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We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect. [Chief Seattle] Our greatest glory consists not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. [Ralph Waldo Emerson] I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done for the children. [Orah Mountain Dreamer] Realize there is life in everything. Realize you are not what you've been taught. And some day, we won't stop smiling. When we walk, we'll float. And light will pour from our eyes. [Viktoras Kulvinskas] The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. [Edmund Burke] Children need long-distance, steady, persistent advocates who do the hard, quiet, thankless, day-to-day work, following up to make sure that action results, not just talk [Marian Wright Edelman] Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. [Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.] A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend on the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received. [Albert Einstein] A line is important except in the impact it has on other lives. [Jackie Robinson] What was really needed here to damen... change... attitudes... and life... and it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us. [Frank Lloyd Wright] Only reality is true. [John Galsworthy] Do the good you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can. [John Wesley] People have oriented all their solutions toward the easy and toward the easiest side of the easy; but it is clear that we must hold to what is difficult. That something is difficult must be a reason the more for us to do it. 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SCHOOLS DESIGNED FOR TEACHERS



“The Village Academies
assessment program is
exceptional. Their reading
assessments represent a
conceptual breakthrough
in the field.”

– **Kim Marshall,**

Leadership Coach,
New Leaders for New Schools



SCHOOLS DESIGNED FOR TEACHERS

How do you create enough excellent schools for all the children who need them?

The one thing I know for sure is that the single most important element of an excellent school is excellent teachers. It is so inspiring to be in the presence of an amazing teacher. I love watching teachers light up about a subject, and push students to do the hard thinking for themselves and to do their best work. One teacher can make a dramatic impact on a child's life.

My favorite book in graduate school was *The Vulnerable Teacher* by John Macrorie. In the book, Macrorie describes a teacher who "taught, I think, by love more than anything else. He was so much in love with English literature and with being a professor. Everyone worked for him to the maximum of his capacity. One couldn't let him down." Teaching is a sacred calling. It's teachers who make a school great.

[DEBORAH KENNY] FOUNDER

The needs of children must always come first – and the best way to serve children is to create schools that attract and support – and yes, serve – the best teachers. So we designed every aspect of our schools to nurture and develop excellent teachers. From the beginning, our core strategy has been to attract talented, passionate educators, to empower them with autonomy, to provide them with clear standards and outstanding professional development, and to hold them accountable for results.



Village Academies is people-driven, not program-driven. The difference is profound. We're not replicating a particular program or product. We are thoughtfully and deliberately setting out to

create an ideal environment and a rich intellectual life for teachers. For example, we try to create systems and opportunities for teachers to collaborate with each other, to talk with each other – about instruction, about students, about data. The result of this approach is extraordinary learning experiences and achievement results for students.

WE ARE SETTING OUT TO CREATE AN IDEAL ENVIRONMENT AND A RICH INTELLECTUAL LIFE FOR TEACHERS.

I see teachers as scholars, and feel it's so important that they should be supported as professionals. We are always looking for ways to reduce administrative tasks for teachers, and while we do have a longer day, we try to keep hours as reasonable as possible, because we don't want teachers to burn out. We want them to fall in love – and to stay with us and grow with us – to become department chairs and associate principals and principals.

The best of what we've accomplished has been created by our teachers. By building a system of schools designed for teachers, we will ensure an excellent education for all children.

Dr. Deborah Kenny was the founding principal of Harlem Village Academy. She is the Chief Executive Officer of Village Academies Network.





"At Village Academies, everyone is on the same page. I'm leading excellent teachers who constantly challenge themselves."

– Laurie Warner,
School Leadership Director

TEACHING AT VILLAGE ACADEMIES

What makes Village Academies different? At Village Academies in Harlem, we emphatically believe that excellent teachers are the most important element of excellent schools. Therefore, we have thoughtfully designed every aspect of our schools to support, develop, respect, and empower our teachers. We are people-driven, not program driven – and the difference is profound. We're not replicating a particular program; we are deliberately and carefully setting out to create an ideal environment and rich intellectual life for teachers. By building a system of schools designed for teachers, we will ensure an excellent education for all children.

Feel appreciated, empowered and respected. Village Academies deeply values teachers' ideas and empowers teachers to make important decisions about curriculum, lesson plans and instructional methods. Teacher input is respected and feedback is encouraged. Our outstanding achievement results and programs have been created by our teachers!

