

# STREET SQUASH news

Vol. 7 no. 2

Summer 06

## SL GREEN STREETSQUASH COMMUNITY CENTER TAKES SHAPE IN HARLEM



### Campaign raises \$10.2 million of \$13 million goal

What a difference a year makes: just 12 months ago, 115th street between 5th and Lenox Avenues was an empty field littered with trash. Now, it is a construction site, with concrete mixers and excavators humming and buzzing about, laying the foundation for the future home of StreetSquash.

The seemingly endless running around New York City, taking StreetSquashers to and from practices outside of their community, is soon coming to an end. The SL Green

StreetSquash Community Center is fast becoming a reality, and soon, the StreetSquash children and their families will finally have a place they can call home.

The 19,000 square foot SL Green StreetSquash Community Center will occupy the basement, 1st, and mezzanine floors of the new 440,000 square foot Kalahari Building, a mixed-income condominium development in Central Harlem. StreetSquash will own its space, and have a separate entrance to its facility. Inside,

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## Board of Directors:

**Andrea Andrews**

*Founder/Director, Peace 2000*

**Bruce Brickman**

*CEO, Brickman Associates*

**Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III**

*Pastor, Abyssinian Baptist Church*

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**Richard S. Fuld, Jr.**

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*Chairman of the Board of SL Green Realty Corp.*

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*Owner/Editor-in-Chief, U.S. News and World Report*

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*Executive Director:*

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*Program Director:*

**Sage Ramadge**

*Director of Squash Programs &*

*Director of Development:*

**Peter Karlen**

*Director of Literacy Program & Volunteers:*

**Lily Rabinoff-Goldman**

*Academic Directors:*

**Leah Brown and Claire Yunker**

*Squash Directors:*

**Pat Cosquer and Chris Tom**

## Credits:

*Written by:*

**Lily Rabinoff-Goldman and Peter Karlen**

*Design:*

**desantis graphic design**

## StreetSquash

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Courtesy of Dayna Kirk.



*View into administration office space.*

there will be 4 classrooms, a library, 8 international squash courts (more than any other facility in New York City), administrative offices, and locker rooms. Construction is on schedule, and we still anticipate moving in during the spring of 2008.

StreetSquash has put together a team of architects and project managers to represent our interests during the construction process. Dattner Architects' John Woelfling and Ryu Aizu have been on the team from the beginning and have worked tirelessly to design and redesign the space. Woelfling commented during a recent board meeting that he attended: "This project is near and dear to my heart because I know that it will make an enormous impact on the Harlem community." In addition, once construction started, StreetSquash hired Bob Gorton and Ralph Amarosa from Gorton & Associates to serve as project managers during construction. They are particularly qualified to oversee this project because they recently oversaw the construction of Westchester Country Club's new squash facility. They inspect the site monthly to ensure that the space is being built exactly to our specifications.

### Fundraising Moving Ahead

In November of 2004, StreetSquash launched a \$9 million Capital Campaign to fund its own youth center, and in November of 2005, the Board of

Directors raised the fundraising goal for the Capital Campaign to \$13 million, including a \$4 million endowment. To date, StreetSquash has raised over \$10.2 million in pledges from 165 different sources, including many foundations, corporations and countless individuals. Over 37% of the donors to the project are new supporters of StreetSquash and of those capital supporters who had contributed before, over 43% more than tripled their previous year's contribution.

"We think it is necessary to provide financial security for the organization during this period of rapid growth," said Board Chair Jeffrey Laikind. "While we have had tremendous success raising capital over the past 18 months, we know that we still have a long way to go."

Because this center could not exist without the generosity of so many, StreetSquash will recognize all donors within the facility. In addition, the following supporters have secured naming rights to specific areas of the building:

- **Stephen L Green** – The Building
- **JP Morgan Chase** – The Library
- **Anonymous** (to be named later) – The Education Center
- **The Pinkerton Foundation** – Classrooms 1 & 4
- **The Louis Calder Foundation** – Classroom 3



## Continuing to Grow

	2000	2004	2006	2008
<b>STUDENTS SERVED</b>	24	80	140	1,000
<b>STAFF</b>	3	5	8	14
<b>ANNUAL BUDGET</b>	\$200,000	\$580,000	\$734,000	\$1.3 million

### The Hall of Legends

Squash is a game that teaches important life lessons and values – commitment, honesty, discipline and sportsmanship, to name a few. Over the years, certain individuals have exemplified these qualities and have made a profound impact on so many others through the game. In order to honor these people, and to offer our children inspirational examples of leaders who have changed the world for the better, StreetSquash's goal is to have all 8 courts named after these squash "legends". Each court will have a plaque outside with a picture and biography of the "legend", as well as all the individuals who contributed towards the creation of that court.

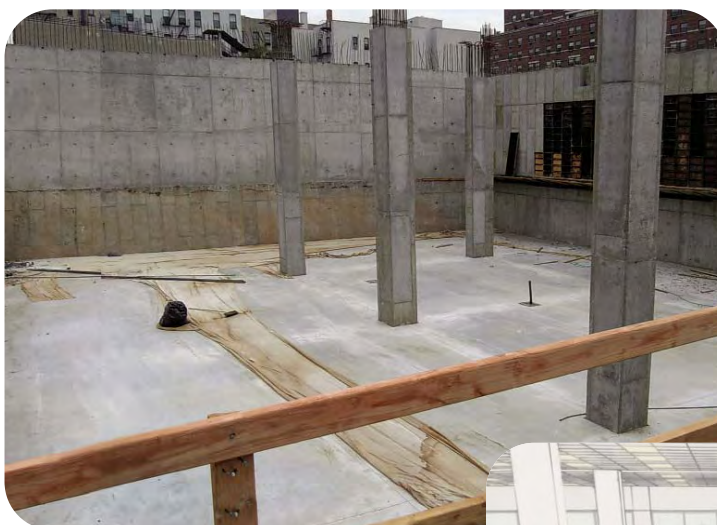
We are proud to report the completion of two "Legend Courts". The first is named after Paul Assaiante, the famed coach of the Trinity College Squash team, thanks to the generosity of George Kellner. In addition, "Red" Hoehn, Dartmouth College's former squash coach, will have a court named after him thanks to the generosity of over 20 Dartmouth alumni. Fundraising efforts are currently under way for five other "Legend Courts", so stay tuned for developments!

