



REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT BOARD  
OF HAMPDEN COUNTY, INC.

*Your Connection to Workforce Development*

## **Harlem Children's Zone Conference What will it take to make social changes for all children?**



Geoffrey Canada &  
Springfield / Holyoke Civic Leaders

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Geoffrey Canada visited Springfield to talk about a model that is improving the educational outcomes for children. The Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) is an anti-poverty effort that is impacting a generation of children. Mr. Canada created a "What ever it takes" approach that streamlined programs offered in the "zone" for young children in Harlem. This multi-faceted approach has been successful for many children, who by today's standards would be lost to a pipeline of poverty.

This model has been so effective that the Federal government is going to provide funding for 20 additional cities (RFP) to replicate the model in other neighborhoods. A team of Springfield and Holyoke civic leaders, with support from the Davis Foundation, attended a conference last week in New York City to learn more about this innovative approach. The leaders include Dr. Alan Ingram, Springfield Superintendent and Denise Jordon from the office of Mayor Domenic Sarno and many more.

HCZ offers a complex approach from pre-birth through the college years, offering the supports the children and their families need to complete their education. Programs included in this model are the Baby College where parents learn about brain development and the principles of education for their children. The Harlem Gems program graduates pre-school children who are "school ready".

In addition, the project created charter schools that meet the needs of children to successfully graduate and transition to college. This project has served over 10,000 children in 2009 and 90% of high school seniors have been accepted into college.

HCZ started with a business plan, a strategic plan, and a change agent who was willing to make the changes necessary to insure children's success. Geoffrey Canada mentions that we need people who move the needle and are willing to stick with children based outcomes.

For more information you can visit [www.hcz.org](http://www.hcz.org) and view the news article recently in The Republican.

[http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2009/11/educator\\_geoffrey\\_canada\\_head.html](http://www.masslive.com/news/index.ssf/2009/11/educator_geoffrey_canada_head.html)

The question for us to contemplate in our neighborhoods is what will it take for our children to succeed? Geoffrey Canada didn't wait for others to change this vicious cycle. The group of civic leaders and others in the community will continue to meet to develop a similar approach to community engagement and action.

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