

Charter Voices

*Building Character....
....Achieving Excellence*

Meet Henry Johnson Charter School's Leadership Team

Principal

Imagine being selected to open a new charter school named for one of Albany's most respected historical figures. Henry Johnson won fame and high regard for his heroic actions as a member of the 369th Infantry Regiment, also known as the "Harlem Hell-fighters," during World War I. Planning a school that carries his name is both an honor and a challenge, for surely this school that is his namesake will want to reflect the high standards set through his character and actions.



Mrs. Turner views floor plans of the new HJCS building located at 30 Watervliet Avenue.

Lillian Turner, named Principal of Henry Johnson Charter School by its Board of Trustees last spring, embraces this mission with enthusiasm and energy. A woman who has devoted her life to education—"Since I went to kindergarten myself, I have never **NOT** gone back to school in September"—Mrs. Turner comes to Henry Johnson after thirty-five years as English teacher and later Director of English Language Arts in the Niskayuna Central School District. Most recently she served for four years as Director of the International Charter School of Schenectady.

"Working with children and helping to prepare them for life through education is the most fulfilling life's work I can imagine, and every step leading up to that moment when we will welcome children into our building is exciting." Currently, Mrs. Turner's attention is focused on enrolling students, hiring teachers and staff, and making curricular decisions for both the academic and character programs the school will offer. A strong focus on literacy and math plus the unique Proactivity character program will be the hallmarks of the Henry Johnson CS experience.

Life is not all school, though. In her private life, Mrs. Turner enjoys the company of her husband William (aka "Sonny") and Golden Retriever, Duffy. Reading, cooking and trying new recipes, dancing, traveling, movie-going, and photography are favorite pastimes.

Frank Sheldon grew up in upstate New York, attending public schools there and later receiving his college degree through North Country Community College SUNY. After working in the industrial area for many years, Mr. Sheldon became involved in the education world as Business and Operations Manager of the International Charter School of Schenectady. He later moved to The Achievement Academy Charter School in Albany as its Business and Operations Manager and has now joined HJCS in a similar role, responsible for all school and business operations.

Business and Operations Manager



Mr. Sheldon prepares to keep the books at HJCS.



Ms Penn enjoys her job as parents' first contact with Henry Johnson CS.

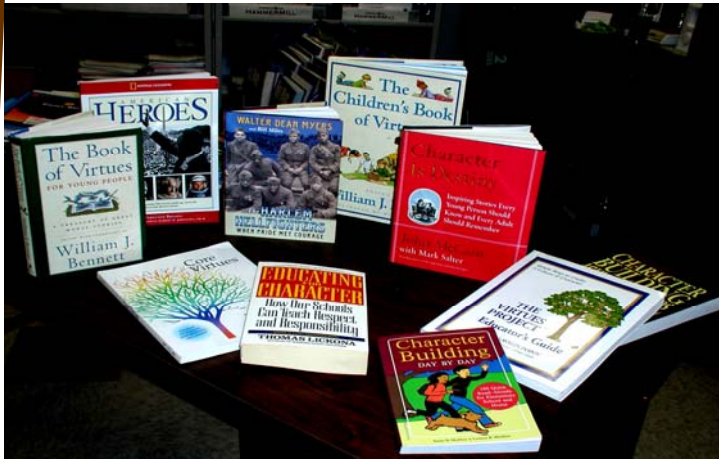
Administrative Assistant / Office Manager

Place a call to HJCS and the friendly voice you are likely to hear on the other end of the line is that of Tanya Penn, a native of Albany who attended Albany High School and received a degree in Business/Marketing and Management from Sage Junior College of Albany. The proud mother of two, Ms Penn has dedicated several years to volunteering as a Little League team mom and coach. She is a motivated individual who loves to be challenged and takes pride in working and serving her community. Her past jobs include Resource Specialist for The Women's Employment and Resource Center, Property Manager for 215 units in Arbor Hill for the Urban League, and Rate Quote Analyst for the Finance Department of MVP in Schenectady. Ms Penn is pleased to join the Henry Johnson Charter School family, coming to us from Albany Prep Charter School. In her spare time she enjoys reading and traveling and spending time with family and friends.

What We Mean By...

....*Building Character*

If, as a charter school, Henry Johnson must be primarily concerned with the academic achievement of its students,



why does “Building Character” come first in our tag line?

Simply put, it is through the resources of a strong character that children learn how to learn, how to value learning, and how to make decisions about their lives that will lead them to success. The HJCS Mission Statement addresses this belief when it promises an environment that instills character, virtue, and “habits of mind” that ensure success both in and out of the classroom: diligence, courage, respect, self-reliance, duty, and responsibility.

Lacking those qualities, Sgt. Henry Johnson him-

self would not have been prompted to his heroic act of saving a comrade from certain death in an ambush, and, while we hope our children will never have to face a challenge that profound, it is these qualities that will support them in their everyday lives and give them the strength—the grit—to try harder, work harder, be fairer, be kinder.

Our unique *Proactivity* program, borrowed from our model school Milwaukee College Prep, and books such as those pictured at left—not to mention the inspiration provided by Henry Johnson himself—will help our school achieve this part of the mission.

“Academic excellence is founded on expert teaching, powerful program, and relevant, engaging materials.”

