

Three –Year Strategic Plan

~ developed to thoughtfully guide Hamburg’s community-wide character initiative ~

**Approved by the Board of Directors of the
Character Council of Hamburg, Inc.**

May 27, 2008

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Introduction

At this pivotal juncture in the life of Hamburg's community-wide character initiative, a three-year strategic plan has been developed to thoughtfully guide the progress and long-term sustainability of the initiative. It is crucial to recognize that three areas critical to the success of the initiative include: *awareness building in the community, engagement of key individuals and groups*, and *sustainability through the development of financial and human resources*. Respectively, awareness building will lead to engagement, and engagement will lead to sustainability through greater involvement and support of key audiences and community stakeholders. The identified goals, objectives and action plans within this document seek to address these critical areas challenging the forward direction of the initiative. Our success will be measured by our ability to implement and sustain a cyclical upward process that will incrementally increase awareness, engagement and resources, thereby allowing for a substantial positive impact of this character focus on our community.

Our Vision... a community dedicated to "Creating a Culture of Character"

In the fall of 2000, our community launched a town-wide character initiative, championed, coordinated and resourced by the Character Council of Hamburg, Inc. Because our community has the foresight to see that at the root of each controllable, critical community challenge is an issue of character, we see a community that is attractively different because it purposefully focuses on emphasizing the most important attribute that brings success... personal character, the inward motivation to make wise choices, hold thoughtful attitudes, and do right things. Encouraged by the resolutions passed by the Town of Hamburg and its contained Villages of Blasdell and Hamburg in the Spring of 2001, we see a community that places a priority on an individual's responsibility for his or her own disposition, words and actions; encourages and praises excellence in character; and strives to reinstate universal community standards of respect, integrity and virtue.

We see...

- That the emphasis of positive character qualities in every sector of society can only occur as individuals commit themselves to exemplifying character in their personal lives and inspiring others to do the same;
- Character development within the family as central to initiating character enhancement throughout the community;
- Stable, harmonious, healthy families because of relationships formed through good character;
- Families working together as having the ability to be the primary source and driving force for the occurrence of a societal shift toward quality of character;
- Citizens supporting and encouraging each other as we expand our understanding of how our character affects the moment-by-moment decisions we make;
- The opportunity seized by community leaders to model and advocate for character excellence in a high profile manner;
- Comprehensive character education effectively contributing to exemplary education in every school, elementary through post-secondary, complementing character development in the home and thereby helping to strengthen the conviction to a strong moral foundation for our youngest citizens;
- A healthy moral, emotional, and achievement climate for our children in which self-control is honored and the ability to make wise decisions is nurtured;
- Commendable economic development because we pay attention to building strong character in the present and future workforce;
- High performing, ethically strong, and safe workplaces because businesses place a priority focus on their culture of character, not just on performance alone; and
- A thriving community secured by trust in law enforcement that will uphold the law with integrity to diminish crime and the tolerance for risk-taking behaviors.

Therefore... because we recognize the fundamental relationship between our community's potential and the character of its citizens, we see our community as an extraordinary place because our leaders and citizens dare to understand this relationship and boldly act upon this vision. Our vision is to build a stronger community by building stronger character.

Our Mission... “Creating a Culture of Character”

Excellence in character is the principal foundation for enduring personal, familial, and organizational success. The Character Council of Hamburg, Inc. exists to enrich the understanding of the benefits of good character and to facilitate the continual development and enhancement of character excellence for citizens throughout our community.

