

## **Former Catholic School Built in 1914 Transformed into Charter School**

*Golden Door Charter School started the 2011 school year in historical, renovated building*

JERSEY CITY (September 2011)- Students at Jersey City Golden Door Charter School started the school year on September 9<sup>th</sup> in a historically renovated building at 3026 John F. Kennedy Boulevard. Construction began at Golden Door Charter School in December to renovate the stately St. John the Baptist School and Convent buildings.

The building was originally built in 1914, yet now feels like a brand new building through façade improvements and renovations completed in the classrooms and hallways. Finished wood floors, new lighting fixtures and new paint completed the fresh look. Additionally, the school put in large white boards in each classroom to cover up the old chalkboards and to modernize the function of the classrooms. The terrazzo flooring in the hallways were also refinished which added character and richness to the building.

Build with Purpose also renovated the adjacent convent, tying the two buildings together with an exterior courtyard. The convent contains administrative spaces, offices, and a conference room for staff. Most windows have been replaced in the school and the convent, but some minor work is still ongoing such as landscaping and the replacement of additional windows.

“Without Build with Purpose, we never would have gotten this project done. They were with us every step of way. The building is beautiful; it is larger and more affordable. Our families love it,” said Brian Stiles, Chief Academic Officer at Golden Door Charter School.

The exterior courtyard between the two buildings creates a new entrance, drop-off area, and garden space with benches. KSS Architects is the architect for the project and Tekton Development is the contractor.

“We are pleased how the upgrades to the buildings tie into the existing details of the space. The faculty can appreciate the history and quality of the buildings but the students also feel they are part of something special as well,” said Eric Felczak, Project Manager at Build with Purpose.

Build with Purpose secured this as a permanent home for Golden Door Charter School in spring 2010 using an innovative real estate structure. Build with Purpose negotiated a 40-year lease for the school with the former St. John the Baptist School. The long-term lease was structured such that the owner would retain legal ownership while letting the school secure the financial resources to renovate the building without the cost of buying it. New Markets Tax Credits were utilized for the project with



The Reinvestment Fund and Chase providing the financing.

At 72,000 square feet, Golden Door Charter School’s new building maintains the beautiful historical structure as well as

the exceptional architectural detail. The building includes a 3,900 square foot auditorium complete with a mezzanine and a stained glass skylight that encompasses the entire ceiling and floods the space with natural light.

Golden Door Charter School was founded in 1998 as one of Jersey City's first charter schools. At its current location, 180 Ninth Street, the school educates nearly 500 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Even with the added space available at the new facility, there are no plans to increase enrollment at the school.

As a nonprofit, Build with Purpose is committed to building strong organizations and communities through innovative real estate development. Since its inception in 2003, Build with Purpose has assisted dozens of nonprofits in developing their facilities to meet their social service needs.

Build with Purpose provides all phases of real estate development and technical assistance including financial structuring and project management. Build with Purpose has been recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education with the Corporate Partnership Award for its work with charter schools and by the Federal Department of Education as a promising practice in real estate development.

For more information, contact Build with Purpose at 732-635-1000.

On the web:

[www.bwpurpose.org](http://www.bwpurpose.org)

[www.goldendoorschool.org](http://www.goldendoorschool.org)