



Awakening Students to their Potential

Spring 2010

Horizons®

at The Harley School

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Horizons 2009-10 Update

The sentiment of a poet, in this case Horizons graduate Ja'Daiza Johnson, inspired the overall theme for Horizons 15th summer: *Horizons in our Hearts*. Students, teachers, parents, friends, and supporters contributed to a landmark year for Horizons at Harley.

A record number of students (83%) returned to the program in 2009 to re-unite with Horizons friends in our unique learning community. Forty-five new students participated, including our first-ever kindergarten class. Over half of our students (53%) had perfect attendance, while the average daily program attendance was 96%.

Five Horizons graduates joined our paraprofessional staff, serving as wonderful role models during the summer session. Exceptional grade-level teachers were joined by colleagues in

art, health, reading, music, gardening, cooking, and library science, further enriching a strong core program. The world premier of *My Mother's Journey*, a film produced by Harley alumnus Dr. Sam Hampton, was the kick-off for Horizons 15th anniversary celebration. 'Horizons Secret Garden' event honored founders and founding donors **Joe and Nancy Briggs, Cynthia and David Marshall, Bill Burleigh, The Wilson Foundation,** and **The Harley School**. Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy issued a 'Horizons at Harley Day' proclamation recognizing the program's positive impact on Rochester's children.

Plans for summer 2010 are well underway. *Let's Go Exploring* is the overall theme for Horizons this year. The program will offer expeditionary learning for middle school and expanded offerings in the arts.

Lessons Learned from Growing Together

Supporting Healthy Kids, Families, and Communities

Horizons unique health and wellness initiative, *Growing Together*, was created in response to the health needs and issues faced by our students. A multi-year grant from the George T. McGowan Fund established and has funded the initiative since 2008. Evaluation was conducted by an external evaluator in 2008 and 2009 to determine program impact, and found that *Growing Together* had a direct, positive impact on students' healthy development, both physically and mentally.

Growing Together's multi-faceted approach to health/wellness fit well with Horizons. The top four health issues rated by parents were consistent over both summers and addressed by the

program. These were 'making healthy food choices,' 'physical fitness,' 'handling stress,' and 'safety & supervision.' Healthy Kids Survey results indicate that students increased their level of physical exercise by 17%, and their consumption of vegetables by 11%. Student ratings increased by over 20% on the Meaningful Participation Scale, by 11% on the Empathy Scale, and 15% on the Problem-Solving Scale. Social work and mental health services were a significant component of *Growing Together* for all participants.

Due to the serious issue of childhood obesity, the Body Mass Index (BMI) was used as a quantitative measure to begin a closer look at summer program impact on weight gain/loss. Given that



current research shows BMI increases for children during the summer vs. school year, it is significant that the majority of our students remained stable in the normal weight range, and in some cases moved from overweight to normal BMI in 2008 and 2009. *Growing Together* will continue in summer 2010 with an array of gardening, cooking, health, outdoor education, and physical education classes.

Focus Report on Horizons Grads



Looking forward to every program day... feeling safe... being challenged to learn and grow—these are among the perceptions shared by Horizons graduates during 2009 focus sessions conducted as part of an overall program evaluation.

Graduates feel that Horizons helped them gain positive strengths including vision for the future, incentive to pursue goals previously thought unattainable, increased independence, a sense of purpose, and the development of intellectual curiosity.

All students shared a belief that involvement in the Horizons program gave them incentive to pursue goals previously thought to be unattainable.

Among the major themes addressed in the study were school year and summer program differences, home/family environment, coping with issues of race/class, whether students gain an advantage because of the Horizons experience, how Horizons teachers help outside the classroom, and family support during Horizons.

The report concludes that Horizons provides "... opportunities for students to view the world in a completely different way, and to open and make real all future potential." Eighteen Horizons graduates have completed their high school years; seventeen of these students (95%) successfully graduated from high school and are currently in college.

Teacher Receives National Award

Marilyn Fain Fenster was one of three Horizons teachers from sixteen Horizons programs across the U.S. to receive national recognition in 2009. Marilyn is the second of our teachers to receive recognition for her exemplary service and excellence as a Horizons teacher, joining **Patsy Friend** who received the award in 2006.



Marilyn's love of teaching and learning coupled with her passion for Horizons are stellar qualities that have influenced a generation of Horizons students in Rochester.

Instrumental in starting Horizons at Harley fifteen years ago, Marilyn has taught with the program ever since. She developed Horizons Grade 1 theme, The Five Senses, and provides exceptional lessons, activities, and experiences for Horizons first graders. Marilyn is tireless in her

efforts to help each and every child feel important and valued in a responsive classroom environment. Congratulations Marilyn!

Leadership and Service

This has been a year of transition for Horizons at Harley. Led by **Conger Gabel**, Horizons Advisory Board successfully managed a national search for a new Executive Director to replace outgoing director **Ann Pennella**. Ms. Pennella left Horizons this fall for a sabbatical to pursue her interests in writing and music; she remains involved as a program consultant and friend of Horizons.

Luis A. Perez, LMSW, was selected from a group of more than 100 applicants to serve as the new Executive Director of Horizons at Harley. A life-long resident of Rochester, Mr. Perez left a position at Roberts Wesleyan College where he served as Assistant Professor of Social Work and Director of MSW Field Education. Mr. Perez helped establish Hope Initiatives Community Development Corporation serving as its Executive Director from 2000-06, and has worked extensively in the areas of positive youth development, mentoring children of prisoners, and prisoner re-entry. Welcome Luis!

We are also pleased to welcome four new members to Horizons Advisory Board: **Osman Aliwaye, Zena Shuber-Dorsey, Eleanor Maclear, and Anne Townsend**. Sincere thanks are extended to outgoing Board members Kate Turner and Richard Finkelstein for their dedication, service, and support.



Luis A. Perez



Horizons = Quality Summer Learning

The original purpose of Horizons was to level the playing field of summer opportunities by providing a hybrid of high-quality academics and enrichment to low-income children. Today, Horizons at Harley continues this mission and vision.

Key characteristics of Horizons program are grounded in research on learning and child development. Horizons works because we:

- Begin Early & Provide Multiple Years of Intervention
- Serve a Broad Range of Academic Abilities & Build Community
- Engage Students through Experiential Learning
- Provide Quality Teachers, Relevant Enrichment, & Athletics
- Build Confidence through Swimming

Real Science for Horizons Students



Horizons Grade 7 and 8 students joined with other Rochester middle school students at U of R's Warner School of Education for their 2009 *Get Real!* Science camp. Students did field and lab work with science educators, studying Lake Ontario water quality. They used the boat Evolution, built by BRIDGES high school students, to collect water samples for their research.

upcoming events

visit horizonsatharley.com for more information

Garden Party Celebration: **May 20, 2010**
For ticket information call 442-1770 x 3014

Summer Program Dates: **June 28-August 6, 2010**

Official Program Visit Days: **July 8 & July 13, 2010**

Summer Reading Day: **July 21, 2010**

Summer Symposium: **TBD**

Harvest Festival/Field Day: **August 3, 2010**

Closing Celebration & Grade 8 Graduation: **August 5, 2010**

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