

STREET SQUASH

news

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Winter 06

GROWTH AND ADVENTURE FOR STREETSQUASHERS DURING SUMMER 2006

outward Bound with Summer Search

by Keith Keith



Keith Keith paddling down the rapids on his Outward Bound trip to Oregon this summer.

Dear Summer Search

Hi, my name is Keith Keith. I was born and raised in Harlem, a place that is infested with negative energy. My parents are Anthony and Ilva Keith. I have a brother and a sister that are older than me. I live in a stable apartment and I was raised by some of the best parents there are.

Growing up I had to deal with a lot of negative people that only wanted to see me fail in life because they failed. I did things that I regretted and I wish I can turn the hands of time to fix what I did, but I can not. I always was a kind and respectful kid that knew better but I did not show that side too often. I knew I was an intelligent, smart kid that wanted a lot out of life, but I always set

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Courtesy of Dayna Kirk.

Summer Squash

A Week at Bowdoin Squash Camp

by Brandy Robinson

I had so much fun this summer at Bowdoin Squash Camp. This was my second year going to Bowdoin, and it just gets better every time!

A typical day at Bowdoin is like this:

we wake up and went to breakfast. After breakfast we played squash for 3 hours. Then we went to lunch. After lunch, we did an activity; we would either go to the beach, the movies, or kayaking. After the break, we ate dinner and played squash for another 3 hours. We went back to the dorms, showered, mingled, and went to sleep. Bowdoin campus is beautiful, and the food is great.

The volunteers we had to work with on our squash game were really helpful. We played games and we did many exercises. The only bad part was the 7 hour bus ride on the way back! I am going to apply to Bowdoin for college because I loved it so much. I would recommend Bowdoin camp to everyone because it is a great experience. Thomas, the coach, is wonderful, and you will really enjoy yourself!

The Fortson Squash Camp held by coach Thomas Fortson at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine, provides intensive squash training combined with the outdoor activities unique to the camp's location in coastal Maine - kayaking, hiking, swimming and beach. StreetSquash would like to thank the Fortson Squash Camp for its generosity in providing a week-long experience for four of our high school StreetSquashers this summer!



From Left: (coach), Ladonis Gaillard, Sheena Suckoo, Brandy Robinson, Princess Hardwell, and Thomas Fortson (coach) on court as camp.



Brandy Robinson (right) on court with a coach at Fortson Squash Camp at Bowdoin college.

Letter from Buck's

by Ayanna Hall

Dear Newsletter,

I had a lot of fun at Buck's Rock Camp for Creative and Performing Arts. It was among the best summer experiences of my life thus far. A typical day at Buck's Rock is always exciting. We always had to wake up at 7:30. Elizabeth, Rakey, and I always woke up at 7:25 just to get a warm shower, because if you waited too long the water would become freezing and it was hard to take a comfortable shower. After the shower, we would get dressed and then go to breakfast from about 8:30 to 9.

At 9, the gong would ring telling us that the shops were open. Sewing was our favorite shop, so we would be in sewing most of the time. We would be there until the lunch gong rang at 12 noon. We would eat each lunch and then go back to our cabin or hang out on the porch and talk to our friends. From 1 to 2 was the rest hour so we would do various things like listen to music, dance, or play cards.

At 2, another gong would ring telling us that the shops are reopened. Normally, in the afternoon, we would have a dance class or a dance rehearsal, so we would be there. If not, then we would go to another shop like jewelry or ceramics. At 3, there would be snacks brought to the shops. We would always try to get all the good snacks. We stayed in shops until the dinner gong rang at 6.



Elizabeth, Rakey and Ayanna in the Ceramics Studio at Buck's Rock Camp

After dinner there would be numerous things to do at night. You could go to plays, recitals, or stand up comedy. Some shops were still open at night, too. Or (and this is what we would do most often), you could stay in your cabin and do what you pleased. We would normally play music and games and dance. Then at 10, the gong would ring telling us to get ready for bed. At 10:30, it was lights out and you woke up the next day to do the same thing.

One memory that sticks out the most to me was when we performed. Well, technically it's two memories. We performed in a show called Motown. We danced and sang and the crowd loved us. That 15 minutes of fame was great. Then we performed in the big dance show. We were like stars at that camp. That's another reason why I want to go back.

Buck's Rock is a summer experience that you could never forget. It will also change your life because you'll meet so many different and new people. I really want to thank StreetSquash for this opportunity. If I have the chance, I would definitely go back.

