

## York has a new charter school: New Hope Academy Charter School has more than 160 students.

By: Nicholo Dobo

Dec 26, 2007 — Standing on a stage in front of about 160 New Hope Academy students, Samuel Sutton called out one teen's name. "Luis Cordero. Where is Luis?" Sutton, a director at the school, asked. Students, who were lined up for a routine morning program, started pointing. Cordero, 14, raised a hand.

Sutton explained to the student body that Cordero scored the highest on a recent test meant to prepare them for state standardized tests. The news came as students at the city's newest charter school prepared for the day with a series of drills, including arm circles, jumping jacks and reciting the school's motto.

New Hope Academy, with a staff of 20, opened to grades seven and eight in September. There are plans to expand to ninth and tenth grade next year, and to eventually expand to become a high school that graduates students. "Frankly, I think we are raising a lot of victims," said Isiah Anderson Jr., founder of the school and owner of the company that provides management services to the school. "To combat that, we talk a lot about how you can control your own destiny."

The school was founded by Anderson, a former basketball coach in the York City School District, who has worked at Crispus Attucks and Mission Home Ministries. His background as a coach is apparent - students line up each morning and do calisthenics and school-spirit cheers. The school is founded on a curriculum that requires project-work in every class and there is a heavy emphasis on technology. All students also take a semester of Spanish. Standardized tests, a requirement for public schools, are also a heavy focus, Anderson said. Students are constantly taking practice tests, like the one on which 14-year-old Cordero scored high. "They understand what you need and they help you," Cordero said. The first year for standardized testing, which will show how students there are doing academically, will come this year. Results are usually released by the state in the fall of the following school year.

"We haven't made any false promises," Anderson said of how the students will do on the tests. "We know we have a lot of work ahead of us." Anderson won approval from the York City School Board for the New Hope Academy Charter School in March by a 6-3 vote. The charter school has enrolled mostly minority students from the city schools. The city school district pays the charter school a fee for each student they take, so students attend tuition-free. The school is working with a \$1.4 million budget for the 2007-2008 school year.

The opening of the charter school came about two years after Anderson began operating an alternative education program at the building now shared with the charter school. Three Cord Youth Services is a private, for-profit education service Anderson owns that currently has a contract with the city school district. Anderson's company is also paid to provide management services to New Hope. The West King Street building was purchased by a real estate company in Anderson's name for \$280,000 from New Heights Ministries, a Christian church, according to county property assessment records. Another \$60,000 was spent making the building suitable for the school, Anderson said.

### AT A GLANCE

The New Hope Academy Charter school was founded by Isiah Anderson Jr., a former basketball coach, who has worked in other city schools. The school currently has seventh- and eighth-grade students, but plans to expand to upper grades. For more information on the school call 845-4046 or go to <http://www.newhopeacademycharterschool.com>.

## York has a new charter school: New Hope Academy Charter School has more than 160 students.

Photos by Paul Kuehnel

### HELPING HAND

Seven students at New Hope Academy were recently selected to become “O Ambassadors,” a program sponsored by Oprah's Angel Network and Free The Children. The program connects students in North America to others around the world. They work toward the UN Millennium Development Goals to address problems such as poverty and hunger. The New Hope Academy students involved in the O Ambassadors Club are: Nychole Woodyard, 13; Jah'Licia Cruz, 13; Jessie Mummert, 13; Imari Cross, 13; Melinda Garcia, 12; Wesley Johnson, 12; and Davia Woodyard, 12.



Students at the New Hope Academy Charter School in York start the day each morning by lining up and performing calisthenics and school-spirit cheers. Jasmine Spells, an eighth-grader at New Hope Academy Charter School, leads her line in morning warm-up late Wednesday.



Students at the New Hope Academy Charter School respond in unison to Samuel Sutton, a director at the school, during the morning program. The children are required to participate each morning in the program, which serves as a big homeroom for the school.



Students at the New Hope Academy Charter School have hands-on project work in every class to aid learning. Science teacher Heather Dorsey leads a class last Wednesday while classical music softly plays in the background.