We *invest* in our community by:

- *Modeling* character excellence in our personal and professional interactions;
- *Building* awareness and understanding of the importance of personal character for sustainable success;
- *Being* a catalyst that draws the entire community into a process that develops a community of character;
- *Providing* training, resources, and support for character development initiatives within each community sector;
- *Collaborating* with existing community resources and facilitating partnerships to enhance character visibility and strengthen character development opportunities; and
- *Acknowledging* people and/or organizations that demonstrate character excellence

Corporate Values...an organization committed to “Creating a Culture of Character”

The corporate values governing the Character Council of Hamburg, Inc.’s development and activities include:

- *Striving* in earnest for personal character development and enhancement;
- *Aspiring* to be a genuine mentor of character excellence, while with humility, inspiring others;
- *Demonstrating* honesty and integrity in personal and professional interactions;
- *Encouraging* the passionate commitment to character excellence and to the mission of the Character Council;
- *Focusing* on the worth of a person regardless of perceived differences;
- *Showing* respect for fellow organizational members and community constituents;
- *Valuing* the opportunity to work as an effective team to accomplish our worthy mission;
- *Recognizing* the need for re-evaluation to enable continuous improvement within the organization and community;
- *Pursuing* the likelihood of realizing our vision through quality effort and the quest for excellence;
- *Utilizing* assets entrusted to the organization with frugality and high regard;
- *Fostering* broad-based community ownership of our community’s character initiative;
- *Persevering* through organizational and community-based challenges with deference and discretion;
- *Appreciating* the valuable chance to give back to our community in a meaningful and lasting way; and
- *Acknowledging* that every individual is at a different stage of character development and graciously showing tolerance and patience for their journey toward character excellence.

Board of Directors

The character initiative in Hamburg, New York is a community-wide collaboration engaging hundreds of volunteers working together to embrace good character within many sectors of our community. This initiative is a completely volunteer effort with no paid staff. The volunteer board of directors listed below guides the focus and direction of the initiative. A biography and contact information for each board member is available on our website at: www.charactercouncilhamburg.org .

Suzanne McKenney, President
Champions for Character Liaison
Character Conference Liaison

Pete Simon, Vice President and Treasurer
Finance and Education Committees Liaison

Susan Sessanna, Recording Secretary
Business/Civic Committee Liaison

Vanessa Rehac, Corresponding Secretary
Media Committee Liaison

Susan Santandreu, Faith Committee Liaison

Blair Webster, Government Committee Liaison

Nancy Maisano, Character Carnival Liaison

Jackie Peffer

Jeanne Stegmeier

Joan Conrad

Nancy Hajduk

Heather Haas

Ann Heraty

Amanda Orendorf

Community Committees... striving together to “Create a Culture of Character”

Guided by our mission to “Create a Culture of Character” and impassioned by our vision to build a stronger community, the Character Council of Hamburg’s Community Committees, as directed by the organization’s Board of Directors, are empowered within their specific sphere of influence to support the following objectives for character excellence:

- *Create* and *coordinate* character awareness initiatives
- *Encourage* and *strengthen* character education and/or training initiatives
- *Inspire* and *reinforce* character promotion initiatives
- *Generate* and *support* initiatives for character recognition of individuals and organizations

Business/Civic

In alignment with the vision, mission and strategic plan of the organization, the Business Division recognizes the need and operates to:

- *Identify* significant challenges impairing businesses, non-profit, and non-governmental organizations from reaching their full potential;
- *Communicate* to these organizations the value of intentional character awareness and development for reaching full potential; and
- *Provide* guidance and resources to assist these organizations in their efforts to build character.

Education

In alignment with the vision, mission and strategic plan of the organization, the Education Division recognizes the need and operates to:

- *Identify* significant challenges impairing schools from reaching their full potential;
- *Encourage* the intentional incorporation of character development for school personnel, recognizing the tremendous power of authentic role modeling necessary for effective mentorship;
- *Encourage* the intentional integration of character development with competency development as it is essential to the full education of students in all schools, PreK through Postsecondary, in our community;
- *Communicate* the value of comprehensive character education to school personnel, students, families and the community; and
- *Provide* guidance and resources to assist schools in their efforts to build character.

Faith

In alignment with the vision, mission and strategic plan of the organization, the Faith Division recognizes the need and operates to:

- *Identify* significant challenges impairing family, workplace, governmental, and community success;
- *Communicate* the value of intentional character awareness and development within the faith community; and
- *Provide* guidance and resources to assist faith community in their efforts to build character.