### Vision for the Future

While StreetSquash has expanded considerably over the years, it is soon to experience unprecedented growth. In its 2005-2006 program year, StreetSquash served 140 students total, including 80 who committed 4 afternoons every week to the program as participants in the After-School Program. Next year, StreetSquash will take on a new group of 7th grade students, resulting in 5 full teams of 20 students from the 7th through the 11th grade. With 100

students in our After-School Program, StreetSquash's staff will grow from 8 to 9. StreetSquash will run programs at two different sites three times per week and at 3 different sites twice per week. After StreetSquash moves into its new facility, its goal is to serve over 1,000 children annually. The number of full-time staff will increase to 14 and the annual operating budget will increase from its present level of \$730K to \$1.3 million

StreetSquash has been preparing for its transition to its new home for a long time. We wanted to both grow our current programming and introduce new programs that furthered our mission. However, while growth is exciting and important, the greatest priority is, and will always be, running the highest quality programs. As such, we decided to only



*Building columns in between squash courts at construction site completed*



*View into court from lobby viewing corridor.*

## Physical Education for Public Schools Program

Perhaps the most exciting new initiative planned for the new facility is the Physical Education for Public Schools Program, which is designed to provide school-time squash programs for local public schools that lack adequate physical education facilities, which is the case with so many schools in Harlem. This program will accomplish several important objectives: 1) it will provide structured and rigorous athletic activity for hundreds of local students who otherwise get little to no physical activity during the school day, 2) it will introduce hundreds of young children to StreetSquash who might one day join the After-School Program, and 3) it will ensure that StreetSquash is able to further its mission all day, every day. It is our goal to serve 500 new students a year through this initiative, and we have already begun talks with several neighborhood schools who are very interested in participating in this program.

"The Physical Education for Public Schools Program will really be tremendous, as it will expose the game to so many new children each year. It is exciting to think that, quite possibly, 1,000 Harlem children will have a squash racket in their hands each year.", says Richard Chin, long time board member and head squash professional at the Harvard Club of New York.

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# "The Perfect Match": Mentoring Relationship .....

Barbara Boynton and Brussels Mercado are a perfect match. Barbara has been Brussels' mentor for the last 2 years, and the two have developed a relationship that goes beyond the squash court or the classroom. Barbara and Brussels' words about each other demonstrate the positive impact that a mentoring relationship can have on both mentor and mentee.

**StreetSquash:** How long have you been working together?

**Barbara:** I first met Brussels just before Thanksgiving, 2004. We had lunch at Ollie's after her squash practice, and we talked a bit. Two weeks later we went to the Heye Indian Museum at Bowling Green, and I was delighted to see that she seemed to like the exhibits as much as I did.

**StreetSquash:** What kinds of things do you do together?

**Barbara:** We've been to the Metropolitan, MoMA, Natural History, Museum of Art & Design, Museo del Barrio, the Cooper-Hewitt, the Coney Island Aquarium, the Hispanic Art Institute, and a few smaller galleries, as well as The National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Phillips, the Renwick, and the sculpture gardens in Washington. Several times she came over to work on school projects, and she and her three friends came over to study for the specialized high school exam and again to do preliminary research for their earth sciences projects. We've gone to three Shakespeare plays (one in Washington and one with fellow StreetSquasher Paige Babilonia and her mentor, Colby Hall), and a few movies, and a couple of times we just had lunch and chatted. Diosmiry Rodriguez joined us on one of our trips to MoMA, and we painted

pottery with her and her mentor, Ashley Austin. Brussels' younger sister joined us for several of our excursions, as did her brother. And when I was home recovering from foot surgery, she came over and we watched *Julius Caesar*, which I had first seen at about her age, and *Bringing Up Baby*, one of the funniest movies ever made.

**StreetSquash:** What was your favorite thing that you've done together?

**Brussels:** My favorite thing was when we took a weekend trip to Washington, D.C. on the train. We visited the White House, the Washington Memorial, and many Smithsonian Museums. My favorite thing of them all was that we saw a Shakespeare comedy play. It was hilarious!

**StreetSquash:** What have you gotten out of your relationship?

**Barbara:** I've gotten a lot of fun out of the relationship. Brussels is a delightful companion, and introducing her to artworks, plays, and places I like makes them new for me.

**Brussels:** I've learned a lot about art. For example, different artists and the importance of art. Also, I found out how I love to read because Barbara helped me find books that actually interest me.

**StreetSquash:** What growth have you seen in Brussels over the course of your relationship?

**Barbara:** Brussels' confidence and independence have increased greatly over the past year and a half. She is developing her own tastes and broadening her horizons. At first, she acquiesced in whatever I suggested. Then she began asking about what was available, and now she comes up with



Brussels Mercado (L) and her mentor, Barbara Boynton, during a StreetSquash community service outing.

ideas herself. From the beginning she was interested in the world around her, but now she seems to really think about the issues and develop her own opinions.

**StreetSquash:** Was having a mentor what you expected it to be like? Would you recommend that other kids get mentors?

**Brussels:** I knew that I had to be committed in order to have a good relationship. I definitely recommend having a mentor to other kids. At home, I used to be bored, without anything to do, but because of Barbara, now I'm always busy!

If you are interested in becoming a StreetSquash mentor, please contact Chris Tom at [chris@streetsquash.org](mailto:chris@streetsquash.org) or (212) 949-4030. •



## Volunteer Profile: Chris Delaney



Chris (right) looks on with 9th grader Jamel Key at Urban Team Nationals in Boston.

Every once in a while, you come across a volunteer who goes above and beyond the call of duty. Chris Delaney is one of those volunteers. Chris played four years of varsity squash at Williams College, winning the Shaw Memorial trophy for leadership, and spent the past four years working at Lehman Brothers. This year, Chris spent his afternoons helping out both high school teams on the squash court. Additionally, he chaperoned our annual trip to Boston for Urban Team Nationals, and has filled in as a coach whenever he's needed. This fall, Chris will be leaving New York and heading to Charlottesville, Virginia to pursue an MBA at the University of Virginia.

