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**Starr Detroit Academy aims to continue Starr Commonwealth mission in Detroit**

**HARPER WOODS, MI** – Starr Commonwealth, a child and family services organization headquartered in Albion, Mich., has embarked on a new endeavor near the east side of Detroit.

Starr Detroit Academy, an open admissions charter school located in Harper Woods serving K-5 children, is scheduled to start school this fall and has nearly 600 students enrolled.

After a highly selective process, Starr Commonwealth received approval in September 2011 for charter school authorization from Central Michigan University. The academy's daily operations are overseen by a management company, Starr Commonwealth Educational Services.

Starr Detroit Academy is made possible in part by the legacy of the Children's Home of Detroit, which ended its services in 2008. Starr Commonwealth, as successor to the property owned by the 172-year-old organization, pledged to reinvest CHD resources into services for youth in the metropolitan area by establishing a committee called Vision Detroit.

Larry Givens, Chair of the Vision Detroit Committee and a Starr Commonwealth board member, is dedicated to creating a culture of success, thus changing the perception of schools in Detroit.

"Detroit is an area with many underserved and at-risk youth," Givens said. "By making college and academic achievement a priority for children and families early on, the likelihood of our youth succeeding throughout their lives is exponentially greater."

The mission of Starr Detroit Academy is to prepare students for academic mastery, college, work and life. To achieve this task, each child will develop a strong character, self-confidence and a deep awareness of their own strengths, interests and abilities. Building a strong foundation in the core subjects through a college preparatory curriculum will also provide students with the skills needed to continue their education with the goal of consistently improving.

Using the strength-based model of positive youth development pioneered by Starr Commonwealth, the academy will provide individualized instruction aimed at meeting students at their achievement level. This program, Response to Intervention, offers teacher-led, small-group interventions that keep students engaged and on track with the idea of meeting grade level standards and closing the achievement gap.

Partnering with the academy to assist children in reaching their academic potential, the Efficacy Institute has been dedicated to the mission of getting students to perform at or beyond their grade level for over 25 years. The Efficacy Institute – which has partnered with Starr Commonwealth for the past two years – emphasizes the ability of all individuals to achieve success in school, work and life.

The Efficacy Institute's methods of data analysis will allow the academy to accurately gauge each student's readiness to take the next steps academically.

“These kids need as much time at school as possible,” said Jim Hall, President of the Starr Detroit Academy School Board. “Using strength-based practices and the Efficacy Institute’s data analysis system, as well as other tools, we are positioned to offer our students access to first-class academic and extracurricular programs.”

But high-level student achievement is impossible without a devoted staff. Starr Detroit Academy will feature professional development opportunities regularly, which will allow the team to be informed on best practices and leading-edge curriculum standards, keeping Starr Detroit Academy ahead of the curve.

Some additional features of the academy are free transportation, an extended school day – 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. – a full athletic program, a Mandarin Chinese program, an unyielding focus on partnering with parents to ensure their child’s success, and many more aspects intended to help the children of Detroit reach their full potential.

“For Starr Detroit Academy and our students to flourish, we need everyone involved to have an unwavering commitment to excellence,” said Dr. Jim Pelt, Chair of the Starr Commonwealth Educational Services Board. “All of our staff members will be held accountable, and we will hold our students to that same standard.

“Starr Detroit Academy is just the beginning for these children. Our program can start equipping kids with the skills they will need to succeed for the rest of their lives.”

Starr Detroit Academy is located at 19360 Harper Ave., in Harper Woods, Michigan. For more information on Starr Detroit Academy, visit [www.starracademy.org](http://www.starracademy.org). For more information on the Efficacy Institute, visit [www.efficacy.org](http://www.efficacy.org).

*Starr Commonwealth is internationally recognized as a leader in transformational programs for children, families, schools and communities. Founded in 1913, Starr’s practices and principles are supported by nearly a century of success in the treatment of troubled youth and confirmed by emerging research in behavioral health and neuroscience. Our community-based programs, residential treatment services and professional training represents the international standard of excellence in identifying, treating and healing trauma and pain-based behavior and building resiliency in children and adolescents. Starr’s first century was about building and refining a successful strength-based treatment approach for children and families. Our future will be spent making sure every child and family has access to it. For more information, please call 800-837-5591 or visit [www.starr.org](http://www.starr.org).*