Learn to become a leader. The growth of the Village Academies network of schools provides exciting career growth opportunities for teachers, such as becoming a mentor teacher, grade team leader, dean or principal.

Receive unparalleled professional development. Every summer, teachers participate in the

Village Academies Summer Institute — an incredible learning experience featuring best practices sharing, collaborative lesson planning, and assessment analysis training. Throughout the year, teachers receive personalized instructional coaching and weekly professional development, and continually improve their craft.

VILLAGE ACADEMIES TEACHERS...

As a Village Academies teacher, you will . . .

Work with smart, passionate colleagues.

What teachers love most about Village Academies is how energizing it feels to work every day with like-minded colleagues — amazing teachers who are intelligent, professional, committed to children, and fun to work with!

Collaborate weekly to share best practices.

Perhaps the most exhilarating part of the Village Academies experience is working in teams to discuss each student's needs, develop new ideas, continually improve instruction, and solve problems together.

Enjoy extensive professional support. Every teacher at Village Academies is respected as a scholar. Teachers receive professional office space, computers, email, voicemail, administrative assistance, and off-site access to the school's computer network.



WE HAVE THOUGHTFULLY DESIGNED EVERY ASPECT OF OUR SCHOOLS TO SUPPORT, DEVELOP, RESPECT, AND EMPOWER OUR TEACHERS.

Feel the deep satisfaction of improving the lives of children in the Harlem community.

We serve children from low performing school districts in Harlem. The academic gains achieved by our students are among the highest in the country. 100%

of our 8th graders passed the New York State math exam, 100% passed science, and 96% passed social studies. Our mission is to develop students of fine character who graduate from college and make a positive contribution to society. Village Academies teachers are continually improving their craft, and building schools that are recognized as a national model for educational excellence.

I've never seen a faculty so talented and dedicated.

At Village Academies, you're working among the highest caliber teachers, so you learn a lot and become better just by observing and talking with colleagues. At my previous schools, I didn't really receive much feedback. Working at Village Academies changed everything. The constant feedback and professional development has helped me to grow as a teacher. Here I am encouraged to perfect my craft. Everyone operates under the premise that we want to help each other be the best educators we can be. School leaders are incredibly supportive and open. They listen to ideas and suggestions for improvement. We've had incredible success and we're proud of that, but we are still continually looking at how we can get even better. Everyone brings so much to the table, and we all work together to improve ourselves and our schools.



THE CONSTANT FEEDBACK AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS HELPED ME TO GROW AS A TEACHER.



VILLAGE ACADEMIES BELIEVES IN EMPOWERING TEACHERS, AND THE BEST THINGS ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS HAVE COME FROM OUR TEACHERS.

I came to teaching as a second career.

Because of this, I had different expectations. In my first teaching position, I spent six years in an urban public school and I became disenchanted. I did not feel like I was surrounded by professionals. Here, I really do.

First and foremost, I'm an educator, and I believe in leading by listening. I have a lot of respect for good teachers, and we have so many *great* teachers here. Village Academies believes in empowering teachers, and the best things about our schools have come from our teachers. Their contributions and ideas are invaluable.

As a teacher, it's challenging to find balance between discipline and making the classroom a joyous place. But it can be done. It is also difficult to keep patience and energy. But the rewards – seeing kids succeed and feeling proud of what they've done – are really amazing.



WORKING HERE HAS ALLOWED ME TO REALIZE THE PURSUIT THAT I BEGAN AS A TFA CORPS MEMBER. IT'S AMAZING TO WORK AT A SCHOOL THAT RELENTLESSLY PURSUES EXCELLENCE.

I am in love with our school.


It is one of the most amazing places I have ever been. In each and every classroom, there is an excitement, a sense of urgency, a quest to discover. Once I knew a school like ours existed, I absolutely had to be a part of it. When I first started out in teaching, I was told, "Stay out of the teachers' lounge; it's where unhappy teachers go to complain!" But Village Academies has a teachers' office. For me, that space is really one of the wonders of our school: it's filled with the smartest people I have ever met. It's where we collaborate, strategize, share ideas, and laugh! At Village Academies, every single thing we do is in the best interest of our students. No teacher on our team has ever put anything else before this common goal. We are committed to excellence and our culture is such that when you point out a weakness, you should also point out a potential solution. It amazes me how much you grow as a teacher here.

Teach for America and Village Academies are complimentary.

