

ISSUE NO. 19

FALL 2013



STREET SQUASH

HARLEM

A JOURNEY



Turn the page to learn more...

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mitch Truwit

Chairman,
StreetSquash Board
Partner
Apax Partners

Jonathan Berger

Chief Investment Officer
and Partner
Stone Tower Capital

Richard Chin

Head Squash Professional
Harvard Club of New York

William R. Cline, Jr.

President and CEO
Clovis Capital

Andrew Fink

Managing Director
Trevi Health Partners

Eddie Fishman

Managing Director
D.E. Shaw

Steve Green

Chairman & CEO
SL Green Realty

Jeffrey Horwitz

Partner
Proskauer Rose LLP

Leslie Kimerling

President
Isis Partners

Eric David Muller

Managing Director
Goldman Sachs

George Polsky

Founder & Executive Director
StreetSquash

Linda Robinson

Senior Managing Director
Blackrock

Edward L. Shugrue III

CEO
Talmage LLC

Frank Stella

Artist

Rodd Evonsky

Treasurer

STAFF

Executive Director:

George Polsky

Program Director:

Sareen Pearl

Director of Alumni Outreach:

Brad Young

Director of College Prep:

Cici Matheny

Director of College

Transition:

Assumpta Galang

Director of Social Work:

Sasha Diamond-Lenow

Academic Directors:

Tai Garcia,

Alana Presslaff and

Mariela Puentes

Squash Directors:

Charles Loesch-Quintin,

RJ Keating and

Clair Oblamski

CREDITS

Written by:

StreetSquash staff

Design:

Desantis Creative

STREETSSQUASH HARLEM

40 West 116th Street

New York, NY 10026

Phone: 212.289.4838

Fax: 212.996.3219

www.StreetSquash.org

Member of:

nusea
National Urban Squash and
Education Association

A JOURNEY (CONTINUED FROM COVER)

13 years ago, on a sunny September morning, I made my way to Thurgood Marshall Academy in Harlem to present to a group of 8th graders about joining StreetSquash. In the crowd was Lonnie Gibbs, a bright-eyed, eager boy who had never heard of squash before that day. He signed up to give it a try, and the rest is, well, an amazing story still unfolding...

- Begins StreetSquash in 2000
- Graduates Thurgood Marshall Academy as Valedictorian in 2005
- Graduates Wesleyan University with BA in Mathematics in 2010 (also plays on varsity squash team)
- Begins work at Promise Academy Charter High School in Harlem as a math teacher in 2010
- This past September begins work at StreetSquash Newark as Academic Director while preparing to take his actuarial exams

While each StreetSquasher's story is different, Lonnie's path nevertheless illustrates the impact that StreetSquash can and does have on many hundreds of students each year. With 180 after school program participants, and over 100 alumni in college and beyond, StreetSquash, along with our parents, school partners and volunteers, continues to work our hardest to give these students the best shot for success. I am deeply indebted for everything everyone continues to do to make this all possible.

George Polsky

Founder & Executive Director

StreetSquash



Lonnie tutoring the next generation of StreetSquashers at StreetSquash Newark

NEW COLLEGE TRANSITION PROGRAM HELPS STUDENTS START OFF STRONG



When asked, “What was the most difficult part of transitioning to college?” StreetSquash College Transitions Director Assumpta Galang got some pretty rote replies from the Class of 2012... “Not having a schedule”, “Living with a roommate”, “All the reading”, “Balancing fun and school work”, “Knowing how to pace all of your work so that you’re not doing it all at once.”

It’s common knowledge that the first year of college is one of the most difficult challenges for any scholar. Whether you are going away or staying in the city, transitioning from high school to college always presents unique obstacles.

In the past year, StreetSquash’s College Access and Success team has worked hard to ensure that our rising college freshmen are equipped with the skills and resources that will help them become more successful students and young professionals.

In addition to all the work that we do in College Prep at StreetSquash, once

the high school seniors have turned in all of their college applications, they participate in workshops to start getting ready for the academic, social and emotional changes which they can expect to experience in the fall. Over this past year StreetSquash has expanded this Beginning College Program: If the students are not already enrolled in a summer program at their respective college or university, these rising freshmen must take a 6-week humanities course at StreetSquash over the summer before they matriculate. This class is structured to mimic the experience of taking a college level Globalization course, complete with a syllabus, a course reader, a term paper, discussion sessions and required office hours. These rising freshmen will also have the chance to talk to current StreetSquash college students, back for summer break, about what their experiences were like in college; the challenges they faced, and how they overcame those challenges. These new alums also

have the opportunity to visit Scotia Bank, where they will submit their resumes and cover letters, and be given mock interviews by junior associates!

After our students go off to college they can look forward to keeping connected to StreetSquash by getting a friendly StreetSquash visit each semester! It’s a great time for the students to show off their campus, have a powwow with their advisor or mentor, troubleshoot any problems they may be dealing with at the time and of course have a nice meal out on us! When the students come back, StreetSquash is ready with professional development workshops and alumni squash tournaments. We encourage all of our alumni to come back, speak to our students and volunteer on court or in the classroom.

This upcoming year StreetSquash is planning to expand the Transition Program to include a First Year Success seminar series for all of the commuter college students. This will be a way for the students in the city to keep active in the StreetSquash community, provide them with the resources and support to help them continue to be successful in school, as well as give them the chance to participate in monthly professional development opportunities that will expose them to different careers around NYC.

Our goal, as always, is to give these students the tools to be successful and we are excited to see where the future takes them and hear their stories about college when they come to visit!

COLLEGE ESSAYS HIGHLIGHT REMARKABLE SENIOR CLASS

This year the StreetSquash seniors continue a long tradition of remarkable college writing, which have not only impressed us by their candor, intelligence, and poetry, but have fortunately also impressed many a college admissions staff! We hope you will enjoy sharing in a few selections of the StreetSquashers' hard work, and bold stories featured below. Congratulations once again to all of the members of the class of 2013 on their achievements and bright futures ahead!



Sade Evans

I was sitting in band class with my head down, once again with no instrument in hand. I tapped my

foot to the music of others and looked down the row of chairs my classmates were sitting in. I glared at their flutes, wishing I had my own.

"Still no instrument, Sade?" Mrs. Keesey, my band teacher, asked. I responded with a slow "No," as she proceeded to tell me what I already knew: I was two weeks behind the rest of the class, and there was no way I could catch up.

Upset, I sat on my bedroom floor later that night and thought about ways to fix my situation. I knew my mother did not have the money at the time, so it would take a while before I got a flute. I began cutting up paper and before I knew it, I had made a flute. It was fragile and wrinkled from my failed attempt to make a perfect cylinder. The holes were oblong, not round, and of course, it didn't make music. Still it was better than no flute at all. For the next few days, I studied my classmates and Mrs. Keesey when they played their flutes in class. I watched the way

their mouths curved around the flute's opening and how to assemble and disassemble the flute's parts and put them in its case. I would then practice on my little paper flute at home.

Finally after a month in band, I got a real flute. I wasted no time in the music store. As my mom stood at the cash register conversing with a staff member, I quickly pieced the flute together and blew into its hollow frame. Out came the worst sound I had ever heard. But, I was not discouraged. I readjusted my fingers and blew out the beautiful sound of a b-flat. With a new enthusiasm and determination to catch up, I practiced and practiced. After a few weeks, I became First Chair, the best flutist in band. It felt good to be acknowledged as a high achiever, not the unprepared student. My experience taught me that I could overcome any obstacle as long as I am able to do the hard work. Although far behind my classmates at the beginning of the year, my perseverance and creativity allowed me to excel.