**StreetSquash:** How did you get involved with StreetSquash?

**CD:** The real driving force behind my involvement with StreetSquash was a friend of mine, Peter Karlen, who has worked there for a number of years. He was always prodding me to go up to Columbia and check out practice but unfortunately, my work schedule at the time did not allow me to do much. This past October, my schedule changed and I took him up on his offer. I have been trying to go to as many practices as possible ever since.

**StreetSquash:** What are your favorite aspects of the program?

**CD:** Unlike what many people think, StreetSquash is not just about squash. It is about the kids in the program and helping them achieve their potential. My favorite part is teaching them the little things, such as honesty, hard-work and respect for others, that will end up having a big impact on their lives. I also really enjoy running the kids around the squash court.

**StreetSquash:** You attended the Urban Team Nationals in Boston in April – what were your impressions of the programs there?

**CD:** Two things struck me when I attended Urban Team Nationals. One was the level of play. The top level of competition was a lot better than I thought it would be and I was really impressed by some of the squash skills demonstrated. Yet the scary thing was seeing some of the younger kids hit the ball. I could tell that they had a great squash foundation and will become great players in the future. Second was the sportsmanship. All the kids really seemed to be enjoying themselves and each other. I can't count the number of times I walked past the court and saw kids from each program competing in a spontaneous game of three-quarter court.

**StreetSquash:** What do you feel you've gotten out of the program?

**CD:** On one level I feel that I have become much more patient over the past couple of months. But the greatest thing I have gotten from StreetSquash is I get to have a whole lot of fun every time I go up to practice.

**StreetSquash:** What moments stand out in your mind from your experience at StreetSquash?

**CD:** Playing with the kids over the course of the season and seeing how much they have improved. It is also great to talk to the kids and hear how much they enjoy the program. ●

# StreetSquash Welcomes its New Board Members .....

**Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III**, is Pastor of the nationally-renowned Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City and President of the State University of New York College at Old Westbury. Dr. Butts was one of the founders of Abyssinian Development Corporation (ADC), a comprehensive community-based organization that is responsible for over \$300 million in housing and commercial development in Harlem, and he continues to help guide and support the daily operation of this not-for-profit organization. Dr. Butts was also instrumental in the establishment of StreetSquash's long-term partner, the Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change. ●

**Dr. Sandye Poitier-Johnson**, is the Principal of the Thurgood Marshall Academy for Learning and Social Change. An educator for the past 35 years, Dr. Johnson has brought her expertise to the school, making it one of the preeminent public high schools in New York City. Dr. Johnson has also been one of StreetSquash's most steadfast supporters in the seven years since it began. Her support has allowed StreetSquash to develop a positive and committed relationship with the school, its teachers, students, and families. ●

## Student Profile: Gabrielle Robinson .....

Each year, StreetSquashers make huge strides in school and on the squash court. One of this year's greatest success stories is from 10th grader Gabrielle Robinson.

Gabrielle "Gabby" Robinson has been with StreetSquash since the fall of her 7th grade year. Now finishing her 4th year with the program, Gabby is an exceptional member of the team. But it hasn't always been easy. In 9th grade, Gabby's academic average was inconsistent, and saw some dips over the course of the year. Leah Brown, Gabby's Academic and College Prep Director, has seen some very positive growth this year: "[Gabby] is not easily distracted, she has held leadership positions on the team as captain, and she has maintained a consistent B average this year."

Pat Cosquer, the Director of Squash and Community Service for all high schoolers, noted Gabby's success this year as well. "Gabby and I have talked about her motivation level several times over the past few years, and this year she has really taken it upon herself and consciously decided to improve her motivation in all areas of her life."

Her increased motivation has certainly paid off. Gabby led her team to a second straight Urban Team Nationals Championship at the SquashBusters facility in April. In addition, Gabby had several great wins on her way to an unexpected fourth place finish at the Urban Individual Nationals at the Groton School in June. "Gabby has some of the best strokes of anyone in the program, and this has been noted by other coaches around urban squash and beyond," said Pat. At national junior tournaments, Gabby has had some tremendously hard fought matches, which have tested her mental and physical endurance, and have demonstrated her vast improvement this year.

Leah congratulated Gabby's growth this year, saying: "Gabby is cooperative, encouraging, and independent. She has really matured academically using her study skills. She is a role model for her peers and should be recognized as such." As a role model and a leader in StreetSquash, Gabby will be working as a Junior Counselor in the StreetSquash Summer Discovery Program this summer.



*Gabrielle Robinson*

Pat agreed. "Gabby's not a loud, rah-rah kind of person, but she's a strong, quiet kind of leader. Her opinions matter to the team, even if they're said in a quiet voice. She's a very effective catalyst and motivator for the team." Gabby is a real StreetSquash success. We are sure that she will continue to achieve and to inspire others to do the same. ●



# Program Expansion

After 7 years of steady growth, StreetSquash will serve more children than ever next year. This past year, StreetSquash served 80 kids in its core After-School Program and next year we will serve over 100. We will be hiring a new Academic Director and a new Squash Director, increasing the number of full-time staff to 9 and allowing us to bring on a new group of twenty 7th grade students. Next year, StreetSquash will run programs at Columbia University six days per week, at the West Side YMCA 4 days per week, at the Harvard Club of New York 2 days per week, and in our partner schools 4 days per week.

In addition to serving more students, StreetSquash's program offerings have expanded as well. In 2005-2006, all StreetSquashers had mandatory practices 4 days per week for the first time. In addition to two weekday practices and Saturday squash or community service practices, this year, College Prep sessions were mandatory for all high school students and Literacy Program sessions were mandatory for all middle school students. These programs boost our students' skills and prepare them for future academic success.

This year also saw the inception of the Elite Squash Program. Elite Squash was started by Peter Karlen as a way to prepare and motivate StreetSquashers to play at the college level. Because the colleges that have squash programs are a collection of some of the best universities in the country, students must meet strict academic criteria to participate in Elite Squash. In order to attend weekly practices, students must have at least a seventy-five average and in order to travel to monthly tournaments, students must be on the honor roll. Elite Squash selects for the most committed team members, as it is the fifth StreetSquash practice every week for all participants and it is held on Friday Afternoons. In addition, all practices include intense fitness training and extensive drilling, with little extra time for match play. However, the commitment has paid off, as students who participated last year made enormous strides in their squash games and maintained excellent academic averages. ●



*9th grader Jennifer Houston with tutor Ravi Kitappa during an afternoon session.*



*Director of High School Academics and College Prep, Leah Brown (L), with 10th grader Asia Giles.*



*Tutor Tyner Gordon (Second from L) with StreetSquash Literacy Project participants"*

# Saying Goodbye to Peter Karlen

StreetSquash is saying a sad goodbye this year. Peter Karlen, who has been with StreetSquash since 2002, will be leaving the program at the end of this summer to pursue an MBA at Columbia University.

