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Path Academy Windham to Open its Doors for Students ***Connecticut's Newest Charter will have First Day of School on August 18***

[Path Academy Windham](#), a state charter school, will open to students on Monday, August 18, 2014. Located in Windham, Connecticut, the opening completes a 14-month process starting with State Board of Education Approval in June 2013, \$6.7-million investment by [Our Piece of the Pie, Inc. \(OPP\)](#) for design, construction and equipment, and full enrollment.

Path Academy is holding a public Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, commemorating the time and hard work preparing a curriculum, renovating a building, and recruiting staff/students within a year's time. The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held on Friday, September 5, 2014, beginning at 10a. A tour of the facility will follow the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

For the 2014-15 school year, Path Academy is enrolling 120 students that are grades 9-12, with a maximum capacity of 200 students in the 2015-16 school year. An estimated 75% of students enrolled will be Windham/Willimantic residents with the remaining students representing: Andover, Bozrah, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Franklin, Hampton, Hebron, Lebanon, Mansfield, Marlborough, Norwich, Scotland, Sprague, Tolland, Vernon, and Willington. Currently, there are 120 students enrolled at Path Academy Windham and a waiting list is expected.

During the week of August 4, students and parents attended school orientation to familiarize themselves with the school and the staff. From Monday, August 11 through Friday, August 15, the school is open to community walk-throughs from 10am-2pm, where the principal and staff will be on-site to view the renovated building and answer questions.

"After nearly two years building a school that is based on experience, research and community need, it's exciting to have students in the halls," said Principal Brooke Lafreniere. "Last week, we held orientation sessions which introduced students to the school that has been designed to look and feel different than any school they've been a part of -- it's motivating for us to see student's motivation to succeed."

Path Academy is located at 832-842 Main Street in Willimantic, in the former YMCA donated by the DeVivo Family. The renovated building, which has been vacant since the mid-1990's, is a significant addition to the revitalization of downtown Willimantic.

The school building project was a complete overhaul of the 29,000-square foot building, restoring the façade to its original brick and limestone, and creating a state-of-the art educational facility that will serve up to 200 high school students. Over 10 months, [Construction Resources, Inc. \(CORE\)](#) of Farmington, CT managed a \$5.3-million top-to-bottom renovation, as designed by [Crosskey Architects, LLC](#) of Hartford, CT. [Webster Bank](#) provided project financing, helping to turn the building from uninhabitable to vibrant and conducive to student learning. The building is in a B-1 Zoning district, which includes zoning for schools, and received its Certificate of Occupancy on August 1, 2014.

“Our Piece of the Pie has an intense commitment to helping young people become economically independent adults, as seen in the time, effort and resources we have devoted to the full development of Path Academy,” said Bob Rath, President/CEO of Our Piece of the Pie, the charter management organization for Path Academy. “We’re excited to see the result of that commitment, with students at Path Academy gaining the access, opportunity, and skills they need to become successful.”

The building was designed with the unique school model in mind. For example, a key component of the Path Academy is the individualized learning plans and self-driven mastery-based progression, requiring each student to work independently. To coordinate students and their individualized schedules, the former YMCA gym is now the Learning Lab, complete with cubicle stations for each student, acting as each student’s locker, housing their books, school materials and provided computer. The building is then made up of 13 high-tech classrooms, workrooms for Youth Development and support staff, offices for administrators, a gymnasium, and additional typical school components.

About Path Academy

Path Academy was unanimously approved as a state charter school in June 2013 by Connecticut’s Board of Education and is managed by Hartford-based non-profit Our Piece of the Pie. Open in August 2014, Path Academy re-engages over-age, under-credited students in the Windham, Connecticut region by supporting them through mastery of the critical skills necessary for success in college, career and community.

Our Piece of the Pie serves as the Charter Management Organization for Path Academy, including the development of the school model and property. OPP’s mission is to help urban youth become economically independent adults and works with young people in Connecticut communities, high schools and community colleges. With the belief that success in adulthood includes being able to meaningfully contribute to society, OPP provides a framework to guide youth, with the specific goals of high school graduation, achieving a postsecondary degree and obtaining rewarding post-education employment.

For more information, please visit www.PathAcademyWindham.org or www.OPP.org.

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