

Starr Detroit Academy Newsletter

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The mission of Starr Detroit Academy is to prepare students for academic mastery, college, work and life.

Welcome back, scholars and families!

Hello and welcome to Starr Detroit Academy for the 2014-15 academic year! As we embark on our third year of serving children and families on Detroit's east side, we look forward to working with you and your child to achieve the best possible educational outcomes.

We've been working throughout the summer to ensure that our students have the opportunity to flourish at Starr Detroit Academy, with the ultimate goal of preparing them for academic mastery, college, work and life. That means if we expect our students to continually improve, we as educators have to keep improving as well.

If you're new to Starr Detroit Academy, we publish a monthly newsletter to keep you up to date on important school events, school and student achievements, as well as introducing you to members of our staff. We will also be sharing information about our partner organization, Starr Commonwealth, that helps us offer the high-quality education your children deserve. Welcome to our new families and welcome back to our returning families. Together we can make this a wonderful school year!

Staff Profile: Phil Price - Director of Schools

Education is important to Phil Price, the director of schools at Starr Detroit Academy. That might sound obvious considering Price works at a school, but to learn the real reason behind his passion for learning, you need to know a little more about him.

Price grew up in the Dallas-Fort Worth area of Texas. Much like Detroit, this is an area with significant socioeconomic challenges, failing schools and a need for better educational services.

After graduating from high school, Price attended Wiley College, the oldest black college in Texas, where he received his bachelor's degree.

In an effort to engage more with learning, Price pursued a career in education. He earned two master's degrees, one from Wayne State University in career and technical education, while the other is from North Central University with a specialization in educational leadership.

Price, who joined the Starr Detroit Academy team in June of last year, has held several roles in education, from teaching to his current



role in school leadership. He is no stranger to startup schools either, as he's been instrumental in developing schools for National Heritage Academies.

"I've been fortunate over the past 15 years to open three new schools with NHA," Price said. "The experience is always challenging, but the rewards are great."

At Starr Detroit Academy, Price will be focused on helping the school develop a consistently high-quality curriculum and educational experience for students.

"There is a high need to improve literacy and math in the community," Price said. "I came from the same kind of community in Texas, and it's important that we as educators do everything we can to help turn these communities around. Education is a great first step."

Price understands the importance of education and how it helps to shape young people's lives, and he hopes he can have a small part in helping students reach their potential.

"The opportunity to serve is most fulfilling," Price said. "To quote Martin Luther King Jr., 'To help someone as I pass along then my living will not be in vain.'"

Upcoming Events

Sept. 2: First week of school for grades 1-7

Sept. 2-5: Kindergarten orientation week

Sept. 8: First day of school for kindergarten

Sept. 17: Constitution Day

Sept. 30: Title 1 Open House

*** NWEA testing takes place in September**

Starr Summer Youth Festival showcases resilience of Detroit's youth

Starr Commonwealth's founder once said, "Beauty is a silent teacher." Floyd Starr also maintained a strong interest in the arts, collecting a significant number of fine works, including paintings, sculptures and furniture, encouraging Starr's students to explore their creative side.

He knew how powerful creative expression and an appreciation of the arts could be in the development of a young person, and for decades this philosophy has played a significant role in the youth development models of Starr Commonwealth.

Overcoming challenges, building on your strengths, bouncing back from adversity, giving back to the community — this is resilience, another fundamental part of Starr's positive youth development. So, what happens when you combine art and resilience?

On Sunday, Aug. 10, Starr Commonwealth launched the Art of Resilience campaign with a major new event in Detroit called the Starr Summer Youth Festival, designed to celebrate the strengths and resilience of young people across the Detroit region.

Approximately 300 young people from more than 40 different youth organizations sang, danced, acted, read their original writing or displayed visual art. Another 17 youth and cultural organizations provided information to help young people find new artistic and educational opportunities.

Dr. Martin Mitchell, president and CEO of Starr Commonwealth, said: "We have long seen the impact of the arts in the development of our students, and we believe strongly in building on the resilience of each individual, as well as families and communities. The Art of Resilience project aims to celebrate examples and stories of resilience from young people and communities across metro Detroit, recognizing the importance of positive youth development and the role the arts can play in that.

The Starr Summer Youth was a fantastic launch for the Art of Resilience and has generated not only incredible experiences for hundreds of young people, but also a wide range of community partnerships, which we aim to develop further in the coming year. We want to celebrate the inspiring work being done by youth and arts organizations throughout the community. By showcasing the many great stories of resilience from our youth, we can help tackle the negative stigma that so many young people face."



Dozens of groups performed Aug. 10 at the Starr Summer Youth Festival.

The festival attracted an audience of around 2,000 members of the Detroit community, with children and families enjoying performances on three stages over a period of six hours. Five hundred young people were provided with free, healthy meals as part of a program sponsored by Samaritan Homes.

The event also honored jazz legend Marcus Belgrave with the new "Starr Commonwealth Art of Resilience Award" for his extraordinary contribution to not only the arts but positive youth development. Belgrave has mentored dozens of young people in Detroit and beyond, including highly acclaimed musicians such as Rodney Whitaker, Kenny Garrett, Robert Hurst, Regina Carter, James Carter, Geri Allen, Karriem Riggins and Carlos McKinney.

John Hollingsworth, director of the Starr Summer Youth Festival, said: "We are delighted with the Detroit community's response to our Art of Resilience project. Not only did we see dozens of youth groups come forward to be in the festival but thousands of people came out to support the talented young artists. We are also thankful to have been supported in this project by foundations and other community leading organizations in the Detroit area."

The Art of Resilience project has received support from the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan, the Knight Foundation and StarrVista. It is being driven by an advisory group comprised of the Carr Center, ARISE Detroit, City Connect Detroit, the City of Detroit, New Detroit, Starr Educational Services, and the Neighborhood Service Organization (NSO).