Sincerely,
Ayanna Hall

Buck's Rock Performing and Creative Arts Camp is located in New Milford, Connecticut. Buck's Rock, whose program allows campers the freedom and guidance to cultivate their artistic sides, has generously supported the creative development of StreetSquash's team members for the past two summers.



From Left: Ayanna Hall, Rakey Drammeh, and Elizabeth Gatling

Growing Up at Camp Dudley



Back Row – Peter Karlen, Chris Rowe, Carlos Soler, Ernesto Jordan, Chris Tom. Center Row – Raymond Moore, Kevin Espino, Uwemedimoh Umoh. Front Row – Julian Hackney.

Kevin Espino

This summer I was an aide at Camp Dudley. Camp Dudley is an all-boys camp located upstate. The aide's job at the Camp Dudley is to run the cabin inspection. Basically, cabin inspection is the time of the day in which cabins compete to have the cleanest cabin. Cabins are inspected every day except for Sunday.

If you're an aide, it's also the last year you'll ever play on a team. Although that seems bad, it's actually an advantage because you already know what it's like playing with seniors and aides.

Camp is broken up into four divisions: Cubbies, Plebes, Juniors, and Seniors. Only Cubbies, Plebes and Juniors have aides. All cabins have a J.L. (Junior Leader) or A.L. (Assistant Leader) and a leader.

I was selected for the Plebe cabin, Yale. Many cabins are named after colleges like Columbia, Yale, and Dartmouth. My cabin consisted of 8 campers, a J.L., and leader, and me.

Next year I will be a J.L. and will finally get paid to go to camp. I can't wait till then! ●

Carlos Soler

When I went to Camp Dudley this year, I was going to be an aide. An aide is a camper but with privileges. So we didn't have to do any community service and we had nights out. They put me up with the juniors, the coolest division in camp. I was excited, but was nervous because I was going to be a mentor to the kids in my cabin. Everybody told me, "spend time with your kids, because you'll regret it later if you don't." So every free time, I would go play basketball with them, or go swimming with them on a hot day.

I liked being an aide because I could play sports and still be on the leadership team. I was very sad the last day because the kids that I bonded with were leaving, but I was happy because I could go home and see my family. Overall I had a fantastic time, and would love to go back next year as a J.L. (Junior Leader) and enjoy the experience. ●



The StreetSquash Camp Dudley Family at camp on Lake Champlain.

Camp Dudley is a boys' camp that has been a summer home for many of StreetSquash's participants for the past four years. This past summer, not only did Kevin and Carlos serve as Aides, but 11th grade StreetSquasher, David Nash, was a J.L., and six middle school StreetSquashers were campers. Many thanks to Camp Dudley for their continued support of StreetSquash and our boys!

outward Bound Pinnacle Program

by cody Levy



Cody Levy zips down the line at the Outward Bound ropes course in Colorado this summer.

This summer, I spent 3 weeks of my vacation in Colorado with Outward Bound Wilderness. At Outward Bound, I met new friends, and experienced things I had never done before.

On Saturday, July 22, 2006, I went to JFK airport to board a plane for Denver, Colorado to meet my Outward Bound group. When I first got on the plane, I felt scared because that was my first time flying by myself. When I flew up in the sky, I wasn't scared anymore because I watched T.V. and went to sleep. When I woke up, I couldn't believe I was already in Denver. I was really nervous to meet the instructors, and see who they were.

When I met my instructors, Hannah King and David Carter at the airport, they were actually okay. At first, I didn't want to be in Denver at all – I just wanted to be with my mother to make sure she was okay. I called her to let her know that I was okay.

When we got to the first Outward Bound site, I met the people in my group – all of whom became my good friends. We did a lot of fun things together in the wilderness to become closer as a group. My groupmates were so funny, and we just had fun with each other and with the instructors. One of the best things about my group was that my leaders Hannah and Dave gave me the nickname Cody "Bear" Levy because I give people bear hugs to make them happy. Getting that nickname really meant a lot to me.

My three weeks with Outward Bound were extremely challenging, but I did it for my mom and my group. We climbed three mountains all the way to the top – Mount Hope, Mount Albert, and Mount Massive. One of the best parts of the trip was when I got to be a team leader for my group, whether during a group hike to the next camp site, or another mountain in the woods.