Though I no longer play the flute, I continue to utilize the skills I gained in sixth grade with my paper flute. Today, I play squash in an afterschool program called StreetSquash. I started out like I had in band, behind in skill. My teammates had been playing for two years by the time I joined squash, and I had to catch up. Every once in awhile, I

think about my flute. I would love to play it again. Until then, I will remember the lessons that it taught me.

Sade Evans is a first-year student at Lafayette College.



Davon Wood

As the plane tilted in preparation for landing, I looked out the window and saw no

buildings! Trees covered most of the land and the plane was close enough to a volcano that I could tell it was smoking. Even before I set foot in Nicaragua, I knew I was about to embark on a journey like no other. In July 2012 I went to Nicaragua with StreetSquash, an organization that I have been part of since ninth grade. Going on trips to college campuses, squash tournaments, and to other youth squash programs are some of the perks that StreetSquash has to offer. However, nothing compares to leaving the country for the first time. My experience in Nicaragua and especially the day I spent volunteering at Los Quinchos, a children's orphanage, taught me to appreciate the small things I have, and not take opportunities for granted.

Before going to the children's orphanage in Matagalpa, our group explored other parts of Nicaragua. We traveled in the back of a pickup truck between most sites because public transportation was not well developed. Traveling with the wind in my face over bumpy dirt roads, I quickly noticed major differences between the United States and Nicaragua. There was garbage on the sidewalks, and the humid hot air made it difficult to breathe. It was also impossible not to notice the stray dogs everywhere. The worst thing I observed were homeless children walking around asking for money and food. I was excited that I would soon be able to make a difference in some of these children's lives while volunteering at Los Quinchos.

The children at Los Quinchos came from different backgrounds. Prior to coming to the orphanage, many of them suffered from substance abuse and lived on the streets, begging for money to support their families. Many children also came from troubled families where they experienced verbal and physical abuse. Despite the issues these children were dealing with, they showed high spirits and the ability to persevere. One seven-year-old child that I met particularly inspired me. Her name was Bilina. It took a lot of courage for Bilina to introduce herself to our group and tell us about her problems. I usually get nervous in crowds, but Bilina's fearlessness ran through me when we started dancing in front of the group. Bilina had little in her life, yet she remained positive and served as a role model for others. She was able to show me how to express myself around others.

Going to Nicaragua has helped me become more aware of the importance of using opportunities in my life. In Harlem, the support of my family, StreetSquash, and my high school have prepared me to be the first member of my family to go to college. I am excited for the opportunity to

spend time growing intellectually and personally, and for the future experiences and challenges that college will provide me.

Davon Wood is a first-year student at Alfred State College.



Richard Brown

I sat at an oval table and listened to my peers go back and forth trying to prove their point on

the electron transport chain. They argued how many ATP coenzymes are processed in this cycle. As they went on, more people had different opinions on the topic. I wrote down what each person stated just in case I had any comments that I wanted to add or ask a question if I did not understand what someone said. Without the help from the teacher we finally came to a conclusion and everyone had a better understanding of the topic. This was a typical experience at the Harkness Table. While other kids were looking forward to battling the waves at the beach or playing video games, I was taking on a different challenge: mastering the difficulties of pre-calculus and advanced biology at Phillips Exeter Academy.

Exeter's teaching method was very different than how I was accustomed to learning. At my high school, students are expected to learn by listening carefully as the teacher covers a particular topic. If you have taken good notes in class, homework is more copying the answers than understanding what is happening with the material. At Exeter, the instructors assign homework that requires applying what was taught rather than simply repeating what we had heard in class. Homework was a real challenge, and in order to complete it I was required to research the topic in the library and essentially teach

myself. Through trial and error I was often able to come up with the right answer. The next day, we would start class by going over the homework, but we wouldn't ask the teacher for the answers, we would ask our peers. We would go around the oval table sharing observations to see if we all agreed with the results. If there were any disagreements, that person was able to ask questions until either a new answer came about or until that person understood why the previous one was better.

Experiencing the Harkness Table has really changed the way I go about my life at school, home, and anywhere I go. Normally, I would go to school and ask the teacher something for clarification on what he or she said. Instead, I am asking my peers a question for clarification on what they said. As a result, I am forcing myself to think critically and opening my resources out to others for knowledge. Furthermore, the Harkness Table has taught me to have a voice during a discussion. Starting high school, I would never ask any questions by myself. Though I did get better at asking questions, my experience at Exeter helped me understand how valuable research and discussions are to the learning process.

Phillips Exeter Academy and the Harkness Table have improved my communications skills, which will prepare me to be a better student and a professional. Teaching myself unfamiliar concepts, discussing points of view with my peers, and being open to communicate with others are things that will prepare me for college and a possibly a future career. Lastly, this summer program taught me about how to learn independently and how to manage my time more effectively, which will be of great help to me as I continue my education and enter a profession.

Richard Brown is a first-year student at Clarkson University.

COLLEGE PREP: A JAM-PACKED YEAR FULL OF EVENTS, TRIPS, AND MORE!

Every year, StreetSquash high school students take in a wide range of college experiences, through weekly College Prep sessions, weekend trips, and special events. Here are some snapshots and student reflections from 2012–2013!



TEAM 4

November 8th, 2012

College Discovery Night

Denecia Cummings '15 learns to "Treat every college visit as an interview."

Divine Wing '14 is inspired to "try my hardest in everything I do and work on time management — use a calendar and be more organized"

November 10th — 12th

Veterans' Day Trip to New England

Marvin McIntyre '14 reflects on Connecticut College "The campus felt small and quiet. This is a good thing because you can get closer to your teachers on a personal level." Thanks to SquashBusters for finding us an alumna to show us Northeastern!



LOCAL COLLEGE TOURS

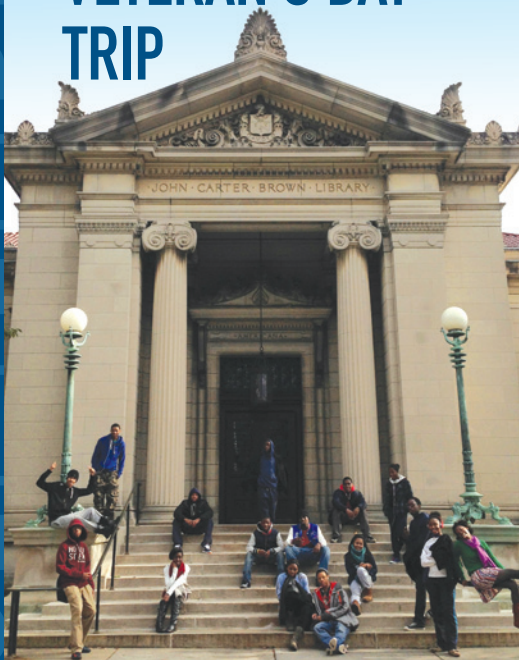
September 17th, 2012

Team 4 goes on their 1st college tour ever at Yale University. We're setting our sights high!

