

## ASPIRA of Pennsylvania

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**Founded** 1969

**Budget:** \$52,000,000

**Web site:** <http://www.aspirapennsylvania.org/> [2]

**Address:**

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(215) 455-1300

**Major Programs:**

ASPIRA of PA Community Programs

**Preschool Program.** Since 2005, ASPIRA of PA has operated the largest PreK/Head Start program and preschool partnered with the School District of Philadelphia, and currently has a waiting list of almost 300 families. The preschool offers a bilingual environment and implements research-based brain development techniques vital to youth under 5 years old.

**Afterschool Programs.** ASPIRA of PA believes in structured, high quality afterschool programs that provide a mix of academic enrichment, counseling, academic help, personal development, and a safe, drug and violence-free environment. ASPIRA of PA's Afterschool Success Center at Hostos Charter, for example, serves over 150 students for 38 weeks, 3 hours per day, five days per week at no cost to the families. This program has received awards from its funders for consistently overachieving attendance and retention goals.

**Leadership Development Program.** ASPIRA of PA offers 6-12th grade in-school and afterschool character development activities to enhance the leadership abilities of youth. Students learn the process of awareness, analysis, and action. The program provides leadership training, cultural enrichment activities, and community action projects that teach students how to become effective leaders of their communities. This program was founded in 1961, is the hallmark program of ASPIRA nationally, and currently serves 8 schools in Philadelphia.

**In-School Training Institute.** After several requests from our partner schools in the area, ASPIRA of PA now offers youth development programming during school hours. The curricula covers a variety of pertinent topics, including conflict resolution, relationship building, study skills, and identity formation. The Training Institute caters their objectives and activities for the particular needs of each school. The Training Institute currently serves 5 local schools.

**Male and Female Development Programs.** Given the unique needs of community's young men and women, ASPIRA of PA offers Girls Invested in Real Leadership (GIRL) and Men of Value and Purpose (MVP). These groups address gender-specific needs and struggles, building young leaders who value themselves, their peers, families, and community. GIRL and MVP each provide a safe-haven to authentically discuss and explore real issues facing our teenagers.

**College Preparation Program.** ASPIRA of PA's federally-funded TRIO Educational Talent Search college preparation program helps students and their families explore post-secondary educational options, prepare for college (including SAT-preparation workshops), and find funding to support their

post-secondary aspirations. To date, this program has helped approximately 1,000 youth obtain post-secondary education.

**21st Century Community Learning Center.** ASPIRA of PA's new Learning Center launched in September 2010 to provide more intensive support to middle and high school youth and their families. The program offers an amalgam of services for the youth, including academic support, 21st century skill-based enrichment programs, physical fitness, and character development activities. Parents of youth in the program are offered free courses in GED preparation, computer basics, English language support, and parenting skills.

**Career Exploration Summer Program.** ASPIRA of PA helps high school students explore careers and develop 21st century skills necessary for success in a global society through a summer program that places 220 students in work experiences and internships in Philadelphia's public and private sector. Upon successful completion of the summer experience, youth in the SDP are eligible to receive a credit toward high school graduation. ASPIRA of PA summer experience projects won 1st place in 2010 and 2nd place in 2011 in their respective categories in the city-wide WorkReady Summer Expo.

**Summer Camps.** For 6 weeks each summer, ASPIRA of PA offers its Coqui Camp for elementary school students and Shaping Outstanding Leaders (SOL) program for middle school students. Both of these programs utilize project-based, service learning to increase academic proficiency and 21st century skills.

**Truancy Case Management.** ASPIRA of PA collaborates with the SDP and the City of Philadelphia to provide support and case management to families to ensure that students are able to attend school. Since 2003, ASPIRA of PA's truancy programs have served over 2,000 families.

**Parenting Empowerment Program.** In 2011, ASPIRA of PA began its Parent Empowerment Program. The program addresses a variety of topics, such as assisting children with homework, effective discipline, and communicating with children about difficult topics. ASPIRA of PA implements the program curriculum via various learning paths and every class encourages open dialogue. During its first year, 28 parents enrolled into the program.

**Stakeholder Groups.** ASPIRA of PA manages two advocacy groups of community stakeholders, including businesses, government agencies, educators and parents, who share information and develop ways to improve their neighborhoods. These groups, located in the Kensington and Hunting Park neighborhoods, have successfully implemented community clean-ups, the installation of playgrounds, fundraisers for needy families, and safety initiatives throughout North Philadelphia.

## ASPIRA of PA Charter

### Schools

**Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School.** ASPIRA of PA founded Hostos Charter in 1998. Hostos is a fully bilingual K-8th grade school that serves 440 students and their families, the majority of whom are native Spanish speakers. Hostos Charter has made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) consecutively for the last seven years. Based on the 2011 School Performance Index (SPI), Hostos ranked 2 out of 10, with 1 being the top score for exemplary performance.

**Antonia Pantoja Charter School.** Pantoja Charter opened in 2008 based on the bilingual school model of Hostos. Pantoja serves 720 students in grades K-8, and has a waiting list of 1,000 more students. Pantoja opened with full enrollment in all 9 grades, with little advertisement other than word of mouth. In its second year, Pantoja achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), boasting some of the largest 5th grade math increases in the city of Philadelphia. Pantoja again made AYP in 2010-2011, meeting every

achievement target. Pantoja also ranked 2 on the 2011 School Performance Index (SPI), again showing excellence in education.

**ASPIRA Bilingual Cyber Charter School.** In the fall of 2010, ASPIRA of PA launched the first K-12 bilingual cyber charter school in the state of Pennsylvania. This cyber charter has expanded ASPIRA of PA's bilingual education services from North Philadelphia to students across the entire state.

**John B. Stetson Charter School.** Stetson Charter is a 5-8th grade turnaround school in its second year of transition from a public to a charter school through the Renaissance Schools Initiative in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP). Within just a few months of school operation, ASPIRA of PA invested over \$450K in new furniture for all classrooms and offices, over \$50K in technology purchases and upgrades, \$1.2 million in contracted specialized services for ELL, special education, and behaviorally-challenged youth through Catapult Learning and Success Schools, and over \$200K in new curriculum. ASPIRA of PA also installed security equipment including over 80 surveillance cameras and painted the building's interior. ASPIRA of PA's first year of school management achieved high results, including a decrease in suspensions from 492 to 4, a 6% increase in student attendance, a 9% increase in reading proficiency, and a 22% increase in math proficiency.

**Olney Charter High School.** Through SDP's second year of its Renaissance Schools Initiative, ASPIRA of PA was awarded the management of Olney East and Olney West High Schools. ASPIRA of PA merged them into one charter school and implemented many of the same reforms as done at Stetson Charter. ASPIRA of PA also implemented a Parent Task Force, Parent Empowerment Center, and Student Excellence Center within the school. School climate has drastically improved and ASPIRA of PA is confident academic proficiency will prove to increase, as well.

**Major Events:** Dinner Concert

**Office Location:** Philadelphia

**Source URL:** <http://www.aspira.org/en/aspira-pennsylvania>

**Links:**

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