One thing I learned about the Outward Bound experience was working with a team and not giving up.

When it was time to go back to New York City, I felt sad because I wanted to stay. I didn't want to leave. I had so much fun being in the wilderness rock climbing, peak climbing mountains, and being alone on my "solo" for a full 24 hours. Outward Bound showed me what the wild is all about, about teamwork, and about coming together as a group. I really appreciate all I learned from the experience. Also, it was the best vacation of my life! ●



Cody reached the peak of three mountains in the course of his trip.

Founded in 1992, the Pinnacle Scholarship Program provides the Outward Bound course opportunity specifically for low-income, high-potential youth ages 14-18 through financial support, pre-course guidance and mentoring, and post-course support, community service, and leadership opportunities.



Keith Keith (far right) with his groupmates on their Outward Bound adventure.

myself up to fail because I was afraid to succeed. I am used to seeing my peers mess up their lives and I thought I should mess mine up too. I did things to fit in. I want to be that popular kid that everybody loves and I succeeded until I found out that I was not happy. Every time I tried to change my life around I got discouraged. But I am working on that and I will pursue my goals in life.

My life started to change when I started to play squash through a program called StreetSquash. It kept me off the streets and busy. I joined the team in junior high school. I was a natural because I picked up the sport quickly. My life started to change even more when Summer Search came into my life. My squash coach recommended me and I am very thankful that he did, but at first I didn't follow up on it. A couple days before the Summer Search interview, I finally wrote my essay. From my experience so far the interview was the hardest part. To have four people staring at me showing no emotion made me nervous. They kept straight faces through the interview and I thought what I was saying was not to their liking. What really made me go to the interview was the fact of I was ready to finally get the help to be the person I really wanted to be.

A couple days later I received the acceptance letter. I was so excited because I thought all I would have to do is show up to a couple events each year, and I would be able to go on a trip. Then I found out that I had to call once a week to check in and I still thought it was going to be an easy program. The phone calls were the second tough task because sometimes while being on the phone, the Summer Search person and I both stop talking and it gets really quiet. After a while I started to like the once a week phone call. It helped me get whatever happened that week out of my head. I became happier because I was not carrying last week's issues to school with me the next week. All my teachers noticed the change in me and they would always ask why I was not acting out any more. Then I told them about Summer Search and they all replied by saying that the program has really helped me. I was a person that didn't speak my mind until it burst out of me, but now I feel comfortable talking things out. I am not afraid to let someone know how I feel. I thank Summer Search for that.

This summer I went to Oregon for an Outward Bound course thanks to Summer Search. The course was more challenging than I expected. On some days we hiked from sunrise to sunset, and on other days we would paddle for more than 20 miles a day. While on the course I wanted to quit and go home, because of how my body felt. I didn't show my group how I felt because everybody was having a hard time.

My downfall on the course was when we hiked up a glacier. It started out easy but as we hiked out more on the glacier it began to get challenging. We had to watch out for crevasses and weak spots on the glacier. It was very cold and the wind made it hard to walk. I slipped and fell a lot. I was starting to give up but my group didn't let me and I am happy that they didn't. After crying to myself briefly, my group helped motivate me and I gained back the confidence to finish. When we finally reached the top I felt mighty even though I was half way frozen. I learned that as long as I have motivation and confidence any goal can be accomplished. Everything turned out successful when I had the right state of mind.

I also learned that it is ok to ask for help. Before we climbed the second of three mountains, the "middle sister," I was tired from climbing to the base of the mountain. Everything was going smoothly until we reached an area of gravel. Walking on gravel is no easy task. Every step you take, you slide back down. I needed help but I didn't want to ask for it. Irza, another Summer Search student from Boston saw that I needed help and offered it but I turned it down at first. She told me if I ever needed help with anything just to ask and she would help me out. Then I finally asked for her help. She helped me through the gravel with her words. It felt good to be able to lean on someone for a change. After that day I learned to appreciate her more. I was happy that we were blessed to have Irza in the group with us. I learned that it is ok to ask for help and to lean on someone once in a while rather than to always get leaned on, especially because in the past I have felt that I am a person that is always there for others but when I need a friend there aren't any open hands.