September 30th, 2012

First weekend College Prep trip of the year to SUNY Albany, Skidmore College, Union College, and SUNY New Paltz. Alumna (now college graduate!) Jennifer Moses gives us a tour of SUNY Albany

VETERAN'S DAY TRIP



January 2013

SAT Prep begins for 11th grade! Hurray!

StreetSquash alumni, Connecticut College squash team volunteer in 9th and 10th grade College Prep sessions

We take advantage of Regents Week to tour **some local colleges**: 10th grade visits Brooklyn College, 9th grade visits Manhattanville College

BIG THANK YOUs to the wonderful and passionate volunteers who helped out at College Discovery Night and Career Night, the urban squash alumni for helping us out when colleges couldn't schedule our tours (Jennifer Moses, Kbudah-Torah Musah, Paige Babilonia, Keith Keith, and Hoai Tran from SquashBusters), and to all the colleges who attended our college fair! We couldn't have done all this without you!



April 3rd, 2013

At **Career Night**, students spoke to volunteers from a wide range of career backgrounds about their college and professional experiences.

Adriana Moran '16 learned that the "hardest things are the most fun," and Romello Gonzalez '15 that "majoring in economics can open many doors to different jobs."

April 19th – 21st, 2013

Last weekend trip of the year to upstate NY to see Syracuse University, Hartwick College, Wells College and SUNY Binghamton

Divine Wing '14 on Binghamton "The campus was social and very large. I liked the performances and how everyone seemed to be bonding. I enjoyed the tour, it's always nice to have a StreetSquash alum give the tour." Thanks Keith Keith (StreetSquash '08, Binghamton '13)!



LAST WEEKEND TRIP

May 3rd, 2013

5th Annual College Fair

March 15th – 17th, 2013

Trip to PA & NJ

Brandy Williamson '14 comments "I enjoyed walking around and learning about Moravian. I loved the atmosphere and the size of the college. I like how there are a lot of hands-on activities. I liked Ursinus' campus and how it was put together. The tour guide [alumna Kbudah Torah-Musah] gave us a real and more opinionated tour of how the college really is."



COLLEGE FAIR

LATASHA BROWN

A STREETSQUASH PARENT EXTRAORDINAIRE!



3 generations of Browns

After serving for 3 years as Chair of the Parents Board Executive Committee, LaTasha Brown will be stepping down. We want to thank her for her commitment to StreetSquash and instrumental support of the Parent Board and StreetSquash students. Her leadership helped raise over \$10,000 in the 3 years she served as Chair, while she also took the lead in restructuring the Parent Board to create new and now integral Parent Representative positions like the Spanish Speaking Representative positions, and School Representative positions.

LaTasha is the proud parent of Richard Brown, Class of 2013, who is currently attending Clarkson University. Richard attributes much of his success to LaTasha and recently said, "My mom has helped me realize my full potential academically and inspired me to give StreetSquash my all and have no fear of going to college. She really has taught me that the world is full of distractions and that only the few keep their eyes on their goal to becoming successful." She is also the mother of 2 other rambunctious little ones who frequently fill the StreetSquash halls with their laughter and energy. A Harlem native, LaTasha believes deeply in

community involvement and has been a fierce advocate for StreetSquash and other youth-serving programs. We want to thank LaTasha for her continued support and wish her luck sending off her first child to college!

LaTasha recently looked back on her time spent with StreetSquash:

My first memory of StreetSquash was at Kickoff four years ago. I didn't have a clue what StreetSquash was nor had I ever heard of the sport. But I figured it would have to be an excellent program since it came so highly recommended from Sarah Lederman. I remember walking into the building and saying to myself how beautiful the facility was and how I had walked by it so many times and never knew what lay behind the huge logo in the window. As I sat in the library among the other parents and opened the famous folder, I knew that this program was going to offer my son exactly what he needed. Guidance and motivation and, as a single mom, I was going to get the added support group to keep him on the straight and narrow.

Now that four years has come and gone, I have watched Richard grow tremendously in different aspects. He has learned to travel on his own, thanks to his Outward Bound experience. He has learned to function in a group/team setting, and acquired social skills. He's also been afforded the opportunity to play on the courts of Ivy League colleges but most importantly, he has learned the meaning of true sportsmanship. Being a youngster who always thought that winning was everything, adopting that trait speaks volumes. Nothing will ever really change our relationship with StreetSquash. Neither time nor distance could ever interfere with the family bond that has been formed.

If there is any one thing I could say it is "Thanks so much" to George and his staff for giving the kids in this community the opportunity to excel in a world that has done nothing but put up road blocks for minority youth. They truly know not the gift that your program will give them but will have a deeper appreciation for it in the future when they realize the true gift was the opportunity for "the world to be their oyster." StreetSquash will always be in our hearts and our time will always be available as volunteers.

Peace and Blessings,
LaTasha Brown

STREETSQUASH YLC HOSTS 4TH ANNUAL MATCH & MIXER



YLC members at Grand Central

The StreetSquash Young Leadership Committee (YLC) held its fourth annual Match & Mixer at the 2013 Tournament of Champions (TOC) in Grand Central Station. A wonderful partnership between the TOC and StreetSquash has developed into a hallmark event for the YLC calendar year. In attendance were supporters, volunteers, students and alumni, and some of the world's top squash players.

The TOC offers squash a stage unlike any other to display the talent and athleticism of professional players, but also allows StreetSquash a chance to use the tournament for exposure



Bryant Rich and Abigail Napp

to a wider public. Taking advantage of that, the Match & Mixer combines a social event with tickets to some exciting professional matches and a chance to see some StreetSquashers play on the all-glass court. In total, the event brought close to 150 people and raised over \$10,000 to support StreetSquash programming.

The YLC is a group of young professionals committed to supporting StreetSquash and the children and families it serves. Through events like the Match & Mixer, the YLC has championed the cause and spread the word through the community of young professionals across the city. Further, many members of the YLC volunteer as mentors to students, college and SAT tutors, and plan and execute special volunteer events like Career Discovery Night at StreetSquash.

This year, the YLC has brought in new blood to the Executive Board. Outgoing

Chair, Bryant Rich, helped recruit Corey Gildart to replace him. His fellow Executive Committee Members, Yasser el Halaby and Ronald Kamdem, support Corey in his new initiatives. Under their leadership, the YLC has reorganized and reinvigorated their membership.

In the coming year, Corey, Ronald, Yasser and the entire YLC hope to build on the success of events like the Match & Mixer. Already the calendar is full of volunteer opportunities and events to get involved. Encouraged by their continuous interactions with StreetSquash students, the YLC strives to bring energetic young professionals into the StreetSquash fold to provide more quality support for its students and their families.



YLC Members Gena Prastos Linhart and Dodie Gildart

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 3rd • ING New York City Marathon—12 runners

December 5th • StreetSquash Holiday Soiree

January 20th, 2014 • StreetSquash Match & Mixer

SOME 2013 SQUASH HIGHLIGHTS



- In October students dressed up to compete against district rivals CitySquash and SquashHaven in the day long squash gala officially dubbed the Halloween Team Tournament.
- Every year StreetSquash faces off against SquashBusters of Boston, meeting halfway at the incredible Yale facility. While SquashBusters has taken many a title, this was the second year in a row we claimed a definitive victory in this high school match which features over 40 high school competitors on each team.
- Urban Team Nationals and Urban Individual Nationals are the largest squash events for the year, and are now some of the largest junior squash events in the world. Both weekends feature some 300 junior players, competing respectively on a 5-person team or an individual basis. StreetSquash earned 2nd place finishes in the GU19 and BU17 draws at UTN and looks to take home its first ever victory at individuals come June.
- Tournament play continues to expand through the generosity and organization of NY Squash. This year our students were given free entries into a number of NY Squash Tournaments including the Winter Warm-up the Big Apple Open, and the Hyder Cup. We took home too much silverware to mention all of our notable finishes, but a big thanks to our success is owed to NY Squash and Corey Modeste for going above and beyond to get these opportunities to our StreetSquashers.