Pete joined StreetSquash as Director of Squash after his graduation from Harvard University in 2002. As Director of Squash, Pete worked with almost all of the current high school StreetSquashers, who to this day remember Pete's special coaching style. "Pete's always teaching," said Jamel Key, a current 9th grader. "He always has something to say to make you a better player."

Beginning in the fall of 2004 as Director of Squash Programs and Assistant Director of Development, Pete worked side by side with Executive Director, George Polsky, to raise funds for our permanent facility. Always a hard worker, Pete's efforts in raising money for the StreetSquash Community Center have been especially fruitful, and the money has been raised much faster than anyone expected.

Pete has always been one to take initiative, and this past year, he started and led the Elite Squash Program for high achieving high school StreetSquashers. Pushing kids to take

both their academics and squash performance to the next level, Pete has put in many hours to prepare members of the Elite team to play squash on the college level. As always, Pete's actions reflect his passion and commitment to the kids and the program.

Thank you to Pete for all your hard work over the past four years. StreetSquash will miss you! ●



*Pete with the 8th grade girls at the Westchester Junior Open in October.*



*Pete with Team 1 after the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk.*

## New Staff

Next year, StreetSquash will be welcoming two new employees to the organization. We take the process of hiring new employees extremely seriously, meeting with every candidate several times before making any offers. We are ecstatic about the talent we have coming in next year.

Laura Lindstrom will be starting as an Academic Director in September. Laura recently graduated from New York University with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. Laura has extensive professional and volunteer

experience with various nonprofit organizations serving children including Girls For Gender Equity, America Reads/America Counts, and the Grand Street Settlement. In addition to serving as an Academic Director, Laura will also assist in curriculum design and execution for the Literacy Project and assist with grant writing. Larissa Stevenson will be joining our staff as a Squash Director. Larissa, originally from New Zealand, graduated from Trinity College in June, where she distinguished herself on the

squash court. She was a First-Team All-American and finished her senior season ranked 5th in college squash. She has extensive experience teaching squash to juniors of all levels after working at the Apawamis Club and the Hartford Golf Club. Larissa will coach squash to the 7th graders next year, run the Elite Squash Program, and assist the organization's marketing efforts, which she is amply qualified to do after an extensive internship in ESPN's Public Relations Department this past spring. ●



# Alumni Update

The following are the stories of four members of StreetSquash's first graduating class, who have just completed their first year of college.



## Lonnie Gibbs

Lonnie is gearing up to be a sophomore at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. He's looking forward to it, because being a freshman at a prestigious university and playing two varsity sports (football and squash) was not easy. "My year at school was tough," Lonnie said. "My first semester hit me hard because I was doing so much; football and squash really took up a lot of my time. I expected it to be hard, but it was kind of overwhelming at first."

Lonnie quickly learned what it took to cut it at Wesleyan, though. "By second semester I learned how to manage my time and I did better." This is a modest account. In fact, Lonnie is proud that by second semester, his grades were quite high. "During the second semester, I got an 84 on my first calculus exam. It felt great because the first semester I got a D in the class," he said.

Lonnie is lucky to be a quick learner and to have a strong support network. By second semester, Lonnie felt that he knew what he was doing and how to find and work better with professors. He also names Leah Brown, StreetSquash's Director of High School Academics and College Prep, as well as a Wesleyan Alumna, as being an important resource. "StreetSquash definitely prepared me for college, especially since I had a Wesleyan alum to give me advice and tell me what kinds of things to expect."

Lonnie rounded out his semester by playing numbers 2 and 3 on the Wesleyan squash team, becoming the first StreetSquasher to ever play squash on the college level. We hope that future StreetSquashers will follow in his footsteps. ●



## Xavier Harrison

Xavier's expectations for his first year at Wilberforce University in Wilberforce, Ohio, were quickly surpassed. "I expected college to be full of studying 24/7, but I was happily surprised," he said. "I enjoyed many fun activities at my school including parties, auctions, and the overall college experience."

Xavier quickly involved himself in many extra-curricular activities and clubs, including the Azure Hip-Hop Dance Team, and the DeJaVu Modeling Troupe. In fact, Xavier cites his dance troupe's performance at the school homecoming game as one of the highlights of his first year at school. With so much on his plate, Xavier remembers that he had some trouble with time management. Even so, his entrepreneurial spirit led Xavier to start up a snack canteen out of his dorm room to feed his hungry classmates on weekends when the college-run cafes were closed.

Xavier did not forget his studies, however, and he thanks StreetSquash for preparing him for the level of academic work he faced in school. "StreetSquash got me used to working hard, so in college it was natural to me."

Though Xavier is happy to be back in the bustle of New York City for the summer, he is looking forward to returning to Wilberforce as a more seasoned student in the fall. ●

## Alumni Update (Cont.)



### Justin Martin

Justin, who played number 1 on the StreetSquash team for many years, found another athletic pursuit while a freshman at the State University of New York's College at Old Westbury. "My highest accomplishment this year was learning to do ballet," he said. "Ballet is a more interesting dance to learn than anything else." Not only did Justin become a better dancer through his ballet class, but he also learned the many cultural origins of different ballet forms, such as Noh dance from Japan.

Justin gives StreetSquash credit for preparing him for these new experiences. "I felt like StreetSquash first exposed me to new and different environments and made me interested in different types of people in the world."

Even with his many positive experiences, Justin, like many of his peers, found that trying to balance the academic, social, and extra-curricular demands of school is harder than expected. "The most challenging part of my year was pledging [a fraternity]," Justin said. "It is hard to pledge and maintain a good G.P.A. If you don't manage your time right, your first year will be hard." With a year under his belt, though, Justin is ready to return for a strong year as a sophomore at Old Westbury. ●



### Davian Suckoo

Davian, who attends SUNY Buffalo, knew just what to expect when he got to college in September. Remembering his time in College Prep, when he and his classmates visited many different colleges and learning what a college experience would be like, Davian felt prepared for what his life might be like as a college freshman.