Finance

In alignment with the vision, mission and strategic plan of the organization, the Finance Division recognizes the need and operates to:

- *Identify* the financial need of the organization;
- *Secure* funding opportunities to help ensure the sustainability of the organization's mission;
- *Communicate* to the Board of Directors financial specifics relevant to the fiduciary responsibility of the organization;
- *Ensure* the solvency and integrity of all financial accounts and records of the organization; and
- *Provide* guidance and resources to the Board of Directors regarding the organization's financial operation.

Government

In alignment with the vision, mission and strategic plan of the organization, the Government Division recognizes the need and operates to:

- *Identify* significant challenges impairing governmental agencies, including law enforcement, from reaching their full potential;
- *Communicate* the value of intentional character awareness and development within governmental agencies for reaching full potential; and
- *Provide* guidance and resources to assist those agencies in their efforts to build character.

Media/Community Relations

In alignment with the vision, mission and strategic plan of the organization, the Media/Community Relations Division recognizes the need and operates to:

- *Identify* significant challenges impairing families and organizations in our community;
- *Communicate* the value of intentional character awareness, development and recognition within the community;
- *Utilize* the variety of communication resources available within the community to promote good character and character development opportunities;
- *Provide* guidance and resources to assist media outlets in their efforts to build character;
- *Acknowledge* individuals and organizations who are demonstrating good character; and
- *Market* the vision, mission, and activities of the Character Council of Hamburg, Inc. in varied and effective ways so as to build sustained support of the organization and character initiative within the community.



Board of Directors

Organizational Chart

Suzanne McKenney
President

Nancy Maisano

Ann Heraty

Joan Conrad

Jeanne Stegmeier

Nancy Hajduk

Jackie Peffer

Heather Haas

Susan Sessanna
Recording Secretary
Business Liaison

Sue Santandreu
Faith Committee Liaison

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Pete Simon
Vice President
Treasurer
Education & Finance
Com. Liaison

Vanessa Rehac
Corresponding Secretary
Media / PR Liaison

Amanda Orendorf

Blair Webster
Government Committee Liaison

Sector Committees

Rocco Lueck
Business and Civic

Open
Faith Committee

Jill Monaco
Education Committee

Open
Finance Committee

Dan Meyer
Media Committee

Tom Tallman
Government Committee

Committee members

Committee members
Barabara Bonanno
Sharon Baldwin, Pastor
Pat Chlebowski
Sr. Sharon Erickson, RSM
Betty McCarrick
Suzanne McKenney
Laura Glista

Committee members
Jennifer Giallella
Michael Shea
Anne Gilhooly
Jessica Evans
Jane Pastor
Kathy Battin
Kerry Courtney
Pat Chlebowski
Laura Glista
Bruce Mitchell
Vanessa Manney
Michael

Committee members
Suzanne McKenney
Pete Simon
Jeanne Stegmeier

Committee members
Michele Darstein
Steve Lingle
Mark Webster

Committee members
Melissa Eberz
Pat Connolly
Sherri Best
Tammy Franz
Rose Mary McManus
George Lee

Strengths ~ Weaknesses ~ Opportunities ~ Threats

This strategic plan addresses the following key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that apply to the Character Council of Hamburg, Inc. now and in the foreseeable future:

Strengths

- Dedicated, passionate volunteers from diverse backgrounds.
- Established Board of Directors.
- Established 501(c) 3 not-for-profit corporation.
- Established name recognition.
- Established website.
- Established character trait schedule.
- Some community committees in place and functioning (Education, Media, Government, Faith).
- Strong relationship with the International Association of Character Cities (utilize for resources, training, support, etc.).