CSI: STREETSQUASH

Where were you on the afternoon that Brad's puppy was kidnapped? That is the question the 8th grade StreetSquash students tackled at the start of their Forensic Science unit of the Literacy Program. In weekly Friday lessons related to hands-on criminal investigation, the 8th graders explored different forensic science techniques and analyzed all pieces of evidence in this highly personal hunt for Brad's missing puppy. With the list of suspects narrowed down to StreetSquash staff, each week



provided a dramatic twist into the kidnapping mystery.

Screams of "Clair did it!" or "Cici is guilty!" echoed through the halls each Friday as the 8th graders proceeded through a progression of evidence analysis. Each week, the students took part in the very same experiments that real criminal investigators use to solve crimes. After the yellow caution tape was cleared from the introductory crime scene, the students engaged in fingerprint dusting, handwriting and hair classification, blood type testing and even stomach content analysis. While many students were familiar with the TV dramatized versions of CSI, the hands-on participation in these activities opened their eyes to the scientific concepts behind criminal investigation. The 8th graders even thought critically about the



imperfections of our criminal justice system by researching the Innocence Project, a nonprofit dedicated to exonerating falsely accused prisoners.

At the conclusion of the semester, the 8th graders not only solved Brad's Missing Puppy case but were able to articulate the scientific reasoning behind each and every CSI technique. With these new 8th grade criminal investigators in the building, we now have a new layer of security at StreetSquash!

2013 STREETSQUASH CUP

THE 5TH TIME IS THE CHARM:

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER RECORD...

This year the StreetSquash Cup reached yet another new level, proving that the commitment of StreetSquash's staff and students is only matched by its supporters. Ten teams entered the tournament with a fundraising goal of \$50,000 each. The team captains and players worked tirelessly, over many months, to achieve their goals, and many of them were able to exceed their target numbers. In the end, the event was a smashing success on and off the court, with the teams raising a combined \$760,000! The R&T Club team, led by StreetSquash Board Chair Mitch Truwit and Scott Mackesey, took home the most coveted trophy of all: the StreetSquash Founders Cup. This award is given annually to the team that wins the fundraising challenge, and once again this year, Mitch and

Scott blew past the competition, raising an amazing \$185,000!

May 11th arrived with great anticipation. StreetSquash students and staff got to the S.L. Green StreetSquash Center early in the morning to prepare and the competitors showed up soon after. Each four-person team had selected

their StreetSquasher and professional squash player based on the amount of fundraising they did in advance. The first round divided the ten teams into two brackets and each player faced his or her counterpart on the other four teams in their bracket in a one-game match to 11.

(continues on next page)



The R&T team raises another StreetSquash Cup

TEAM	CAPTAIN	PRO	STREETSQUASHER
1. Goldman, Sachs & Co.	Eric Muller	Amr Khaled Khalifa	Floyd Perkins
2. Harlem Squash Trotters	David Sachs Eric Semler Bob Mylod	Ryan Cuskelly	Lonnie Gibbs
3. Harvard Club	Richard Chin Jeffrey Horwitz Rahul Nayar	Richard Chin	Sion Sennon
4. Ivy League All Stars	Peter Lasusa Yasser el Halaby Jacques Swanepoel	Ramit Tandon	Jazmin Matos
5. Racquet & Tennis Club	Scott Mackesey Mitch Truwit	Adrian Grant	Terrance Rose
6. StreetSquash YLC	Bryant Rich	Chris Callis	Gabby Robinson
7. Union Club	Edward Shugrue	Bradley Ball	Julian Hackney
8. University Club	Jonathan Berger Andrew Fink	David Palmer	Raheem Logan
9. Virgin Squash	Stephen Freidheim	Todd Harrity	Tariq Holland
10. Women All Stars	Leslie Kimerling	Chris Walker	Samantha Matos



2013 STREETSQUASH CUP PARTICIPANTS

Above, clockwise: Harlem Squash Trotters, Harvard Club, University Club, StreetSquash Club Pros, Goldman Sachs.
Below, clockwise: Women All Stars, The Ivy League, Union Club, Virgin Squash.



[continued from previous page]

After the conclusion of the first round, the two teams with the most games won, Racquet & Tennis Club and University Club, faced off for the Cup with the final victory going to Racquet & Tennis Club. The victory was a sweet one for the R&T Club team, their third consecutive, and solidifies them as the team to chase in the coming year.

In the end, the day was marked not by the competitive nature of a squash tournament but by the shared love of and commitment to StreetSquash. Those feelings manifested themselves in exemplary sportsmanship, extraordinary drive on court, and excitement to be involved with the event. It was hard not to get caught up in the joy of the program and its mission, even to the point of being willing to embarrass oneself — just ask Chris Walker — for the chance to help out. The end of the squash brought about a transition to a BBQ dinner and socializing as everyone gathered to relive the excitement of the day.

The StreetSquash Cup has become more than just a fundraiser for the after school program. It is a chance for students, staff, supporters, professionals and friends and family to celebrate the success of the program and the love of the sport that binds them all. Just like the students and the program itself, it continues to grow and reach new heights each year. Though it is hard to imagine, the 2014 StreetSquash Cup promises to be just as, if not more, successful than its predecessors. Congratulations and thanks go out to all who participated, and for those who did not, a challenge: get "In it to dethrone R&T!"

3RD ANNUAL STREETSQUASH JR. CUP REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

Thanks to a very strong push by StreetSquash Board member Linda Robinson, this year's StreetSquash Jr. Cup improved dramatically, in every category, from previous years. The Jr. Cup raised an amazing \$32,000, up from \$15,000 in 2012, and there were a total of 6 high school and 6 middle school teams competing, up from 8 from the prior year. However, there were several elements that remained the same: great sportsmanship, camaraderie and fun. All participants got on court for their official matches, but in the end seemed to spend much more time playing $\frac{3}{4}$ court with kids from other teams. We look forward to an even more successful Jr. Cup next April.

HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS



HARVARD CLUB



BROOKLYN BAGELERS



THE CRIMSON



STREETsquASH



44TH STREET NICKS

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEAMS



BROOKLYN SQUASHERS



R.H.C.



PIPING ROCK CLUB



BROOKLYN BRIDGERS



SPORTS CLUB/LA



UNION CLUB

Q&A WITH CHAIRMAN MITCH TRUWIT



Mitch Truwit has served as Chairman of the StreetSquash Board since 2009. Mitch is a Partner and Co-Head of the Financial & Business Services team and a member of the Executive Committee at Apax Partners. Mitch lives in Connecticut with his lovely wife Jody and their 4 children, Alexandra, Cooper, Jack and Teddy.

1 How did you become involved/aware of StreetSquash?

I have been friends with StreetSquash founder George Polsky since high school. I have followed George's efforts since inception over 13 years ago. When I moved back from Chicago, George reached out to engage me in StreetSquash. I am very grateful he did.