Looking back on his year, Davian reflects that no matter how prepared he may have been, it is not easy to start in a new place. "My first semester was the most challenging part of my year. I was taking a lot of classes and I didn't have any time for myself," he said. Davian learned and adapted quickly, though. "The work was hard at first, but it became easier after a while."

In fact, Davian ultimately found great academic success. He mentions getting an "A" on an English paper as being the high point of his year. Most significantly, though, Davian finished off his freshman year with a 3.0 GPA, a major accomplishment. ●

## StreetSquash Facility Going Up (Cont.)

### Strengthening Ties to the Community

Over the past 7 years, StreetSquash has run all of its programs outside of the community where its students, families and schools are located. We have long recognized that, in order to meet the demand from the community, maximize efficiency and serve as a true community organization, StreetSquash needed to be physically in the community that it serves. Now, instead of children and their families having to travel 45 minutes each way to come to a practice, most will be able to walk or take a 5-10 minute bus or subway ride to the facility. While we are proud of our outstanding attendance figures over the years – 94% – we are highly confident that the proximity of StreetSquash's new building to the schools and homes of its students will only bring about an even more faithful following. Most importantly, the children, families and schools will now

feel a far greater sense of ownership of StreetSquash as the program will now physically be a part of their community.

Says George Polsky, Founder and Executive Director, "This building is being created because of these children, and as such, it will be theirs. Everything that we do well as an organization, and all of the strides our students have made, will only be enhanced once we are inside our new home. There is hardly a day that goes by when our staff does not field a question from a student or parent asking, 'When is it going to be open?'. I simply tell them that I too wish it were tomorrow, and I reluctantly remind myself that patience is a virtue, and of course, good things come to those who wait." ●



# Congratulations to.....

## StreetSquash's 2005-2006 Award Winners!



The StreetSquash and CitySquash A-Teams before their match.

### The Following StreetSquashers Have National Rankings

#### Girls under 17

Sheena Suckoo . . . .69  
Ladonis Gaillard . . . .76

#### Girls under 15

Samantha Matos . . . .53  
Elizabeth Gatling . . .101  
Diosmiry Rodriguez 105  
Brussels Mercado . .107

#### Boys under 19

Daequan Andino . . .73

#### Boys under 17

David Nash . . . . .62

#### Boys under 15

Jamel Key . . . . .99  
Kevin Espino . . . . .106

### Outstanding Attendance:

- Team 1:** Brandy Robinson, Asia Giles,  
**Team 2:** Nicholas Nicholson, Samantha Matos, Javen Williams, Cody Levy, Carlos Soler, Shanese Patterson  
**Team 3:** Ayanna Hall (perfect attendance), Brussels Mercado, Ernesto Jordan, Chris Rowe, Paige Babilonia, Rakey Drammeh, Henry Spicer, Diosmiry Rodriguez  
**Team 4:** Raymond Moore, Bernard Carter, Diamond Martin, Tynisha Avila, Julian Hackney

### StreetSquash Parent of the Year:

- Team 1:** Claudia Giles  
**Team 2:** Belkys & Hernan Matos, Wynessia Levy  
**Team 3:** Shalinda Harris, Eileen Gibson  
**Team 4:** Harvey and Janice Hackney, Doris Horton, Ivy Martin

### StreetSquash Volunteers of the Year:

Harry Harwood, Lora Goodrich, Richard Polsky, Virginia Polsky, Dolores Cosquer, Chris Delaney, Yardenia Brickman, Michael Witkin

### StreetSquash Mentors of the Year:

Barbara Boynton, Emlyn Harmon

### StreetSquash SMASH Tournament:

#### High School Boys:

**Finalist** – Josh Gary  
**Champion** – David Nash

#### High School Girls:

**Finalist** – Samantha Matos  
**Champion** – Sheena Suckoo

- Team 3:** **Boys Finalist** – Ernesto  
**Boys Winner** – Elijah  
**Girls Finalist** – Elizabeth  
**Girls Winner** – Rakey  
**Team 4:** **Boys Finalist** – Julian  
**Boys Winner** – Devin  
**Girls Finalist** – Diamond  
**Girls Winner** – Tynisha

### Leadership:

- Team 1:** Sheena  
**Team 2:** Carlos Soler

### Squash Improvement:

- Team 1:** Shantell Wynn  
**Team 2:** Javen Williams  
**Team 3:** Esmeralda Amador  
**Team 4:** Raymond Moore

### Squash Achievement:

- Team 1:** Daequan Andino  
**Team 2:** Nicholas Nicholson  
**Team 3:** Raheem Logan  
**Team 4:** Tynisha Avila

### Academic Improvement:

- Team 1:** Daequan Andino  
**Team 2:** Shanese Patterson  
**Team 3:** Kenneth Blassingame  
**Team 4:** Tranai Johnson

### Academic Achievement:

- Team 1:** Sheena Suckoo  
**Team 2:** Cody Levy  
**Team 3:** Ayanna Hall  
**Team 4:** Sugeiry Betances

### College Prep:

- Team 2:** Shanese Patterson, Jamel Key, Melissa Sandoval  
**Team 1:** Brandy Robinson, Shantell Wynn, Sheena Suckoo

### Sportsmanship:

- Team 1:** Brandy Robinson  
**Team 2:** Jamel Key  
**Team 3:** Paige Babilonia  
**Team 4:** Diamond Martin

### StreetSquasher of the Year:

- Team 1:** Gabrielle Robinson  
**Team 2:** Samantha Matos  
**Team 3:** Elizabeth Gatling  
**Team 4:** Julian Hackney

# Summer Programs

After a long year of school, kids can't wait for the freedom and fun of summer vacation. StreetSquash helps kids use their summer vacations to expand their horizons through opportunities and experiences that push and challenge them in new and unexpected ways. For the past several years, StreetSquash has partnered with numerous summer camps and programs. This summer, many kids will be returning to their favorite spots from previous summers, and others will have new adventures in places they've never been before.

One of StreetSquash's exciting partnerships is with Summer Search, a program that finds resilient high school students and inspires them to become responsible and altruistic leaders by providing year-round mentoring, life-changing summer experiences, college advising, and a lasting support network. This year, 10th grader Keith Keith was accepted into the Summer Search program. As a Summer Search participant, Keith was connected with Outward Bound, and will be hiking and rafting with them in Oregon this summer.