This whole Summer Search experience so far has helped me build my true character. I am where I want to be in life right now and that's being happy and confident with whatever I do. Summer Search helped me find out the true values of life and I want to thank ya'll for that. I know that I am ready for the other challenges that will come my way and nothing will stop me from achieving my goal to own my own businesses. I want to start a franchise, that's my ultimate dream, and now that I've been through this experience I know I can achieve my goals. I want to say thank you summer search for giving me the chance to see who I really am. Thanks a lot.

Sincerely,
Keith Keith



Through Summer Search, Keith has the opportunity to travel anywhere in the world this coming summer. Keith is planning to go to Minnesota to do a Spanish language intensive for the first part of the summer, and then will travel to Spain to practice what hes learned!

The mission of Summer Search is to find resilient low-income high school students and inspire them to become responsible and altruistic leaders by providing year-round mentoring, life-changing summer experiences, college advising, and a lasting support network.

Windsor Mountain International Camp in our own Words



Raheem Logan overcame a great challenge this summer at Windsor Mountain – swimming in the lake!

Raheem Logan, Guytaul Bennett, Tynisha Avila, and Diamond Martin attended Windsor Mountain Camp for a month this summer. Windsor Mountain International was founded in 1961. Since then, Windsor Mountain has hosted young people from more than 60 countries. This past summer was the second year that StreetSquashers have attended Windsor Mountain.

StreetSquash: What was a typical day like at Windsor Mountain Camp?

Raheem: We woke up (early if we had a kitchen prep or clean dishes day), got breakfast, and had a morning meeting. Afterwards, we had a class that we chose. It could be anything, like sports, art, or music. Next we had lunch, then rest hour, then two more classes, then dinner and a night activity. Finally, we got to go back to sleep!

Guytaul: At Windsor Mountain Camp, a typical day was: first, I would clean my living unit then go to my first class. My classes were usually sports. I especially liked basketball and football. That would be a typical day for me.

StreetSquash: What was your favorite activity at camp? Why?

Raheem: I loved playing Capture the Flag. It was exciting and I had a chance to test my quickness and speed.

Guytaul: My favorite activity was Hot Rodicus. Counselors would dress like demons, and we would have to search for them all over camp. Then we would have to find them and carry them to the basketball court.

Raheem's great experience at camp this summer was recognized by the Windsor Mountain staff, and he has been asked to come back as a member of their Leadership in Training (LIT) program in summer 2007!

StreetSquash: Was Windsor Mountain like what you expected it to be?

Raheem: No, I thought I was going to have no friends, and be miserable, but I was cool with everyone and had a great time. I've even been back for a reunion, and gone to visit some of the friends I made at camp since I got home.

Guytaul: No, I thought for the first two weeks or so that I wouldn't know anyone, but I met my friend Matt about two hours after we arrived. We were good friends for the rest of the summer.

StreetSquash: What was the biggest challenge you faced while at camp? What do you think you learned?

Raheem: Swimming was the biggest challenge for me. But I think I learned from it to never give up, and that practice always results in success.

Guytaul: My biggest challenge was going to sleep after we heard coyotes howl at night. Also, nearby, neighbors would shoot shotguns at the coyotes so they would leave. That was scary.

StreetSquash: What is your best memory from camp?

Raheem: Riding the zip-line on the ropes course. I've never done anything like that before. Plus, it felt just like a roller coaster ride!

Guytaul: My best memory is when my friends from my tent and I pulled a prank on our LITs (Leaders in Training). While they were sleeping, we drew mustaches on their faces, so that they would have to go to breakfast with marker on their faces!



Guytaul Bennett (far right) with friends in front of their platform tent, where they slept for a month this summer.

A Week in England

by Sheena Suckoo



Samantha Matos (second from left) and Sheena Suckoo (center) with friends at a carnival in Portsmouth, England.

During this summer, I was very fortunate to go to two squash camps, one at Bowdoin College, and the other in England. In August, I went to Bryan Patterson's Universal Squash Camp in Chichester, England. During this trip I was accompanied by Samantha Matos. This was an amazing opportunity because I had the chance to go to a completely different country to get help for my squash skills.

I was filled with verve because I was going to Europe, which I'd never been to before, and also I was nervous. I was nervous because I didn't know what to expect from the English people, the camp, and my host family. However, when I arrived at the camp I found that everyone was friendly and polite. The coaches Tim, Tina and Bryan were very kind to me when I arrived. They made me feel as if I was home at Columbia University practicing with my team.