Weaknesses

- Difficulty securing funds and lack of sufficient funds to support the growth and maintenance of character initiative.
- Difficulty engaging active support from community leaders.
- Turnover rate of Board of Directors members.
- Need for more volunteers for community committees and board.
- Public knowledge and understanding of virtues, vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.
- Need to establish or re-establish some community committees (Business, Finance, Fundraising, Law Enforcement).
- Alignment of community committee's activities with vision and mission of organization.
- Action plan to support goals.
- Communication between committees/board.
- Poster distribution throughout business community.
- Timely submitting of information by organization for updating of website.

Opportunities

- Grow character development initiatives throughout all community sectors.
- New enthusiastic Board of Directors.
- Character ambassador program.
- Be a mentor for other communities establishing their own character initiatives.

Threats

- Other non-profits competing for limited resources.
- Community leaders not recognizing the value of a character initiative potential.
- Misunderstanding of vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.

Goals, Objectives and Action Plans

The following goals, objectives and action plans have been developed to address the challenges posed in the Threats and Weaknesses sections. This part of the strategic plan identifies a general approach for strengthening our community's character initiative within a 3-year time period.

Goal #1: Secure the active support, as ambassadors for character excellence, of 5 respected community leaders within the first year (2008) and then add 1 or 2 annually thereafter.

Objectives:

- Establish "Champions for Character" as an ambassador program for character excellence in a concerted effort to strengthen the Character Council's ability to effectively forward the character initiative throughout the community.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Difficulty engaging active support from community leaders.
- Need for more volunteers for community committees and board.
- Public knowledge and understanding of virtues, vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.
- Need to establish or re-establish some community committees (Business, Finance, Fundraising, Law Enforcement).

Action Plan:

The Character Council will invite prominent community leaders to come together to create a formalized group to act as ambassadors championing character excellence throughout the community. Recognizing the essential element of influence, the Council seeks the active support of these leaders to help nurture the community-wide character focus, thereby joining us as we strive in our mission to "Create a Culture of Character" in Hamburg. A group of five (5) to ten (10) ambassadors will be invited to participate in this program.

Ambassador Selection Process

Each prospective candidate's name should be submitted to the Board. The potential name will then be given to the **Champions for Character** ambassador group for review using the criteria for selecting ambassadors as listed below. The **Champions for Character** ambassadors will study the prospective member and make recommendation to the Board based on the current need of the ambassador group.

Criteria for Selecting Ambassadors

- Someone who is highly regarded in the community.
- Someone who has demonstrated leadership abilities within the community.
- Someone who has demonstrated that they can work cooperatively with other individuals and agencies.
- Someone who is passionate about character and believes in the mission of the Character Council of Hamburg, Inc.
- Someone who is willing to attend the **Champions for Character** tri-annual meetings.
- Someone who will take an active role in being an advocate for the Character Council.
- Someone who is willing to actively champion character excellence and Hamburg's community-wide character initiative.
- Someone who recognizes and is willing to accept the responsibility of serving in the honorable role as an ambassador for character excellence in our community.

Expectations of Ambassadors

- Strive for a high standard of personal character excellence.
- Be a steward of exceptional character, modeling ethical principles to inspire in others their embracing of good character.
- Be a visible and vocal advocate for character excellence, the Character Council, and Hamburg's character initiative.
- Attend only three (3) **Champions for Character** meetings each year in October, February, and June.
- Serve for a term of three (3) years. Consecutive terms are unlimited.
- Ambassadors will adhere to the expectations contained in the "Criteria for Selecting Ambassadors" section.
- Additional expectations will be determined and reviewed annually by the ambassador group.

Goal #2: Host an annual “Creating a Culture of Character” conference beginning in 2009.

Objectives:

- Improve visibility of character initiative.
- Provide a formalized venue for educational opportunities to support character development implementation and growth throughout each community sector.
- Increase the enthusiasm and motivation for the community-wide character initiative.
- Engage community stakeholders in the ownership of an annual character-centered conference intent on bringing people from inside and outside of the Hamburg community to learn about the implementation of character-focused initiatives on a personal, individual organization, community sector and/or community-wide scale.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Difficulty engaging active support from community leaders.
- Need for more volunteers for community committees and board.
- Public knowledge and understanding of virtues, vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.
- Need to establish or re-establish some community committees (Business, Finance, Fundraising, Law Enforcement).
- Alignment of community committee’s activities with vision and mission of organization.