2 What is the most important part of StreetSquash?

The student athletes are all that matters at StreetSquash. The goal is to create opportunities for them to work hard to reach their potential as students, as squash players and ultimately as leaders. The students know when they enter the program that it is going to require a lot of hard work and dedication and that success is not just getting into college, but graduating.

2a What do you see as the role of the StreetSquash Board?

Board members help as a sounding board for George and his team as they tackle larger, strategic issues such as expansion, development, vision for the future. The Board helps with the continual professional development of the StreetSquash staff. The Board is also responsible

for providing a stable, predictable source of funding for StreetSquash's annual operating budget.

3 How has StreetSquash evolved over the years?

We continue to grow and expand. We are matriculating more students to better and better universities. We are developing more serious squash players. We have recently expanded to Newark. Our alumni are returning in ever-greater numbers to StreetSquash to work and give back to the community.

4 What is your fondest StreetSquash memory?

Our student on our StreetSquash Cup team is Terrence Rose. Terrence is a great kid who is averaging close to a 4.0 in his first year of college. I can vividly recall his enthusiasm at meeting former NCAA champion Baset Chaudhry who plays for our team. His excitement was similar to how I would feel in meeting Michael Jordan. I thought that was pretty cool.

5 How do you see StreetSquash growing in the next 5 years?

I think we will expand in new local areas. We have just started up in

Newark. We will move methodically, prove out our ability to execute, raise funds, get the same high graduation rates, and make a meaningful difference in the lives of our participants and their families.

5a How's your squash game these days?

I've started playing a lot again. I really love it. My goal was to beat George. I won't comment publicly on whether I achieved this goal. Maybe best to ask him.

6 What is your biggest personal inspiration/motivation?

I am really passionate about squash. I think it's the perfect combination of physical and cerebral exercise. It's brought so many positive things to my life. I love that we are able to do the same for many hundreds of kids a year in Harlem.

7 Any words of advice for our students?

Love the journey. If you love the process of learning, you will be surprised how much time and energy you are willing to commit and how much you will achieve.

STREETSSQUASH CONTINUES TO HONOR TRADITIONS OF GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY



Dr. Zachary Linhart and Gena Prastos Linhart work with Nija and Jahquan on dental care

On Saturday, April 27th, the SL Green StreetSquash Center in Harlem, including the squash courts and classrooms, was transformed to accommodate a bustling fair with a lively carnival feel for Global Youth Service Day, the largest service event in the world, celebrated in over 100 countries. In preparation for GYSD, StreetSquashers and staff alike formed committees to plan the

exciting day. Each committee: Internal Outreach, External Outreach, Logistics and Activities, worked tirelessly to make the day a huge success. For GYSD 2013, some of the community participants included Community Health Network Teen PACT, Harlem Seeds, Corbin Hill Farms, Linhart Dentistry, and Red Rabbit. The day also included workshops such as Zumba, HIV Testing, Healthy Eating

on a Budget, Self Help for Women with Breast or Ovarian Cancer, Yoga, Smoothie Making and Trail Mix Making. Workshops served as safe spaces for students and families alike to participate in activities and informative demonstrations on obesity prevention and healthy choices.

The SL Green Center housed over 250 people at any given point on Global Youth Service Day. Music resounded from speakers. Students, families and friends competed fiercely in on-court games such as dodge ball, four-square, Squash Wii, and Squash-Mini Golf, all while learning the importance of physical activity, and fitness. The true highlight of Global Youth Service Day is seeing all of the students work hard to transform the SL Green center into a boisterous, fair-like environment on the morning of the event, and seeing students' families actively participate in workshops and demonstrations. Everyone at StreetSquash is looking forward to Global Youth Service Day, 2014!

STREETSSQUASH YOUTH ARE IN ACTION FOR THEIR LARGER COMMUNITY

It has been another busy year at StreetSquash as students from all the grades demonstrate their civic engagement in service opportunities ranging from trash pickup to food bank meal service. This fall, students volunteered for the Making Strides For Breast Cancer Walk and middle school students made craft kits for children with terminal illnesses. During the winter, for the 4th year in a row, StreetSquash seniors served meals at the 116th Street Food Bank, while 10th and 11th graders help pack meals for the victims of Hurricane Sandy. The StreetSquash family also donated 6 boxes of canned goods to feed the hungry in its

annual can drive. In the spring the seniors kept up their commitment by tutoring and coaching at StreetSquash Newark (no easy commute!), while the juniors did Spring cleaning at StreetSquash, the sophomores pulled the invasive species garlic mustard from Riverdale Park, and 7th graders took to the streets picking up trash and learning the importance of recycling! We end 2013 just like every year with a plethora of new experiences and understanding. The importance of community awareness and participation is an integral part of the StreetSquash experience!

MENTORING AND PEER MENTORING PROGRAM FORGE NEW FRIENDSHIPS



Vivian and Erica together in the park

This year was yet another successful year for the Mentoring Program and newly formed Peer Mentoring Program at StreetSquash. Both programs have produced a total of sixty invaluable relationships which will hopefully last for years to come.

With regards to the adult mentoring program, our mentors were highly involved yet again, spending time with students at community service events such as the Breast Cancer Walk, coaching their mentees in squash tournaments, taking their mentees to exciting shows and museums, and of course playing squash and tutoring them on a regular basis. This year we added a number of new adult mentors to the program who formed strong relationships with our students right from the start with their high level of

commitment. Vivian Gaddis, who just recently began mentoring Erica Ortiz in the 8th grade, exemplifies this. Speaking about her relationship, Vivian says:

"I don't even know where to begin! I've loved getting to know Erica and her family. While it's set up as a mentor-mentee relationship, Erica is quickly becoming more like a friend. While we come from quite different backgrounds and are certainly different ages, we have quite a bit in common. I've come to really enjoy hearing what is going on in her life! She's also become a great sounding board for me, tolerating me rambling on about my own trials and tribulations. I think we really motivate each other. I'm looking forward to knowing Erica, as well as her family, for a long time to come."

We look forward to seeing more relationships like this materializing over the course of next year.

The Peer Mentoring Program similarly brought about some very strong relationships between our high school mentors and their younger middle school mentors. This program is a new addition to the mentoring initiative at StreetSquash as of last year and has really blossomed in its first full year in action. We now have twenty matched pairs, and more and more students are striving to get involved. A sense of responsibility is emerging in the younger students through their work with their mentors, and a sense of leadership being created in the peer mentors through the drive they feel to give back to StreetSquash in such a way.

Fatou Thiam, a mentor of two years to a middle schooler and the Peer Mentoring chair in our Student Leadership Council, speaks about the positive impact the program has had on her:

"When I became a peer mentor, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I didn't know how to talk to my mentee or find different ways to bond with her because our time and space were limited. As I visited her more often though, we became closer and I even became close with her whole class. She opened up to me more and even though it has only been two years I didn't see her only as my mentee, but like a younger sister. I am glad I had the opportunity to be her mentor and am thankful she showed me how much of a leader I can be."

MY HERO

Rising 8th grader Nija James wrote her Urban Individuals Essay, on her team's mentor, graduating senior Davon Wood. The topic of the essay was "Heroes".

My hero is kind of tall, very smart, encouraging, and so phenomenal. My hero is Davon Wood. He is the person I called a hero in my life.