Every morning we had to wake up at 7:00 to make sure we would be on time to the club where we were playing. If we weren't on time, we would have to run suicides, which we didn't do because our host family made sure we weren't late. In the morning I would be extremely exhausted because of the jet lag, but I managed to make it work. Tim, Tina, and Bryan would split us into groups and help us on certain skills such as backhand, boasts, dropshots, lobs, and volleys all morning.

In the afternoon we would have lunch break, and Samantha and I would walk through the town buying things at the shops. Later we would have to be back to the courts and do some intense fitness. I really abhorred the fitness part of the day, but I had no choice so I put forth one hundred percent. After we accomplished all our fitness drills, we had the chance to play squash.

Overall, I had a great time at camp getting to know the other kids, coaches, and England. I made friends with three girls named Kelly, Emily, and Jenny, who opened up to me as soon as I arrived. In England, I didn't meet one rude person, which is a culture shock because it's a different environment from America. We went to Portsmouth to a carnival where I had a blast. Also I went bowling with the group, and that's where I got to know a lot about the others. I am glad I was chosen to go to this camp because I wouldn't regret any day I spent there. ●



Samantha and Sheena (center row, left) with all the squash players from Bryan Patterson's Universal Squash Camp in Chichester, England.

This summer, Sheena Suckoo and Samantha Matos attended Bryan Patterson's Universal Squash Camp in Chichester England, which has been one of StreetSquash's greatest summer partners for the past five years. Through the support of the camp and the StreetSquash community, StreetSquashers have the opportunity to study with world-class coaches and players, and to travel to the U.K.

Oh, the Places We've Gone!



Tranai Johnson, Raheem Logan, and Guytaul Bennett at the Connecticut Squash Academy.



Paige Babilonia on court at Princeton University Squash camp



Princess, Ladonis, Sheena and Brandy on a trip from Bowdoin Squash Camp

Buck's Rock Camp, *New Milford, Connecticut*

Rakey Drammeh
Elizabeth Gatling
Ayanna Hall

Camp Dudley, *Westport, New York*

Christopher Rowe
Ernesto Jordan
Julian Hackney
Uwemidimoh Umoh
Peter Mitchell
Raymond Moore
David Nash
Kevin Espino
Carlos Soler

Longacre Leadership Program, *Newport, Pennsylvania*

Kareem Bridges

Outward Bound Pinnacle Program Cody Levy

Windsor Mountain International Camp *Windsor, New Hampshire*

Raheem Logan
Diamond Martin
Guytaul Bennett
Tynisha Avila

Squash and Beyond Camp *at Williams College*

Elijah Hardwell
Esmeralda Amador
Ladonis Gaillard
Jamel Key

Power Squash Academy *at Dartmouth College*

Ernesto Jordan
Brussels Mercado
Diosmiry Rodriguez

Mitchell Squash Summer Camp *at the Chatham Club*

Tynisha Avila
Gabrielle Robinson
Shantell Wynn

Hill School Squash Camp *in Pottstown, Pennsylvania*

Shelby Bozeman
Ayanna Hall
Henry Spicer

Summer Search *in Oregon* Keith Keith

Princeton University Squash Camp

Paige Babilonia
Rakey Drammeh

Connecticut Squash Academy *at Wesleyan University*

Tranai Johnson
Raheem Logan
Guytaul Bennett
Melissa Sandoval
Shanese Patterson

Fortson Squash Camp *at Bowdoin College*

Sheena Suckoo
Princess Hardwell
Brandy Robinson
Ladonis Gaillard

Complete Squash Camp *at Harvard University*

Christopher Rowe
Uwemidimoh Umoh
Julian Hackney
Charisse Strong
Elizabeth Gatling



Visiting Day at Buck's Rock Camp



Update on the SL Green StreetSquash Center

As of December, 2006, the outer shell of the S L Green StreetSquash Center in Harlem is complete!



StreetSquash is excited to be able to get into the space within the next six months to begin the fit-out of the interior of our permanent facility, building 8 squash courts, 4 classrooms, locker rooms, a library, and an office suite. We are thrilled to be on schedule for a Spring 2008 grand opening.



A view of the entryway into the StreetSquash Center.

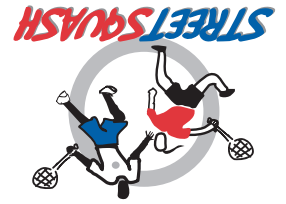


The interior of the StreetSquash Squash Courts, looking into the locker rooms, offices, and classrooms.



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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