

Camden's new Mastery school offers the community a fresh start

State-of-the-art building “glows” with natural light, and will help put storms in their place with a high performing vegetated roof

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The start of the new school year will be a fresh start, in more ways than one, for the Camden community that the new [Mastery](#) Cramer Hill Elementary school will serve.

“This brand new, safe and beautiful facility is one step in the right direction offering a world class education to Camden kids,” says Joseph Ferguson, Chief Operations Officer, Mastery Charter. “That first day of school, what will really matter to me is that students and parents take pride in the school that was designed and built with them in mind. I want them to take ownership and truly believe this is a place where they can learn, and grow.”

The city of Camden suffers extremes of poverty, and is reported to have among the nation’s highest violent crime rates. Many kids are in schools that are historically lower performing – in the bottom 10 per cent statewide – some in classrooms with no windows and no natural light.

Come September that will change for up to 750 local students who will attend the new school on East State and River Streets. Ferguson says that when students arrive at their new school, he wants them to “experience joy and great instruction.”

The [vegetated roof](#), a high performing StormCap™ system, will be part of the learning as it is visible from classrooms on two levels. “In the construction of this new facility, the green roof presented a



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Mastery’s first newly constructed school is in keeping with their cutting edge approach to education and technology, and utilizes the latest approaches in construction technology, said Troy Hill, Blackney Hayes Architects.

very economical and environmentally friendly stormwater solution,” says Ferguson. “It also provides an educational opportunity. Our teachers are excited and are looking forward to program the space in the future. We want students to be able to appreciate it. We want it to be part of the science program, by explaining why we have it, how it works, and how it helps the environment.”



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Architects Kevin Blackney and Troy Hill of Blackney Hayes Architects designed the building. They say the green roof was proposed early in the design process to help with storm water management, and also as a learning tool. “This is Mastery’s first newly constructed school and in keeping with their cutting edge approach to education and technology, they thought it was important to utilize the latest approaches in construction technology,” said Troy Hill. “The green roof technology also gives the teachers the opportunity to use its function and maintenance to supplement their curriculum.”

The vegetated roof and pervious parking reduce runoff and manage stormwater on-site helping keep the local waterways clean. “Like most projects in urban environments with aging infrastructure, the storm sewer in the area is “combined” with the sanitary sewer flows,” explained engineer Charles Chelotti. “During heavy rainfall events, this combined system discharges directly to the local waterways and rivers. For this specific project, although there was net reduction in impervious coverage from the pre-existing condition, it was still necessary to reduce the impact to the “combined” system in the area, some of which may be over 100 years old.”

In addition to superior [stormwater management](#), the vegetated roof offers other benefits for the building and the environment such as cooling the building, prolonging the lifespan of the roof itself, providing natural habitat and reducing the urban heat island effect. Also, research shows that biophilic design has direct advantages to students and teachers as views of natural landscapes from classrooms benefit academic achievement and behavior.

Ferguson, who is overseeing the construction of Mastery’s brand new building, is excited, too. In mid-July under the blazing sun, Ferguson was present to watch workers from Ganter Contractors install the nearly 3000 square feet of vegetated roof in less than one day. “It looked very organized and straightforward. The team knew exactly what they were doing and I was very impressed with how efficient the installation happened.”

With school just around the corner, the team continues to work hard on the finishing touches to welcome new, eager students who will learn to love to learn.

About Mastery Charter Cramer Hill

Mastery Charter operates 24 schools in the cities of Philadelphia and Camden. Cramer Hill Elementary is their first newly constructed school and will welcome up to 750 students and their families from kindergarten through 8th grade. From music to art to field trips - students will get a well-rounded education. Mastery schools are a special place where children experience the joy of learning in a safe, positive environment with a focus on 5 core values: respect, responsibility, hard work, teamwork and kindness.

About the Vegetated Roof System

Innovative and easy to install, this green roof system is enhanced by the Urbanscape® Needled Hydro Mineral Blanket to maximize stormwater retention and keep weight down. The vegetated roof system uses pre-grown mats, engineered growing medium and high performing base layers loosely laid on a Sika Sarnafil roofing membrane making a more reliable roof.

StormCap™ vegetated system has superior water retention properties.

This green roof is customizable and contributes to 8 additional LEED points in the following credit categories:

- SS - Site Development Protect or Restore Habitat; Open Space; Rainwater Management; and, Heat Island Reduction
- EA - Optimize Energy Performance
- MR - Environmental Production Declarations
- EQ - Thermal Comfort; Acoustic Performance

For more information visit www.stormwatercaptureco.com or contact Cristina Senjug at cristina@stormwatercaptureco.com. For Mastery Charter, please contact Courtney Collins-Shapiro at Courtney.Collins-Shapiro@Masterycharter.org.

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