Extraordinary gains require extraordinary people. Coming from Teach for America, I already understood this concept. Teach for America rigorously trains corps members to become excellent teachers. Village Academies then gave me the organizational support, professional development, and time to realize the vision. TFA alum are well suited for careers at Village Academies because the respect, humility, and integrity that are critical to corps members are fundamental at Village Academies. Working here has allowed me to realize the pursuit that I began as a corps member. It's amazing to work at a school that relentlessly pursues excellence, where every member of the team holds themselves and each other to the highest expectations.



THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING PLACES I HAVE EVER BEEN. IT AMAZES ME HOW MUCH YOU GROW AS A TEACHER HERE.



"Village Academy is one of the best schools I have seen in fifty states and five continents. Everyone talks about data-driven accountability, but Village Academies is making it work."

– **Douglas Reeves, Ph.D.,**

President,
Center for Performance Assessment



EVERYONE FROM THE PRINCIPAL TO THE CEO
CARES ABOUT TEACHERS AND TAKES AN
ACTIVE ROLE IN OUR DEVELOPMENT.

I've been teaching for 25 years.

I have never been part of an educational community that so advocates the nobility in education, that so maintains an atmosphere in which the mind is elevated and the character exalted. High expectations for every member of the learning community abound: they are clearly communicated, justified and explained as key to reaching educational and personal goals. At Village Academies, the ownership you have over what and how you teach compels you to be passionate about it. Village Academies is a place for educators who feel joy deeply with each student's every moment of success, and who try something else and something else again when the success is slow coming. There's comfort in knowing that every decision is made with a respected colleague's idea of "what's best for kids" in mind.

Village Academies empowers teachers.

There is not a top down approach here. Leaders as well as teachers identify problems, and everyone participates in finding solutions. It's always a team feeling. Everyone is encouraged to take initiative. The office manager is empowered to enhance the efficacy of administrative systems. Teachers are empowered to refine curriculum. We're always included in the decision-making process, so we step up and take ownership. This drives us to do our best. The leadership team at Village Academies sets high expectations and trusts teachers. Everyone from the principal to the CEO cares about teachers and takes an active role in our development. When a leader comes to a class, they find the time to go over their observations. They believe in teachers' capability; they're always looking to support and empower us. It's incredible.



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VILLAGE ACADEMIES PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Rigorous Curriculum

A rich liberal arts curriculum that teachers are empowered to continually refine.

Longer School Day

A schedule that runs from 7:40-4:40 provides time for students to master basic skills, to reflect deeply on ideas, and to fall in love with learning.

Enrichment Program

Optional after-school homework center, sports and clubs featuring karate, capoeira, yoga, journalism, dance and other enrichment activities.

Diagnostic Assessment

Village Academies assessments measure student progress every 4-6 weeks. After each assessment, teachers meet with the principal for personalized instructional planning sessions, to analyze data and discuss strategies to improve learning and teaching.

Tutoring and Saturday School

Saturday programs and weekly tutoring provide students with academic support and extracurricular activities.

Excellent Teachers

Dedicated teachers with subject area expertise and a passion for teaching.

Grade Level Teams

Teachers meet weekly to review behavior, homework, and other issues, and to discuss strategies for supporting the 50-60 students in their grade.

Academic Collaboration

Academic departments regularly discuss curriculum and instruction, look at student work together, and share best practices.

A Common Culture

School-wide rules and community routines establish clear and common expectations for students.

Student Uniforms

Uniforms reduce social pressure and engender a culture of scholarship and respect.

Small School

A small, safe, nurturing environment where every adult knows and feels responsible for every child.

Community Circle

This gathering of our whole school is the highlight of the week, where students feel a sense of joy in belonging to our close-knit community.

"IT'S AN INCREDIBLE FEELING
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TEACHERS WHO ALL WANT
WHAT'S BEST FOR KIDS."



Character Education

Weekly small group "family meeting" focused on values such as integrity, respect and compassion, with an emphasis on long-term character development.

Advisory

A personal advisor for every student provides individual attention and develops trust and involvement of parents through frequent communications.

College-Bound Culture

Every class is named for a college, students visit college campuses each year, and the faculty speak frequently about preparing for college.

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Village Academies maintains a highly selective and rigorous hiring process. If you would like to be considered for a position, please email your resume along with a cover letter to: teach@villageacademies.org.

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