Firstly, Davon is my best friend. I can go to my best friend for everything and anything. For example, my team was headed for Lancaster, Pennsylvania for a match against Franklin and Marshall squash players. It was my first match I didn't know what to expect. So I as a protégé went to talk to my mentor/ friend. I told him my concerns so he got a racquet, goggles, and shoes and placed them in my hands, and said, "You got the tools, play hard and for it." From that day on I knew two things: Davon cared and he was my hero.

Secondly, Davon is an amazingly great teacher/ squash instructor. On squash courts he's a speeding comet. From the first day I was at squash till now he taught me so much. Even on his bad days he pushed himself forward, from how to hold my racquet and where to stand to cool trucks he was phenomenal. Even when I lost a match he told me, "Keep your head held high and keep going." Even when we did exhausting fitness by our coach, Davon cheered us on. The whole point is he was there guiding me, teaching, mentoring and more.

Thirdly, Davon is an academic scholar in my eyes. When were in academic rooms he keeps us focused. He's great with helping students all the time. Any topic I don't know Davon can help me with.

Furthermore, Davon is trustworthy. He can keep the most top secrets of all secrets. This is another reason why Davon is trustworthy, my best friend, as well as a hero. He is an amazing person in many divided ways.

Lastly, this is why Davon is a great squash player, academic scholar, best friend, a trustworthy person, mentor, problem solver, strategy user and maker — my phenomenal hero.



Nija James at work at StreetSquash

.....
Pssst! Are you my hero? My over-achiever who taught me an unlasting lifetime of lessons. Well at first I thought, "Why would you care?" You now you don't really care! But I figured it out quick once you gave me the tools and words of encouragement. I've been told those lines over a dozen times, never believed them once because I knew whoever said them didn't care much anyway. But, then came you, for once of the few times in life I believe those lines. ("You got the tools go for it.") I must say thank you, you're one person I'll never forget who showed that they really meant what they said. I must ask: Are you my... HERO!?

KEVIN MCMIKLE REMEMBERS HIS TIME WITH STREETSQUASH

"We're StreetSquash. We have the loudest cheer when we go to Urban Team Nationals and tournaments." That's what you'll hear from Kevin McMikle (StreetSquash '13, Cazenovia '17), matter-of-factly conveying the pride he feels in the organization that has been part of his life for the past six years. When Kevin joined StreetSquash, halfway through 7th grade, "it felt normal to come." Although he was new to Frederick Douglass Academy II, he knew teammate Maiyah Rushing (StreetSquash '13, Alfred '17) from elementary school so coming to StreetSquash fell right into place. Kevin had spent some time in Maryland, one of many moves with a mom in the military, where there were no afterschool activities and few family members, so when he moved back to New York City, he was hungry for a place to belong.

"For awhile in New York, I didn't have blood family around me," Kevin recalls. "As I got more comfortable here and my teammates played more of a role in my life, that's how the family bond came about." Looking back, the connection has only grown and played an important role in Kevin's life. "We don't all go to the same school so if we all quit we wouldn't see each other. Once you get into this relationship, after a couple years you can't just get up and walk away. This is like a marriage."

Kevin's love for his team, combined with his love of squash created a solid foundation for his connection to StreetSquash. But when Kevin first started learning to play, it wasn't always easy. He recalls, "I always had an open mind. I'm most likely not going to get it at first. By the time I started, everyone could serve and my ball wasn't making it close." But one Saturday, he finally got the serve down and he was so pumped it made him want to improve. Now Kevin relishes the opportunity to get on court every day. "It's a stress reliever."

As Kevin made the transition to high school, the already social, friendly young man struggled to balance his schoolwork with socializing. "I still kept a 4.0 in English, but hard subjects like math fell off," Kevin recalls. "When I wasn't doing well, StreetSquash always pushed me to do better. Every time I set a goal, it would get increased so I had something to work toward." He remembers

his mom, combined with StreetSquash staff, and family friends, always pushing him to do his best. "No win-win situation if I didn't do well. With my mother in the military, I spent a lot of time with adults on the base who expected more of me. And Sareen [Pearl, Program Director] was always on top of me. Clearly I didn't see it yet but they pushed me to pursue my dream."

Before Kevin knew it, he had improved his grades to the degree that he had a range of college options in front of him. "When Assumpta [Galang, Director of College Transition] suggested Cazenovia, I didn't want to go to the interview. I had to go alone and I didn't feel like I interviewed well." But Kevin prepared and came away feeling he had been able to be himself, to just have a conversation. When describing his decision to attend, Kevin says, "Even though it's in the middle of nowhere, the whole purpose of college is to start something new and transition to the real world. I figured my prior experience living away from home allowed me to go away."

Kevin has found a home at StreetSquash over the past six years. As he prepares to leave for college, leaving the support of his mom and StreetSquash, he reflects on this new journey. "Hope has played a major role. I hope I can use the stuff you guys have taught me to go off to college. You won't be right up the block." But we will continue to support Kevin throughout his post-secondary journey and know that he will continue to make us proud.



Kevin McMikle, with Assumpta Galang at Senior End of Year Awards June 2013

The following is a list of StreetSquash graduates who have completed post-secondary education programs or are currently attending one:

