

Looking back at our
first year in the new building!

STREET SQUASH news

Summer 2009

11. 20. 2008:

GRAND OPENING OF THE SL GREEN STREETSQUASH CENTER



Program Director Leah Brown (far left), StreetSquash alum Davian Suckoo (far right), and Hillary Clinton pose with student ambassadors at the opening.

What had once been a long-shot dream for a small non-profit was now there for all to see: 8 squash courts, 4 classrooms, a 1,000 square foot library, locker rooms and an office for 14 staff. On a memorable and emotional evening, over 400 people came to see the final product of 5 years of hard work. Almost every person in attendance had in one way or another contributed to the creation of the \$9 million SL Green StreetSquash Center.

The Grand Opening attracted a wide array of public officials and members of the extended StreetSquash family. In attendance were Hillary Clinton; Shaun Donovan, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President; and Inez Dickens, NYC Council Member. Several StreetSquash alumni came back from college for the event. Board members brought friends and family. Supporters from Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia made the trip to see, firsthand, what a 19,000 square foot squash and education center looked like.

Senator Clinton kicked off the celebration with a rousing speech about the importance of after school programs and the need for everyone to pitch in and make a difference. After having been given a tour of the facility by a few StreetSquashers, she remarked on the amazing opportunities that this Center would provide these students for years to come. *(Continued on the next page)*

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Steve Green, who made the lead gift for the facility, spoke eloquently about the importance of charity and why helping children was so important to him. Mr. Green also urged others to continue and even increase their support, as StreetSquash was now serving hundreds more children than ever before.

The evening closed with speeches by Jeff Laikind, the Board Chair since inception, and George Polsky, the founder of the program. Each reflected on the long and rewarding journey that, over the past ten years and despite tall odds, brought StreetSquash to this defining moment. "These children and StreetSquash finally have a place to call home," Mr. Laikind stated, "a place where people of different ages and backgrounds will come together every day to learn and improve."

In addition to expanding our after school program to 150 children, we launched the P.E. for Public Schools Program, through which we have served 350 students during the school day. Most of these children would otherwise receive no formal P.E. instruction on a regular basis. In its first year of operation, the SL Green StreetSquash Center has served over 650 public school students from Harlem.

Steve Green; Hillary Clinton; and George Polsky, founder and Executive Director.



Guests crowd the corridor between the rows of courts.



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And now, we look back at the 2008-2009 program year...

In addition to the regular after school squash and study sessions, we go on community service outings, play in squash tournaments, explore cultural opportunities in New York City, and even go on team trips out of the city. This is a chronological look at some of the extracurriculars of our extra-curricular program!



Third graders from Public School 149.

Sept. 2008: StreetSquash Phys. Ed. Begins

StreetSquash is proud to announce that in the fall of 2008 we launched our physical education program in partnership with several Harlem public schools. The classes take place during the school day at the StreetSquash Center. This new initiative has enabled StreetSquash to extend our services to an even greater number of underserved children and has helped to address a major problem faced by most Harlem public schools: woefully inadequate physical education resources that leave their students with limited organized physical activity. In addition, the P.E. for Public Schools Program has increased accessibility to squash, a sport which has traditionally been out of reach for low-income residents of New York City.

The students range from 2nd to 7th grade. Harlem Success Academy, Academy for Social Action, PS 149, and Frederick Douglass Academy II all participated in the program this year. Since this was the inaugural year, the program was completely free.

Each class runs 50 minutes. The group is divided into two sections, one working on fitness and the other on squash. After 25 minutes the students switch activities. During squash, the children learn the basics of the game and are provided with squash racquets, eye-wear and shoes. In fitness, we focus on court sprints, sit-ups, push-ups, wall-sits and fun fitness games. Every participant is given a colorful StreetSquash P.E. Shirt. Everyone on staff was responsible for running at least one class per week; for next year we have hired StreetSquash alumni to run the physical education side of our programming.

Roughly 350 students come in each week to participate in physical education activities; the children seem to love the sport of squash. We hope that the program expands and continues to flourish.



September 2008: students start at boarding school

Raheem Logan and Ayanna Hall started at Canterbury and Miss Porter's, respectively. Samantha Matos began her second year at Westover, where she will play #1 on the girls squash team. Samantha will be joined in September 2009 by her younger sister Jazmin (above right). In addition to being a top student, Jazmin has developed good squash skills in just three years at StreetSquash.



10.15: North General Hospital

After learning about whole-body wellness, including yoga and conflict resolution skills, the StreetSquashers wanted their new-found knowledge to benefit their community too. So on a day in late October, enthusiastic 6th graders overran North General, bringing cheer to patients. The students assembled and decorated goody bags, which they distributed to pleasantly surprised patients. The students closed out their day with some reflection, and concluded that kind acts benefit others but also make you feel pretty good. (The fruit and cookies courtesy of North General only played a minimal role in how the students felt about the day.)

Team 5 poses on the National Mall.



11.14-16: Team 5 Trip to Washington D.C.

Team 5 arrived in D.C. late Friday evening after Ryan and Sareen took a wrong turn or two. We met our host families and split up for the night. Saturday we reconvened at the Museum of the American Indian. We very much enjoyed an exhibition of paintings by the artist Fritz Scholder, a Native American pop artist. Also of interest was a one-woman play that we saw about a Native American girl who attends a high school whose mascot is the "Indian Brave." A discussion of school pride, racism, and family ensued with the performer, our group, and others in the audience.

