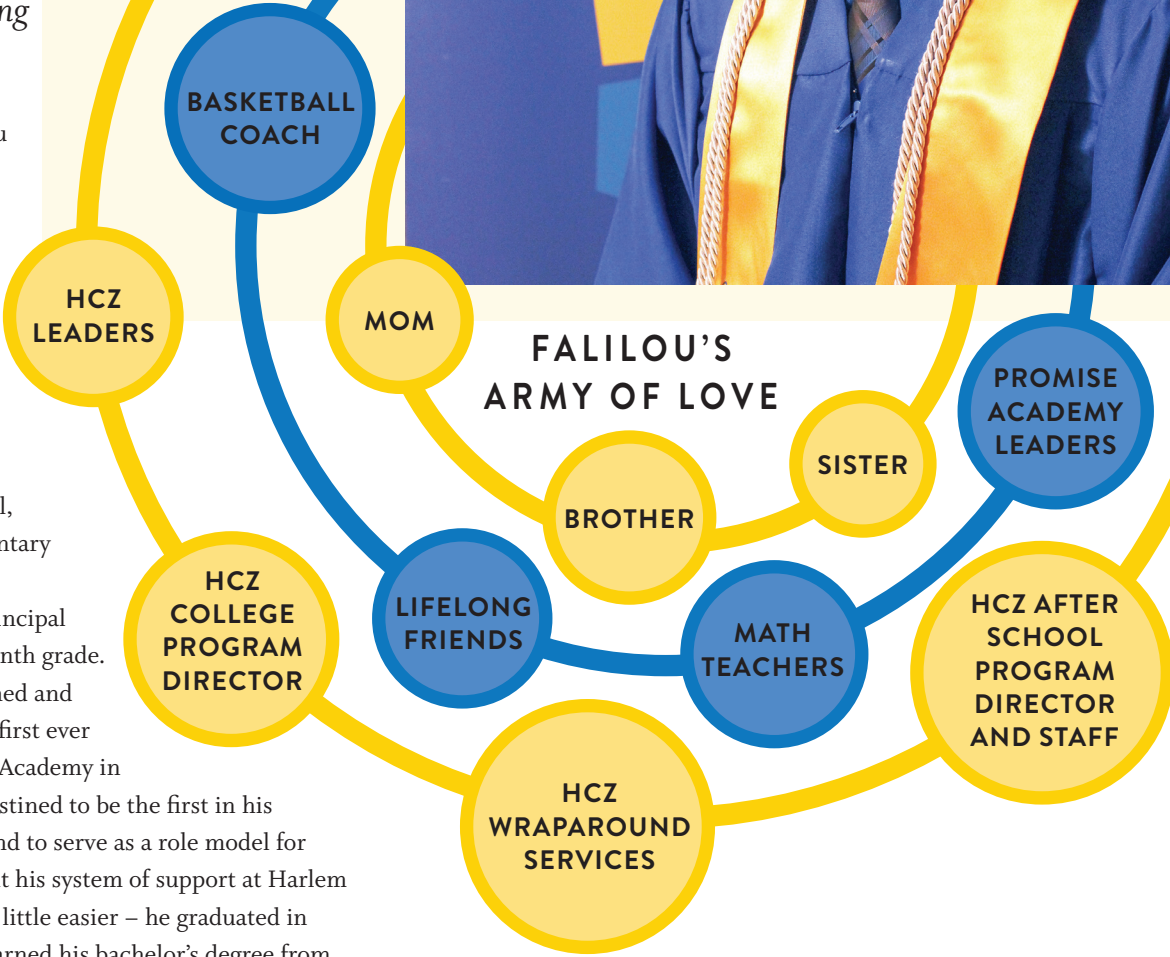


# WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE



*One surprising decision changed the trajectory of Falilou Barry’s life: deciding not to skip a grade.*

During elementary school, Falilou Barry participated in HCZ’s after school program at PS 154 and then came to HCZ Promise Academy, a member of the second incoming class of sixth grade students. He was supposed to go to another middle school in the neighborhood, but his mother had other plans for him. Lou, as he is known, was skeptical, but saw some friends from elementary school and agreed. He excelled at Promise – so much so that the principal talked to him about skipping seventh grade. To everyone’s surprise, Lou declined and it enabled him to be a part of the first ever graduating class of HCZ Promise Academy in 2012. Lou always knew he was destined to be the first in his family to graduate from college and to serve as a role model for his younger sister and brother, but his system of support at Harlem Children’s Zone made that path a little easier – he graduated in the top of his high school class, earned his bachelor’s degree from Boston College with multiple scholarships, interned at prominent companies, and now works as an analyst at a hedge fund.



## CALLING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Some might wonder why an organization dedicated to education would rally thousands of children to call for an end to violence in the neighborhood, but the reason lies at the heart of our work of fighting poverty. After 25 years, our annual Children’s March for Peace in Harlem still carries an important message for us all to create a counter-narrative to the violence that devastates too many kids’ lives in America.

ANNE WILLIAMS-ISOM, CEO OF HARLEM CHILDREN’S ZONE