(L to R) Brussels Mercado, Paige Babilonia, Rakey Drammeh

## These are some of the other opportunities StreetSquashers will have this summer:

- Outward Bound's Pinnacle Program
- Windsor Mountain Camp
- Longacre Leadership Camp
- Buck's Rock Performing and Creative Arts Camp
- Exploration Summer Program
- Camp Dudley
- Bryan Patterson's Universal Squash Camp, Chichester, England
- 35 StreetSquashers will be going to twelve squash camps around the northeast. These camps take place at the following locations: Harvard, Princeton, Dartmouth, Williams, Wesleyan, Bowdoin, The Hill School, and the Chatham Club.



(L to R) Samantha Matos, Talise Hall, Lavonda Howe, Nicholas Nicholson



# StreetSquashers are National Champions!



*The champion Girls Under 19 team with their plates after their win at Urban Team Nationals in Boston.*

It was a weekend to remember for five StreetSquash girls at this year's Urban Team Nationals. Faced with stiff competition from the top female teams in urban squash, the squad of Sheena Suckoo, Samantha Matos, Gabrielle Robinson, Princess Hardwell, and Brandy Robinson prevailed over the competition en route to the first GU19 National Championship in StreetSquash history. Entering Sunday's final as the underdogs against the top-seeded SquashSmarts team, the StreetSquashers dominated, sweeping all five matches to secure the championship.

"After working so hard all year long, we had a lot of confidence coming into the tournament. However, I don't think anyone expected to win 5-0 in the finals. We came as a team and we won as a team," said Brandy Robinson of their match.

In addition to the champion girls' team, three StreetSquash teams were B-draw champions. Those three teams – Girls Under 15, Boys Under 15, and Girls

Under 19, all came back from difficult losses in their first round of play to win two consecutive matches and bring home their own silver tournament plates. All of the nearly 60 StreetSquashers who participated gained valuable tournament experience, and were excited to meet and spend time with their counterparts from the other urban squash programs.

Many StreetSquashers also saw major individual squash successes this year. David Nash, a 10th grader, won the C-Draw of the Eye Care Open at the Chatham Club in Chatham, New Jersey this December, beating out adult squash players who had been playing for many years. Samantha Matos finished second at the Metropolitan Open at the End of March, finished 9th in the Silver Nationals, and finished second at the Urban Individual Nationals in June at the Groton School.

There's no question that the overall level of squash being played at StreetSquash is rising every year. Many more of our children are earning national rankings and they enter tournaments with a completely different mindset. They used to be self-conscious and nervous on court, and now they step on court believing in themselves and thinking they can win. StreetSquashers are gaining more and more tournament experience and gaining important exposure in the squash world. ●



*The Boys Under 15 B-Draw Championship team. Top Row (L to R): Elijah Hardwell, Nicholas Nicholson, Jamel Key. Bottom Row: Raheem Logan, Kevin Espino.*

# StreetSquash Senior class

**Daequan Andino** – Daequan has been a dedicated and enthusiastic member of the StreetSquash team for 6 years. Serving as a captain of Team 1 for part of his senior year, as well as

Team Nationals in Boston in April 2006. Katherine earned admission to 3 CUNY schools, and will be attending New York City College of Technology in Brooklyn beginning this fall.

admissions rates in her whole graduating class! She has decided to attend the College of New Rochelle in New Rochelle, New York this fall.

**Keesha Record** – Always visible because of her big smile and big personality, Keesha has been in StreetSquash since the 9th grade. Keesha is proud to have been accepted to the University of Bridgeport, in Bridgeport, Connecticut, which she will attend this fall.

**Keddie Valerio** – Keddie began his 5-year career with StreetSquash as an 8th grader at the Robert Clemente School. With his unique sense of humor and consistent academic performance, Keddie has been an important member of team. Keddie will be attending Mitchell College in New London, Connecticut beginning this fall.



*Some of StreetSquash's 2006 graduates: (L to R) Daequan Andino, Katherine Espino, Keesha Record, and Keddie Valerio.*

a Junior Counselor in the StreetSquash Summer Discovery and Youth Employment Program, Daequan has served as an excellent role model and leader for the team. Daequan earned admission to 2 universities, including his first choice, the University of Bridgeport in Bridgeport, Connecticut, which he has decided to attend in the fall.

**Katherine Espino** – Katherine has just completed an impressive 7 years with StreetSquash. A dedicated member since sixth grade, Katherine has distinguished herself from her teammates with her positive attitude and consistent academic achievement. Katherine was also a member of the B-Draw Championship team at the Urban

**Asia Navarette** – Asia has brought her bright smile and positive attitude to StreetSquash since 2000. An exceptionally hard worker who put her all into the college admissions process, Asia earned admission to 7 colleges and universities, one of the highest

**Good luck to our seniors in all their future endeavors! •**

*2006 graduate, Asia Navarette (center), with her mother, Sabrina Grandson (R), and 2005 alum, Latasha Bailey.*





# college Prep Update

After last year's huge success with college admissions, StreetSquash has continued to move forward in the pursuit of a college education for all its participants. This year, the College Prep Program experienced huge growth. In addition to our seniors being matched with College Prep mentors who helped them through the college application process, all ninth and tenth graders also attended weekly College Prep sessions, with the goal of building StreetSquashers' SAT and essay writing skills for three years before they apply to college.

There's no doubt that the extra time will pay off. "Over the past few years, we've heard from college admissions officers and private college counselors that the writing and SAT practice make a real difference in our kids' applications," said Leah Brown, Director of Academics and College Prep.

