

Exciting news for midtown: Major developments in education

By Jenn on March 19, 2014

Major developments in education have occurred in Midtown Kansas City!

Last fall, we introduced you to the Midtown Community School Initiative (MCSI), a group of parents and community leaders who had organized in an effort to change the face of education in Midtown. This group has worked hard over the last eight months to develop a plan to bring more schooling options to Midtown.

They have held community meetings, interviewed neighbors, met with Kansas City Public School personnel and charter school leaders as well as many other people who are passionate about education and Midtown to find out what the community is looking for in a school and how to possibly provide another high-quality option for our community.



As a mom living in Midtown, I was thrilled when this initiative was launched and am even more excited last week when I heard the Midtown Community School Initiative's big announcement.

After inviting interested educators to write a response proposal and reviewing each proposal thoroughly in light of the needs of our area, they have chosen to partner with a successful national charter school called **Citizens of the World** (CWC) to bring another schooling option to our neighborhood. Citizens will begin working now with the hope of possibly launching a school in the fall of 2016.

Overall, I think the community is excited and thankful that MCSI and CWC have agreed to partner in this endeavor. I talked to Kristin Littrell, a Midtown mom and member of the MCSI leadership team, about her thoughts on the partnership.

She said, "I don't think we could have found a better fit for the Midtown community! Citizens' core values of creating diverse learning environments, focusing on student achievement, and maintaining a commitment to the community are characteristics that I believe all Midtown residents hold dear.

I think Citizens will be an incredible school partner for our neighborhoods."

Kristin also explained how exciting this development is for her personally: "As a mom raising kids in the city, I'm so excited to have another quality school option for my children and my neighbors. We get asked frequently, 'what are you going to do about school?' and I'm looking forward to being one step closer to eliminating that question because families have enough great schools to thrive in the city."

The team has also indicated they are planning to have preferential boundaries which would allow families who live in Midtown to have priority during the enrollment process.

With regard to preferential boundaries, Kristin said, "we're excited about offering Midtown a community school with preferential enrollment for the families that call these neighborhoods home. This unique offering will get us one step closer to vibrant neighborhood schools."

The fact of the matter is that right now, we *don't* have many high-quality neighborhood school options in Midtown; great improvements are being made, but we aren't there yet. I believe that this recent development is a great step for Midtown.

A charter school with proven success in cities like New York and Los Angeles is willing to – *desires* to – partner with our community. With more quality options in Midtown, our kids have an even greater likelihood of getting a good education.

Yes, I still dream of a day when kids in Midtown and other communities across Kansas City, MO will attend high-quality schools in their own neighborhood, with their own neighbors – but for now, I rest assured that this latest step is progress towards that goal.

About Jenn: A Special Education teacher turned fitness fanatic, Jenn has a Masters in Special Education with an emphasis in Autism Spectrum Disorders. Although she is still passionate about helping children with special needs, most days she can be found chasing her two wild boys (ages 1 and 3) around some park in Kansas City. Jenn, her husband Matt and her sons have lived in KC for five years.