Action Plan:

The Character Council aims for the Town of Hamburg to become a model community with respect to forwarding character-centered initiatives concertedly on a community-wide scale. To that end, the Council plans to host an annual conference consisting of seminars that specifically address the implementation of character development programs and initiatives for business, education, families, faith, and government. The 1st annual conference will take place during the week of March 16-20, 2009. Funding to support this project has been secured in part from the NYS Education Department. Additional funding sources are presently being identified and sought. The goal is to make this project a financially self-sustaining event.

The following specifically details the areas targeted for the 1st annual conference:

Law Enforcement Community – “Police Dynamics” 2-day character-focused training specifically designed for law enforcement personnel. This program will be appropriate for local police departments, the county sheriff department, the state police department, correctional facility personnel, educators within the criminal justice sector and students majoring in criminal justice programs.

Education Community – This program would encompass a full-day character education training appropriate for Pre-16 educators and students majoring in education programs.

Athletic Community – This program would encompass a full-day inspirational and educational seminar for sport coaches at all levels and recreation department personnel.

Business and Government Sectors – This program would encompass a 2-day management-training seminar with character-based solutions for workplace challenges. Managers within the business, government, and even educational sectors would benefit from this program.

Goal #3: Secure additional major funding alliances resulting in a consistent increase in revenue of at least \$10,000 annually.

Objectives:

- Increase monies secured from charitable foundations.
- Increase monies secured from corporate sponsorships.
- Increase monies secured through government grants.
- Increase monies secured from private donations.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Difficulty securing funds and lack of sufficient funds to support the growth and maintenance of character initiative.

Action Plan:

The Finance Committee will research and apply for foundational and governmental grants, and solicit for private and corporate donations. The Finance Committee will also prepare a budget and maintain financial statements to support these funding requests.

Funding partnerships will be targeted to benefit the organization for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2008. Smaller donations/sponsorships will be targeted from organizations/businesses who have generously supported our mission in previous years.

In subsequent years, an effort will be made to encourage continued loyalty from established funding partnerships, while expanding the opportunity to secure new alliances. Additionally, a program will be developed to target local businesses to encourage sponsorship of specific character-centered projects and initiatives as needed. A complementary aspect of this program will seek to encourage private donations to support the mission of the organization.

Goal #4: Hold 1 annual fundraiser beginning in 2009.

Objectives:

- Create an event that supports awareness of character initiative while also functions as a source of revenue to support the activities of the Character Council. The fundraiser may also perform as a character education program and family-centered event.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Difficulty securing funds and lack of sufficient funds to support the growth and maintenance of character initiative.

Action Plan:

- Create a fundraising committee.
- Brainstorm fundraising ideas and identify one that can become signature to the Character Council.
 - ~ Annual community-wide Character Fair (fashioned after the Pinehurst Elementary School character fair)
 - ~ “Common Cents for Character” – a coin collection drive
- Coordinate and hold function annually.

Goal # 5: Develop and implement 3 new marketing strategies to promote the virtues, character excellence, the community-wide character initiative, and the Character Council. The timeline for implementing these strategies will be directly tied to specific projects such as special announcements, the annual character conference, the annual fundraiser and/or other character-centered events.

Objectives:

- Uplift throughout the community and teach about each individual virtue.
- Champion the value of character excellence.
- Augment the understanding of the character initiative for community citizens.
- Highlight the benefits of implementing character development programs.
- Highlight character success stories in a high profile manner.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Need for more volunteers for community committees and board.
- Public knowledge and understanding of virtues, vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.
- Need to establish or re-establish some community committees (Business, Finance, Fundraising, Law Enforcement).