There are many types of colleges, and the College Prep Program focuses on exposing StreetSquashers to a wide

range of colleges, so that they can choose a place that's the best fit for them. This year, College Prep Program participants visited Historically Black Colleges and Universities, public, liberal arts, and Ivy Leagues schools. Among the College Prep Program's special activities this past year were:

- 2 college tours through Connecticut, visiting Wesleyan University, University of Connecticut, University of Bridgeport, and Mitchell College.
- A college tour through Philadelphia, including visits to Temple University, University of Pennsylvania, and Lincoln College.
- Spring parents' workshop: "The College Process: What to Expect."
- Personal Statement/College Essay Writing Workshop with writer and teacher, Ron Singer. •



*10th graders on the College Prep trip to Wesleyan University.*



*9th graders work on their writing skills during their College Prep workshops.*



*10th graders during the College Prep Career Panel.*

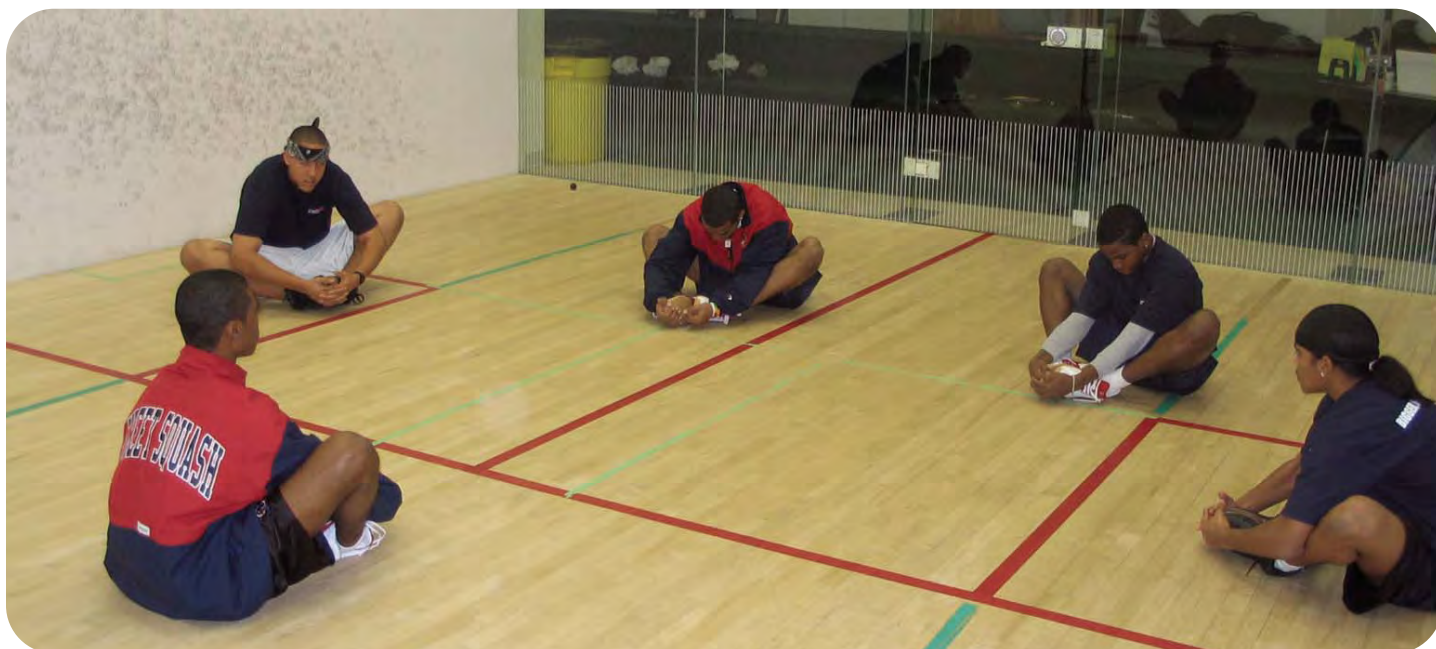
# StreetSquash on The Court

## Teams 1 and 2

<b>August 26</b>	Metropolitan Open, New York, NY
<b>October 7</b>	Chatham Junior Open, Chatham, NJ
<b>October 21</b>	Wilmington Junior Open, Wilmington, DE
<b>October 21</b>	St. Luke's Open, New Canaan, CT
<b>October 28</b>	Heights Casino Round Robin, Brooklyn, NY
<b>November 5</b>	Match versus CitySquash B team,
<b>November 12</b>	Match versus CitySquash A team,
<b>November 18</b>	Purple Cow Open, Williamstown, MA
<b>December 1</b>	Match versus Greenwich Academy, Greenwich, CT
<b>December 1</b>	Columbia University Round Robin, New York, NY
<b>December 2</b>	Chatham Eye Care Open, Chatham, NJ
<b>December 2</b>	Westchester Future Stars, Mamaroneck, NY
<b>December 9</b>	Heights Casino Round Robin, Brooklyn, NY
<b>December 16</b>	US Junior Olympics, New Haven, CT
<b>January 5</b>	Match versus Poly Prep, Brooklyn, NY
<b>January 7</b>	Match versus Pingry School, NJ
	Match versus Delbarton School, NJ
<b>January 17</b>	Match versus Chapin School, New York, NY
<b>January 20</b>	Westchester Junior Open, Mamaroneck, NY
<b>January 27</b>	Match versus Salisbury Academy, Salisbury, CT
<b>January 30</b>	Match versus Poly Prep, Brooklyn, NY
<b>February 2</b>	Match versus Squashbusters, New Haven, CT



*Nicholas Nicholson and Jamel Key*



*The top 5 boys stretch before their match against SquashBusters.*



**February 10** High School Championships, New Haven, CT  
**February 11** Match versus Blair Academy, Blairstown, NJ  
**February 15** Match versus Brearley, New York, NY  
**February 17** Sy Perkins Tournament, Chatham, NJ  
**February 25 – March 3** Tournament of Champions, New York, NY  
**March 17** Match versus Lancaster Country Day School, Lancaster, PA  
**March 24** Metropolitan Junior Open, New York, NY  
**March 31** Urban Team Nationals, Boston, MA  
**April 7** Silver Nationals, Baltimore, MD  
**June 17** Urban Individual Nationals, Groton, MA



(L to R) Carlos Soler, Daequan Andino, professional squash player Thierry Lincou, and Raheem Logan at the Tournament of Champions.

**Team 3**  
**October 8** Chatham Junior Open, Chatham, NJ  
**October 22** Wilmington Junior Open, Wilmington, DE  
**December 3** Westchester Future Stars, Mamaroneck, NY  
**December 3** Clinic with Jonny Smith at University Club  
**January 17** Match versus Chapin School, New York, NY  
**January 27** Heights Casino Tournament, Brooklyn, NY  
**January 27** Match versus Poly Prep, Brooklyn, NY  
**February 11** Match versus Blair Academy, Blairstown, NJ  
**February 25 – March 3** Tournament of Champions, New York, NY  
**March 4** Match versus CitySquash, New York, NY  
**March 24** Metropolitan Junior Open, New York, NY  
**April 7** Silver Nationals Tournament, Baltimore, MD  
**June 3** Match against SquashSmarts at Lawrenceville School, Princeton, NJ  
**June 17** Urban Individual Nationals, Groton, MA

Practice at the Harvard Club.

