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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: New Roots Charter School Celebrates 15 Years**

Ithaca, NY – New Roots Charter School is thrilled to celebrate its 15th anniversary of "growing New Roots" in the heart of downtown Ithaca on Monday, September 9, 2024.

Authorized by the State University of New York (SUNY), New Roots first opened its doors to high school students in the region on September 9, 2009. Designed as an innovative whole school model of secondary education for a sustainable future, the school supports high academic achievement for all students and develops their capacity to be workforce and community leaders in this time of global climate change and energy transition.

Open to any student eligible to attend high school in New York State, New Roots is a tuition-free public school with the commitment that all students will graduate ready for life and work, with college college earned in high school, acceptance to a college or technical program of their choice, and a resume that will earn them an entry-level position in our regional green economy.

A nationally-recognized, award-winning school, New Roots was designated a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School in 2021, one of just 37 schools including 5 charter schools nationwide. Prior awards include the Department of Environmental Conservation's NYS Top Green High School (2012), and the first school in the country to be named a Human Rights Friendly School by the Dorothy Cotton Institute and Human Rights Educators (2016).

New Roots also earned the Best of Green Schools Award in (2019) in the Transformation category for a collaboration with members of the Cayuga Nation to develop the school's Cayuga Wetlands Restoration Project. With the support of the Park Foundation and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, New Roots launched the Youth Ecological Restoration Corps, a summer internship program that restores native wetland species in the southern end of Cayuga Lake to improve water quality.

Currently New Roots is a partner in the Connected Communities project, a semi-finalist for the 2024 Earthshot Prize.

In 2023, New Roots Charter School launched EarthForce, a green workforce training program, with support of the Tompkins County Community Recovery Fund. “EarthForce creates opportunities for learning that are directly linked to the workforce needs of our local and regional green economy, supporting our community’s transition to greater sustainability in energy, agriculture, water, transportation, and other sectors that contribute to our collective wellbeing,” said Tina Nilsen-Hodges, founder and principal. “We are excited to be partnering with so many local organizations to expand opportunities for our youth to be prepared for this vital work.”

The school has now celebrated 14 graduating classes, with alumni pursuing a diverse array of technical and professional career paths. New Roots alumni have gone on to career fields including engineering, environmental science, aviation, community organizing and social justice, applied mathematics, medicine, entrepreneurship, horticulture, agriculture, and more.

Upcoming highlights of the school’s 15th year include a robust array of college and career preparatory activities, with a focus on green career training opportunities, continued expansion of hands-on entrepreneurship and farm-to-school programming, and exciting partnerships with local organizations.

The school is planning a schoolwide 15-year celebration for the fall, as well as an alumni reunion in the spring of 2025.

New Roots Charter School is a tuition-free public charter school serving grades 9-12 that is open to any young person who is eligible to attend high school in New York State. Offering a private school education at a public school price (free to students!), young people prepare for lives of passion and purpose as they prepare to create and embrace new 21st century life opportunities through career and college preparation. Visit newrootsschool.org to learn more. For more information, contact Michael Mazza, Director of Community Engagement at New Roots Charter School, at mmazza@newrootsschool.org.