Jennifer Moses
SUNY Albany '13

Maiyah Rushing
Alfred University '17

Davon Wood
SUNY Alfred State '17

Daequan Andino
Art Institute of
New York City '08

Ayanna Hall
Barnard College '15

Rakey Drammeh
Bates College '14

Samantha Matos
Bates College '14

Dios Rodriguez
Bates College '14

Sugeiry Betances
Bates College '15

Julian Hackney
Bates College '15

Rokya Samake
Bates College '15

Sonia Gaona
SUNY Binghamton
University '09

Raven Williams
Borough of Manhattan
City College '15

Melvin Ventura
CUNY Bronx Community
College '07

Davian Suckoo
SUNY University
at Buffalo '09

Cody Levy
SUNY Buffalo State '13

Rosmery Hidalgo
SUNY Buffalo State '14

Krystal Harris
SUNY Buffalo State '15

Tishina Bowden
SUNY Buffalo State '17

Kevin McMikle
Cazenovia College '17

Fatou Sangare
Cazenovia College '17

Tajon Rice
CUNY City College
of New York '11

Sion Sennon
CUNY City College
of New York '16

Richard Brown
Clarkson University '17

Jasmine McElveen
Colgate University '15

Odell Lee
SUNY Delhi Community
College '14

Nasir Ellis
Dickinson College '15

Patricia Francis-Hall
Dickinson College '17

Jamal Joseph
Elon University '17

Gabby Robinson
Franklin & Marshall
College '12

Sheena Suckoo
Franklin & Marshall
College '12

Melissa Sandoval
Franklin & Marshall
College '13

Liz Gatling
Franklin & Marshall
College '14

Jazmin Matos
Franklin & Marshall
College '16

Jennifer Bueno
CUNY Guttman Community
College '15

Terrance Rose
CUNY Guttman Community
College '15

Danny Cabrera
Hobart and William Smith
Colleges '16

Kenneth Blassingame
CUNY Hostos Community
College '13

Sade Watts
CUNY Hostos Community
College '15

Amar Moorer
CUNY Hostos Community
College '15

Tynisha Avila
Ithaca College '15

Moriah Foy
Lehman College '14

Sade Evans
Lafayette College '17

Diamond Martin
LaGuardia Community
College '14

Jamel Key
LaGuardia Community
College '15

Fatou Thiam
LaGuardia Community
College '15

Tynisha Avila
Ithaca College '15

Jasmine Haskins
CUNY Medgar Evers College '15

Isamar Rodriguez
CUNY Medgar Evers
College '15

Allagha Padilla
SUNY Mohawk Valley
Community College '07

Ernesto Jordan
SUNY Mohawk Valley
Community College '15

Albatina Harris
SUNY Monroe Community
College '07

Christian Knight
SUNY Monroe Community
College '07

Ayanna-Grace King
Mount Holyoke College '17

Nick Watkins
SUNY New Paltz '17

Asia Navarette
The College of
New Rochelle '09

Ramsey De Jesus
New York City Tech '15

Anthony Little
New York City Tech '15

Justin Martin
SUNY Old Westbury '10

Dekeiya Armstrong
Pace University '15

Ladonis Gaillard
Quinnipiac University '13

Paige Babilonia
Rutgers University '14

Jenny Romero
Trinity College '09

Taralyn Gonzalez
UMD Eastern Shore '10

Shelby Bozeman
UMD Eastern Shore '14

Kbudah-Torah Musah
Ursinus College '16

Lonnie Gibbs
Wesleyan University '10

Raheem Logan
Wesleyan University '16

ALUMNI/COLLEGE SUCCESS: THE SAME MISSION WITH A NEW “CAST”



StreetSquash Alums Gather with YLC Volunteers at Proskauer Rose for Networking Workshop

This year, StreetSquash launched its newly dubbed College Access and Success Team (CAST). The initiative combines the previously autonomous College Preparation Program and Alumni Outreach Program with the newly launched College Transition Program to form a holistic approach to students' post-secondary school success. CAST operates under the shared mission of preparing students and their families for life after high school by informing, guiding and supporting them beginning in ninth grade and only ending once a participant is independent and self-sustaining. By combining the three programs, the three directors' shared insights and experiences ensure the best resources for each student.

Early exposure to college applications and essential academic and social skills is paramount to the success of the program. Beginning in ninth grade and continuing through the end of eleventh grade, the Director of College Preparation delivers weekly skill building and college knowledge instruction to every StreetSquash participant. Students receive opportunities to speak with college representatives and college coaches individually and at an annual college fair, and visit a variety of college campuses before the end of their junior year.

The Director of College Transition takes over in the summer before twelfth grade and guides students and their families through the college application process. An intensive

application support program has facilitated a 99% college matriculation rate, far out performing the 46% average of NYC public schools. Following students' graduation from high school, they attend one of the CAST's hallmark programs, the Beginning College Program (BCP). The summer before their first year in college, students spend six weeks in a BCP course designed to emulate a college level writing course. Further, they are introduced to their first professional development programs, spending at least one of their class days in an office to begin developing their career aspirations. Since its launch, each student that completed the BCP has successfully completed his or her first year of college and progressed to sophomore status.

Once students make it to their sophomore year, they transition to the purview of the Director of Alumni Outreach, who facilitates a professional development series and summer internship opportunities along with providing consistent academic support. Each year, students are required to complete a prescribed course of professional development programs. By the end of their college career, students have had the opportunity to network with

young professionals in any field of interest, receive specific resume, cover letter, and interview feedback, and even receive work stipends to support their career goals.

The CAST has developed out of years of observation and feedback and will continue to innovate as needs change and mature. This year, four students completed their respective journeys: Ladonis Gaillard '08, Keith Keith '08, Jennifer Moses '09, and Melissa Sandoval '09. All of these students maintained their connection to StreetSquash through their post-secondary journey and used the CAST program to help their success along the way. With their example, as well as the others who have completed the program, the CAST will continue to push each other and the students to even greater achievements.



Ladonis Gaillard
StreetSquash '08
Quinnipiac
University '13
Currently attending
City College Graduate
School of Education.



Jennifer Moses
StreetSquash '09
University at
Albany '13
Currently a
New York City
City Year Corps
Member.



Keith Keith
StreetSquash '08
Binghamton
University '13
Currently pursuing
a career in business
and finance.



Melissa Sandoval
StreetSquash '09
Franklin & Marshall
College '13
Currently attending
American University
as a Pickering Fellow.

STREETSSQUASH NEWARK COMPLETES SUCCESSFUL 1ST YEAR



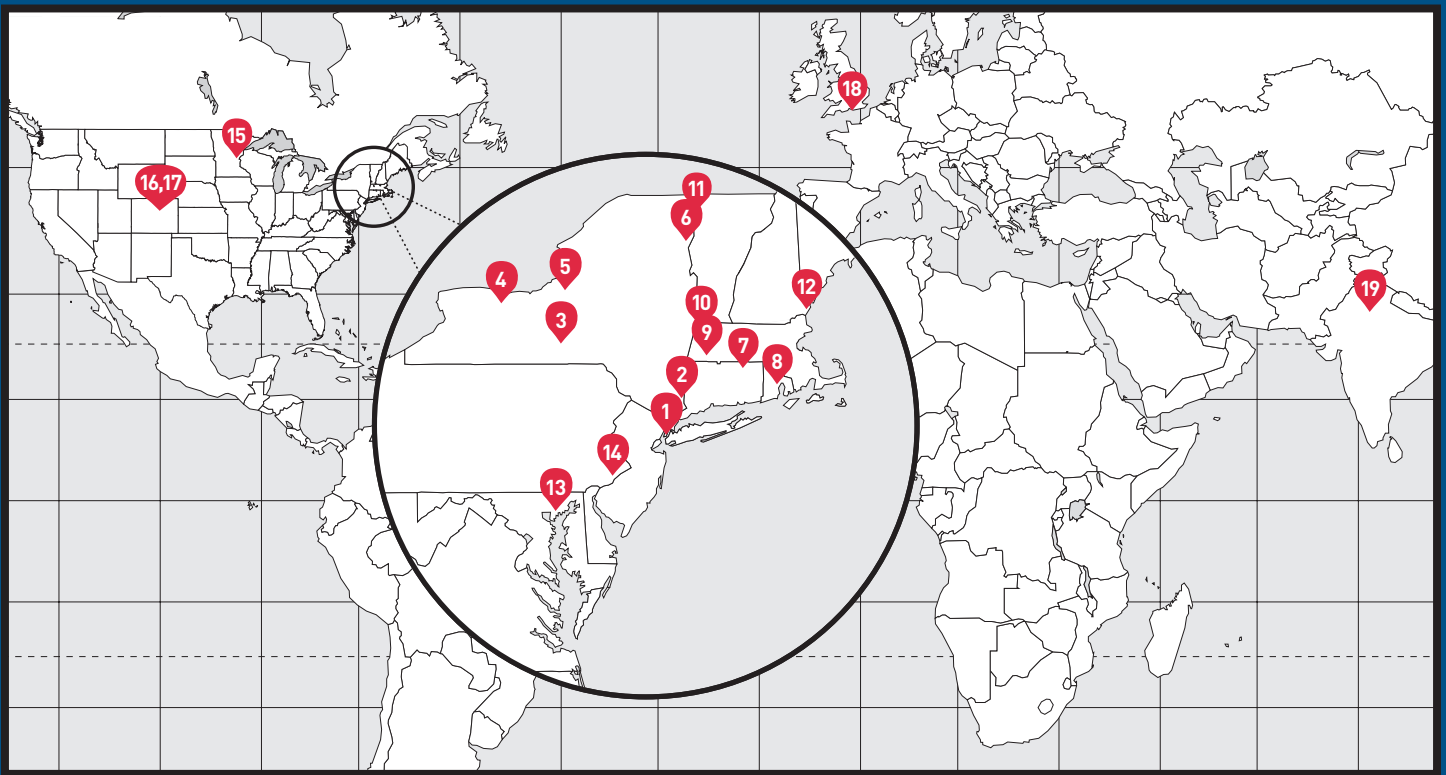
One year down, many more to come. Under the watchful eye and stellar leadership of Executive Director Leah Brown, StreetSquash Newark completed a terrific first year. 28 6th and 7th grade students from partner public schools Eagle Academy and University Prep participated in weekly academic and squash practices at the YMCA of Montclair. All of the children were completely new to squash, and each student couldn't get enough court time to satisfy their desire. Guided by Squash Director Corey Cabot, the StreetSquashers traveled throughout New Jersey (Chatham Club, Blair Academy, Englewood Field Club, Princeton University) and the Northeast to play in many tournaments and team competitions. But, as we know, it was not all about the squash.

