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NEW KIND OF PUBLIC SCHOOL GETS THE INFORMATION-PACKED WEBSITE IT NEEDS

April, 2011 . . . Want to know where your daughter's teacher went to college? Or what your grandson will learn in second grade? Need an application for kindergarten? Or a list of school holidays?

Parents and other visitors to the new Staten Island Community Charter School (SICCS) website at www.si-ccs.org can get all that information and more. The site's bright colors, photos and contemporary graphics make it inviting and easy to use, but what's really different about it is the sheer amount of information it contains.

There are full professional biographies, with photos, of all SICCS staff members and trustees. An exhaustive section of frequently asked questions, many on charter school-related topics. And a helpful profile of the school's curriculum for kindergarten and grades 1 and 2.

There's also an archive of the school's press releases and collateral materials and a page on educational philosophy. Plus a Store page where visitors can buy children's and adult apparel that bears the SICCS logo. The site also provides detailed coverage of the many volunteer opportunities available.

S.I.'s first and only K-8 public charter school

According to Lorna Harris, chairperson of the SICCS board of trustees, the content-filled site is designed to help the community get to know Staten Island's first and only K-8 public charter school --- a school still in its first year of operation.

"Traditional public schools don't have to explain who they are, what they do, why they're different, or why you should trust them to educate your children," said Ms. Harris, of St. George. "We do. That's the gap in awareness and knowledge that our communications --- including our website --- have to overcome." (MORE)

Not only is SICCS a new school, Harris explained; it's a new kind of school --- a charter school --- that's founded on ideas like real collaboration between school, parents and community and dedicated to each student's success in school and in life, with an enhanced curriculum that includes foreign language study starting in kindergarten.

Community-based, community-run

"Our goal," Harris said, "is to build an effective educational institution that parents and families feel connected to, get involved with, and support."

Accepting its first students this past fall, Staten Island Community Charter School was founded by parents, grandparents and educators from the neighborhoods of Staten Island's North Shore --- community residents who wanted a different kind of public school for their children and grandchildren, and a voice in setting school policy, designing curriculum and implementing educational philosophy.

SICCS is run by a board of trustees, not a charter school management company. Most trustees --- including an elected representative of the SICCS Parent Team --- live in the same Staten Island neighborhoods as the school's students.

The new Staten Island Community Charter School website was created by the St. George-based team of Kevyn Fairchild, web developer; Vera Naughton, art director; and Dan Icolari, writer.

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