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Paterson Promise Kept

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Governor Christie Built On The Success Of The Harlem Children's Zone Model By Breaking Down Government Barriers And Focusing On The Needs Of Children In And Out Of The Classroom

Acting on Governor Christie's commitment to pursuing innovative approaches to ensure every New Jersey child is receiving a quality education, the Christie Administration is implementing the Promise Communities initiative.

Building on the core principles of the Harlem Children's Zone model and utilizing the participation of community partners and stakeholders, Promise Communities creates a comprehensive continuum of services designed to prepare young people in Paterson to succeed, from the cradle to college and a career, not only to deliver on needs in the classroom, but before and after school as well.

Working with the New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC), the State's designated non-profit partner in this project, the Christie Administration developed and executed a broad initiative designed to empower community-based organizations, help schools advance and operate more efficiently, and to break down the "silos of government," ensuring a more efficient and coordinated use of resources toward a common goal of positive outcomes for children.

Partnering With Harlem Children's Zone: In July of 2011, Governor Christie joined with Harlem Children's Zone founder and Executive Director, Geoffrey Canada, to announce the Promise Communities initiative in the Great Falls District of Paterson. In Harlem, Mr. Canada's organization has shown that results can be transformative when you take a commonsense and simple approach of breaking down silos and providing services in a complete way throughout a child's life.

Five-Year Strategic Plan: This past July, NJCDC in coordination with the Christie Administration finalized a new five-year Strategic Plan to guide its implementation of the Harlem Children's Zone model in Paterson. The State facilitated the Harlem Children's Zone's assistance in reviewing and finalizing the Strategic Plan.

Focusing State Services To Support Promise Communities: Acting on his commitment to deliver state government services more effectively and efficiently, Governor Christie ordered the relevant state agencies to identify how existing resources and services could be better utilized to support the Promise Communities initiative. As part of the Christie Administration's commitment to supporting NJCDC's five-year Strategic Plan, state departments are taking several important steps to provide direct support to the Promise Communities initiative ways and focusing services on the unique needs of individual children:

The Department of Education is working with NJCDC to align resources with schools involved with the Promise Communities initiative to close the achievement gap and prepare every student for success in college or in a career.

The Department of Labor and Workforce Development will work with NJCDC to focus on the specific needs of key industries in our State, help employers find qualified employees, and connect Paterson residents to training and educational opportunities.

The State Department of Health will work with NJCDC to connect Paterson residents to a variety of services, including newborn screening, children's oral health services, and asthma education and awareness programs.

Baby College: Based on the State's support of the Promise Communities initiative, The Nicholson Foundation has committed \$450,000 to launch a comprehensive parenting education program in the Great Falls District of Paterson. This program, known as a "Baby College", lays the groundwork for successful parenting and the rest of the programs the Promise initiative has to offer.

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The Teen Center: In support of the Paterson Promise initiative, and in partnership with the Paterson school district, NJCDC opened a new Teen Center within International High School in Paterson, providing students with an array of services - ranging from academic support to counseling to recreational activities - to ensure students stay in school and succeed. The Paterson school district has worked with NJCDC to offer expanded enrichment services to students and families at Paterson School No. 5, including the creation of an on-site health clinic providing primary care health services to low-income children.

YouthBuild: NJCDC has transformed its YouthBuild Program into a YouthBuild Academy to give at-risk young people the opportunity to turn their lives around by providing them with an array of educational and vocational services. Based on the national model, Paterson's YouthBuild Academy is an intensive program in which young adults who never completed high school study to obtain their GED while developing the leadership- and life- skills necessary for living a successful and productive life. As part of the state-supported five-year plan, NJCDC is working to scale up the YouthBuild Academy to eventually serve up to 200 students at a time.

Partnership With Higher Education Institutions: The Paterson Promise initiative is developing a partnership with Montclair State University, which will include a variety of support services including literacy education for parents and a counseling-based substance awareness program in schools.

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