Action Plan:

- Identify audience.
- Develop strategies to market through additional media outlets.
- Develop and maintain Email list.

Goal #6: By year 2010, build to and maintain at 15 members the Board of Directors for the Character Council.

Objectives:

- Ensure the viability of the Character Council organization, its vision and mission, and the healthy growth and development of the community-wide character initiative.
- Ensure the appropriate manpower for executing the organization's mission and operating according to the organization's bylaws, and according to the laws governing the organization's 501(c)3 not-for-profit status.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Turnover rate of Board of Directors members
- Need for more volunteers for community committees and board

Action Plan:

- Develop a formalized written job description for the Board of Director position to help clarify this role for potential candidates.
- Develop criteria for selecting candidates.
- By way of the Media Committee, advertise available positions to the community.
- Through recommendations of existing board and committee members, identify and invite participation from potential candidates.
- Ask for help with identifying and inviting potential candidates from "Champions for Character" ambassadors.

Goal #7: By end of 2008 establish community committees in Business, Finance, Fundraising, and Law Enforcement. Then, by end of 2009, build to and maintain a minimum of 5 members for each community committee not yet fully established.

Objectives:

- Ensure all sectors of the community are given the opportunity to learn about and meet the objectives for character excellence through incorporation of character initiatives specific to each sector.
- Ensure that committees essential to the operation of the organization are viable.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Need for more volunteers for community committees and board.
- Public knowledge and understanding of virtues, vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.
- Need to establish or re-establish some community committees (Business, Finance, Fundraising, Law Enforcement).
- Alignment of community committee's activities with vision and mission of organization.
- Action plan to support goals.

Action Plan:

- Identify and maintain a board liaison for each community committee.
- Identify and maintain a chairman for each community committee.
- Develop and implement annually an individualized invitation plan or membership drive to boost membership of each community committee.

Goal # 8: Beginning in 2008, grow established community committees of Education, Faith, Government and Media by 1 or 2 members annually.

Objectives:

- Ensure that organizations within each sector of the community are aware of the opportunity and are invited to become involved with the character initiative.
- Encourage the growth of character initiatives throughout each community sector.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Need for more volunteers for community committees and board.
- Public knowledge and understanding of virtues, vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.
- Alignment of community committee's activities with vision and mission of organization.
- Action plan to support goals.

Action Plan:

- Identify and maintain a board liaison for each community committee.
- Identify and maintain a chairman for each community committee.
- Develop and implement annually an individualized invitation plan or membership drive to boost membership of each community committee.

Goal # 9: Beginning with the 1st Annual Character Conference in March of 2009, recognize 12 community citizens annually (1/month) for each of the 12 virtues uplifted throughout the community.

Objectives:

- Highlight each virtue in a high profile manner by way of recognizing an individual for their genuine embodiment of that virtue.
- Increase the understanding of each virtue in a public and celebrated approach.
- Improve awareness and understanding of character initiative.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Public knowledge and understanding of virtues, vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.

Action Plan:

- Develop a community citizen-driven nomination system for recognizing individuals who have displayed the virtue of the month.
- Recognize selected citizens by way of media outlets and certificate specific to the virtue and criteria for nomination.

Goal # 10: Beginning with the 1st Annual Character Conference in March of 2009, recognize 12 community organizations annually (1/month) for each of the 12 virtues uplifted throughout the community.

Objectives:

- Highlight each virtue in a high profile manner by way of recognizing an organization for their genuine embodiment of that virtue.
- Increase the understanding of each virtue in a public and celebrated approach.
- Improve awareness and understanding of character initiative.

Threats and Weaknesses Addressed:

- Public knowledge and understanding of virtues, vision, mission, proposed and/or current activities, and accomplishments.

Action Plan:

- Develop a community citizen-driven nomination system for recognizing organizations who have displayed the virtue of the month.
- Recognize selected organizations by way of media outlets and certificate specific to the virtue and criteria for nomination.