**Team 4**  
**January 7** Match versus CitySquash, New York, NY  
**January 27** Match versus Poly Prep, Brooklyn, NY  
**February 12** Tournament at Harvard Club of NYC  
**March 31** Urban Team Nationals, Boston, MA  
**June 17** Urban Individual Nationals, Groton, MA



# Community Service and Cultural Outings

On Sunday October 16th, StreetSquash took part in its first community service project of the year as over 60 StreetSquash students, staff, and family members took part in the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in New York's Central Park. Luckily for the participants, the rain that had soaked the region that week disappeared on Sunday and everyone was able to enjoy a crisp fall morning in the Park. Earlier in the month, Leonard Hamilton from the American Cancer Society spoke to two StreetSquash teams about the impact of breast cancer and the purpose behind the walk. In the weeks after Mr. Hamilton's talk, the students raised over \$2,000 for the American Cancer Society, the second consecutive year that StreetSquash passed the \$2,000 milestone.

## October 2005

- Talk with Leonard Freeman, of American Cancer Society, and a breast cancer survivor
- Breast Cancer Walk in Central Park: StreetSquash children raised over \$2,000
- Crunch Fitness: StreetSquashers took spinning and strength training classes with one of Crunch's personal trainers

## November 2005

- Crunch Fitness: StreetSquashers took African Dance and Boot Camp classes with one of Crunch's personal trainers

## December 2005

- Nutrition talk with Columbia University Strength Coach, Tommy Sheehan

## January 2006

- Yoga: participated in class at OM Yoga studio
- Westside Ecumenical Ministry for the Elderly: Made Valentine's Day cards for residents

## February 2006

- Hanover, NH: Field trip including bowling, a trip to the circus, and matches with Hanover residents at Dartmouth College

## March 2006

- Yorkville Common Pantry: Distributed food to the homeless
- Lancaster, PA: Field trip included squash match against Lancaster Country Day School, tours of pretzel and chocolate factories, and visit to a farm
- Philadelphia, PA: Field trip included squash match against SquashSmarts, visit to the Franklin Institute, bowling, and trip to the Terhune Orchards



*Esmeralda Amador works to fix up an ailing building during the City Year Community Service Day in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.*

- Natural History Museum: Galapagos IMAX movie
- Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn: CityYear clean up day

## April 2006

- Sakura Park Clean-up: Cleaned up and weeded a local park
- East Side, New York: CityYear clean up day

## May 2006

- AIDS Walk NYC: StreetSquash children raised over \$2,500
- Cleanup in Central Park with Riverside Park Fund
- Reebok Human Rights Award Young Activists Ceremony



*The 7th graders visited the Terhune Orchards in Princeton, New Jersey during their team trip to Philadelphia in March.*



*The whole StreetSquash team at the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in Central Park.*



# Urban Squash Goes National

Urban Squash is clearly riding a wave. Now the questions are 'how to keep riding it well?' and 'how to encourage and inspire others to hop on board?' Last July the Executive Directors of the four most established programs, George Polsky (StreetSquash), Greg Zaff (SquashBusters), Tim Wyant (CitySquash), and Steve Gregg (SquashSmarts), met in New York City and decided it was time to more formally unify the programs under some type of umbrella association for the purposes of program learning, improvement, and growth. Several meetings followed and new members, Board Chair Bill Simon Jr., and Kevin Klipstein, USSRA CEO, joined the team, effectively launching the National Urban Squash and Education Association. Working closely with the USSRA, the Association's mission is "to support and ensure excellence among existing programs and promote and initiate the growth of similar programs in new cities."

The Association's first initiative has been to create a member organization whereby programs, new and old, must satisfy 16 explicit criteria to join. The criteria, taken together, represent the Association's definition of an excellent urban squash/education youth program. They are born out of the almost 30 years of combined knowledge and learning of StreetSquash, SquashBusters, CitySquash, and SquashSmarts. Programs are granted membership after they satisfy the criteria through a written proposal and by passing a two-day site visit. Provisional membership includes an initial \$10,000 grant, paid for by the USSRA with funds raised during the Centennial Ball, pending approval by the new Association. Full membership carries the benefit of

Association funding and technical support, USSRA endorsement, and the invitation to compete in the Association's two national events, the Urban Team and Urban Individual Championships.

Beginning this fall, the Association will expand its focus to author a best practices white paper, convene learning forums for program staff and board members on topics such as evaluation, student selection, fundraising, academic curricula, college counseling, and board recruitment. Additionally, the Association will identify new cities suitable to receive financial and technical support based on the requirements outlined in the application process such as the requisite number of squash courts, available classroom space, and a demonstrated community and financial backing. After selection, the Association will work with people

from the start-up city to find a passionate, skilled Executive Director to run the new program. The program and the Executive Director will receive ongoing guidance and resources from the Association every step of the way.

The Association would like to welcome its newest member, MetroSquash, which is doing great work with children on the south side of Chicago. Congratulations go to Dave Kaye, MetroSquash's Executive Director, who recruited students this past fall, and is completing a very successful first year of programming. It was tremendous having the MetroSquashers participate at the Urban Individual Nationals at the Groton School in June.

Stay tuned for more updates on the National Urban Squash and Education Association. Great things are to come! •



StreetSquash Team 1, 2005-2006

# MISSION

Founded in September 1999, StreetSquash is an after-school youth enrichment program that combines academic tutoring, squash instruction, college prep, literacy, community service, and one-on-one mentoring. Working with 140 boys and girls, ages 7 – 18 from Harlem, for a six-year period, the program's goals are: to improve academic performance; to develop an ethic of hard work and commitment; to boost self-confidence; to ensure that all StreetSquash children graduate from high school, enter into post-secondary education, and move on to become active, productive and involved citizens. StreetSquash is a 501(c)3 organization.



An Urban Youth  
Enrichment Program

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