“Achieving excellence” can be read two ways: first, as the school builds students’ character, it achieves excellence in accomplishing that goal. It can also mean that the students achieve excellence in their academics, in part as a result of strong character development. However you read the tag line, it



speaks to the HJCS mission. Academic excellence is founded on expert teaching, powerful program, and relevant, engaging materials.

In these photos, curriculum reviewers study textbooks and other materials in English language arts and math for adoption

by the school. To round out their academic experience, students will also have classes in social studies, science, art, music, physical education, and computers.



Milwaukee College Prep Shows the Way

Welcoming the children of urban Milwaukee since 1997, Milwaukee College Prep celebrated its 10th anniversary this fall with an expanded building, a new playground, and a fully equipped computer lab donated by an area business. This K-8 school that has been described as the “Miracle on 36th Street” (it’s located on North 36th Street in the city), has changed students’ lives by providing an education and expectations that lead to enrollment in the top high schools in the city and country, including Phillips Exeter Academy and Brookfield Academy.



MCPS kindergartners line up for recess.

MCPS achieves these results by adhering strictly to its mission: “An unrelenting focus on academic achievement and character development is our cornerstone. We embrace an educational philosophy of love and hard work coupled with a college-bound curriculum grounded in basic skills, outstanding literature, and moral virtues.” Add to this a nurturing environment of high expectations and accountability along with “awesome teachers, dedicated parents, diligent students, and phenomenal community support”—not to mention the inspired leadership of Principal Robb Rauh—and you have a prescription for success.

“From the moment scholars enter our school as 4-year-olds [charter schools in Wisconsin are permitted to run pre-K schools], they are focused on climbing the mountain to college. This year’s 4K class is called the Class of 2020, referring to the year they graduate from high school and begin college. They write mission statements about what they will accomplish with their lives and they begin an engaging and rigorous curriculum that will give them the tools to be successful in college and beyond.

“Similar to John Wooden, the legendary UCLA basketball coach, spending the entire first practice of each season teaching his players how he wanted them to put on their socks and tie their shoes properly to avoid blistering and foot injuries, we ‘sweat the small stuff’:

- Impeccable uniforms
- Silent, neat lines in the hallways
- Answering all questions in complete sentences
- Sitting up straight and tracking the teacher in the classroom
- Parent signatures on homework each evening

‘Sweating the small stuff’ translates into not having to deal with the big stuff. Our school culture is marked by routine, ritual, order, predictability and high expectations for all.”

Why should all of this about MCPS concern you, an HJCS parent?



Kindergarten teacher Ms Brooke Halsey instructs a small reading group at the horseshoe table on “Red Shirt Day.”

Because MCPS is our model, and what you read about that outstanding school you will find reflected at HJCS. Already Mrs. Turner has served a three-week internship at the school, and this spring HJCS teachers will spend a few days there absorbing the program and the culture.



Imagine *your* child in these photos—wearing *our* uniform’s brown, brown plaid, or gold color scheme—and imagine your family’s pride in his or her accomplishments. Making those accomplishments happen is our promise to you and to your Class of 2020 or 2019 scholar.

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[Quoted material is taken from MCPS brochures. Visit their website at www.milwcollegeprep.com.]

Student Enrollment



At this time of year our number one priority is enrolling students, and helping us immensely in that undertaking is the Brighter Choice Project, funded by a federal grant to assure that all parents are aware of the educational choices available to them. In these photos, Brighter Choice staffers Lillian Garland and James Chandler provide information about Henry Johnson Charter School and help a mother enroll her child. Thanks to other BCP staff members Maureen Blum, Sabrina Johnson, and Arica Grimes for the work they do to get the word out about the benefits of Albany's charter schools.



You are invited to an
Information Night for Parents

at our temporary office at the
KIPP Building at 1 Dudley Heights
(also known as 400 Northern Blvd.)

Stop in to meet our Principal, have your questions answered, and see our building plans, curriculum materials, and uniforms.

Visit on the night convenient for you—
Wednesday, Feb. 21 or Tuesday, Feb.27
5:30 pm to 8:00 pm

Construction Work on New HJCS Building Progresses Well



Jim Miller, Construction Manager for Brighter Choice Foundation school projects, looks over the plans for our new building at 30 Watervliet Avenue. Renovations are currently under way in the original structure, which used to be P.S. #3, built in 1887. That building is being fitted for modern-day use with every effort to retain as many of its original features as possible. Within a week or so footings for the new expansion are slated to be put in, resulting in a building that will more than double the size of the original and boast state-of-the-art elements and features tailored to the special needs of the HJCS program. A large multi-purpose room to be used

for gym classes and assemblies, a cafeteria, a library media center, art and music rooms along with classrooms outfitted with computers will provide a bright and comfortable environment where real learning can take place.

Stop by to say "Hi!"

HJCS will be out and about over the next several weeks. If you're there too, stop by to say "Hi!"

Feb. 21-23 — Black History Month Celebration at Empire State Plaza

March 3 — Hannaford's Kidz Expo at Empire State Plaza

March 10 — Brighter Choice Foundation's Charter School Fair at Brighter Choice School on Central Avenue



*Building Character...
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30 Watervliet Avenue
Albany, NY 12206

Temporary office at 1 Dudley Heights, Albany, NY 12210

Phone: 518-432-4300

Fax: 518-432-4311

E-mail: ltumer@henryjohnsoncs.org

www.henryjohnsoncs.org