Students worked hard in the classrooms as well, getting their homework done with the aid of many volunteers and staff. In addition, StreetSquash college students from the Harlem program came to Newark to talk to the younger students about what awaits them in high school and college. Newark StreetSquashers also participated in 6 community service events, and each gave at least 20 hours to help make a difference with others.

With one successful year under their belts, StreetSquash Newark, under the guidance of Board Chair Geoff Mitchell, will be expanding in the coming months, adding two new partner sites to their list: the Wayne YMCA and the Newark YMCA. Another exciting development has StreetSquash alum Lonnie Gibbs (Wesleyan '10) joining the staff as an Academic Director. And to cap it all off, StreetSquash Newark was just accepted as the 15th member program of the National Urban Squash and Education Association! Congrats to all the students, parents, staff, Board and volunteers for being a part of such a wonderful first year.

STREETSSQUASH SUMMER TRAVEL ADVENTURES!

This summer, StreetSquash had a record number of students escape the heat of New York City and take part in a variety of academic, squash, and leadership summer opportunities. Many of our middle schoolers got their first taste of the outdoors (and s'mores!) through sleep away camps in Vermont, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Over thirty select high school students became summer globetrotters as they participated in pre-college programs, NUSEA squash exchange trips, leadership expeditions, and squash camps that took them across the world. From community service ventures in India to intense squash instruction in England, the StreetSquash summer travelers will have a wide range of stories to share with you on your next visit to SL Green!



1. Columbia University Summer Program—*New York, NY*
2. Camp Herrlich—*Patterson, NY*
3. Cornell University Summer Program—*Ithaca, NY*
4. University of Rochester Pre-College Program—*Rochester, NY*
5. Syracuse University Summer College Program—*Syracuse, NY*
6. Camp Dudley—*Westport, NY*
7. Camp Woodstock—*Woodstock Valley, CT*
8. Brown University Pre-College Program—*Providence, RI*
9. Christadora Summer Experience—*Berkshires, MA*
10. Williams College Squash & SAT camp—*Williamstown, MA*
11. Camp Kiniya—*Colchester, VT*
12. Phillips Exeter Academy (Upper School and Access Exeter Summer Program)—*Exeter, NH*
13. Baltimore Squash Exchange trip—*Baltimore, MD*
14. Philadelphia SquashSmarts Embrace Middle School program—*Philadelphia, PA*
15. Minneapolis Squash Exchange trip—*Minneapolis, MN*
16. Denver Urban Doubles National Tournament—*Denver, CO*
17. Denver Squash Exchange trip—*Denver, CO*
18. Universal Squash Camp—*England*
19. India International Leadership Program—*India*
20. Fresh Air Fund—*various locations*

STREETsquashERS TO INDIA!

YES, YOU READ CORRECTLY: TO INDIA!

Mawa Ballo and Nick Little became StreetSquash summer pioneers as they traveled to India through the Global Learning Across Borders Leadership Program (Global LAB). Designed to provide intercultural learning and leadership training for urban youth, the program sponsored our students to spend three weeks in Dharmsala, Delhi, and Amritsar, India.

While the journey itself began on July 7th, the preparation for the trip started months in advance. Every two weeks beginning in January, Mawa and Nick took part in workshops and group outings to educate them on the Indian culture, history and language. A highlight of this residential program was their May outing to “Little India” in Jackson Heights, Queens, where they sampled native Himalayan and South Asian cuisine and heard stories of Pakistani and Indian immigration from local store-owners.

After ample preparation and an eighteen hour flight, Mawa and Nick’s first stop was to the World Buddhist Center in Delhi, India. “The first shock after getting off the airplane was the immediate hot air”, Mawa explains, “it was very humid and the air smelled of lots of spices.” After being greeted with “Tashi Delek,” Tibetan for hello,



Mawa with Tibetan school children in Dharmsala



Mawa, Nick, fellow Global LAB travelers and Elephant stop for a photo in Amritsar

our students took a tour of The Salaam Baalak Trust, a program that gives homeless youth shelter and food. The next stop was Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India, the India Gate, and Indian Parliament where Mawa and Nick learned key historical information about India’s participation in World War I and II.

After their time in Delhi, Mawa and Nick traveled to Amritsar, where they encountered their first elephant sighting and learned about the unique religious culture from a Sikh scholar at the Golden Temple. The Amritsar leg of the journey was capped by a meaningful ceremony at the Wagha border, the boundary between India and Pakistan. Mawa was particularly struck by the “separation of men and women into two separate lines at the event” and the fierce nationalism shown by both Indian and Pakistani participants.

The final stop on Mawa and Nick’s adventures was Dhramsala, where they hiked a portion of the Himalayan mountains and made meaningful relationships with their homestay families. “I lived with a Tibetan refugee family,” Mawa explains, “and I grew very close with my ‘amala’ which is Tibetan for mother. At first, I had a hard time communicating with her, but eventually we found ways to interact and my Tibetan improved.” Though a language barrier existed, Mawa and Nick spoke volumes of their time getting an in depth look at the daily life in India through their homestays.

Upon returning to the states, Mawa and Nick are still processing the eye-opening experience of their trip to India. “There aren’t enough words to describe my experience”, explains Mawa, “I had such an amazing time.”



STREETSSQUASH
HARLEM

**AN URBAN YOUTH
ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

StreetSquash Harlem

40 West 116th Street
(Entrance on West 115th
between 5th Ave. & Lenox Ave.)
New York, New York 10026
P: 212.289.4838 • F: 212.996.3219
www.streetsquash.org

HARLEM

MISSION

FOUNDED IN SEPTEMBER 1999, STREETSQUASH IS AN AFTER-SCHOOL YOUTH ENRICHMENT PROGRAM THAT COMBINES ACADEMIC TUTORING WITH SQUASH INSTRUCTION, COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING. STREETSQUASH'S MISSION IS TO PROVIDE CONSISTENT, LONG-TERM AND RELIABLE SUPPORT TO THE CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS IN HARLEM. BY EXPOSING THESE CHILDREN TO A BROAD RANGE OF EXPERIENCES AND BY MAINTAINING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS, STREETSQUASH AIMS TO HELP EACH CHILD REALIZE HIS OR HER ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL POTENTIAL.