After the museum, Bruce Brennan, one of the hosts, showed up with a car full of sandwiches for the group. As we sat and ate outside the National Gallery of Art, a motorcade of black limousines bearing G-20 representatives drove past us along Pennsylvania Avenue.

We were caught in a downpour en route to the White House, so we ducked into the visitor center and learned some facts about previous presidents and about the White House itself. Once the rain abated, we continued on to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. It was cool to be there on the heels of such an historic election, a fact which was not lost on Team 5. Sareen, Ryan, and Tony had to explain that Obama hadn't moved in yet!

Our last stop on the mall was the National Air and Space Museum. We didn't have much time before the museum closed, so we rushed from exhibit to exhibit in smaller groups, trying to see as much as possible. We emerged from the museum to see a beautiful 360 degree rainbow bridging the great lawn of the mall.

Saturday evening, we went to a dinner theater to see *Once Upon a Mattress*. The show was fun, and the food was all-you-can-eat. All of the waiters at the theater were also performers in the play.

Sunday on the way home, we stopped in Baltimore to play SquashWise at the Meadow Mill Club. Despite a busy Saturday, the StreetSquashers had plenty of energy and played some great matches. Then it was a quick stop at Subway and back to the city.

11.08: Meals on Heels

Team 5 delivered meals to homebound seniors on the Upper East Side through a program at The Carter Burden Center for the Aging.

11.21-22: College Prep Trip To Maryland

The group began Saturday at Goucher College, a small liberal arts college right in Towson, very near our hotel. After an info session and tours in small groups, we continued on to McDaniel College. We had a very brief Q and A in the admissions building and then took tours. The student tour guides were very impressive, as were the facilities of the school. We then had a delicious dinner and went to the movies. Sunday began at Loyola College, where we walked around on our own. The last stop was Morgan State College, which we toured with Taralyn Gonzales, a StreetSquash alum!

StreetSquashers pose with alum Taralyn at Morgan State.



11.21: Middlebury visits!

Men and women from the Middlebury squash team volunteered with Team 6.

11.28: HC Women's Cup

Rakey Dammeh, Rosemary Hidalgo, Elizabeth Gatling, and Tynisha Avila played in the Women's Championship at the Harvard Club.

11.28: NDC Outing

Eight StreetSquashers went with staff members of the National Development Council to the Duke theater to watch the hip-hop musical *CLAY*, written and performed by Matt Sax and directed by Eric Rosen. Before the event the NDC staff and StreetSquash students ate at John's Pizzeria in Times Square.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Interview with Jim Merrill



Jim with team 4 members Johnathan, Isaac, and Shaheem.

What is your squash background?

I played a little tennis in high school and college but switched to squash when I arrived at Columbia for graduate school. We used to play hard ball, but gradually everybody changed to the international, soft ball game, which allows more strategy and requires more running. Some of my partners were pretty good and gave me tips to improve my game. I never had formal lessons.

When did you first start volunteering with StreetSquash? How did you get involved?

I just started volunteering with StreetSquash last October. I had seen the players show up at Columbia on Saturday mornings when I also was playing. I had been planning to get involved, and, after retiring, the time seemed right.

What is your favorite part about volunteering?

As anticipated, I've been having fun playing squash with the kids. I play hard on the court and think I set a good example on fitness. I've also enjoyed getting to know some of them a little. In the past I've been an assistant coach for my son and daughter's soccer teams. That was good, but squash is my sport.

What is your professional background?

After receiving a PhD in Economics at Columbia, I spent 15 years as an international economist at Marine Midland Bank (now part of HSBC), analyzing the economic and political risk of lending to countries around the world. I travelled a lot. Then I spent 15 years helping to invest the global assets of the General Motors pension plan, especially for the Canadian workers.



Natasha and her mother.

12.20: Family and Friends Day

StreetSquash Parents came out in full force in December 2008 for the first Family & Friends Day in the new facility. The Center was filled with the sight of families playing squash, the scent of sundry homemade dishes donated by parents, and the sound of friendly conversation and laughter. There was a true sense of home. For the first time in the history of StreetSquash, the entire program's participants were able to occupy the same space simultaneously. A tremendous surge of energy could be felt throughout the entire building.

For the third year in a row, parents have actively participated in the Family and Friends Day which is a time to network, have fun with their children, chat with teachers, play squash and enjoy good food. A few teachers and an assistant principal from a partner school participated in this year's events. The momentum from this event spilled over into the next month's Parents' Board meeting. Many parents stated they are looking forward to the next one, while the teachers said they enjoyed seeing their students outside of the classroom. StreetSquash liked having the opportunity to fill the space and expose more people to the sport of squash in a safe, family environment. We anticipate even greater participation at next year's Family and Friends Days.

Community Service

12.03: Team 4 goes to North General

Following in the footsteps of Teams 6 and 7, Team 4 members walked the five blocks to North General Hospital and made and distributed cards and gift bags.

12.06: Meals on Heels

Teams 1 and 2 delivered meals to seniors through a program at The Carter Burden Center for the Aging.

12.18: Team 3 goes to GHNH

On one of the last days before Christmas break, Team 3 went to Greater Harlem Nursing Home on 138th Street. The team's attempts to sing Christmas carols brought tears to the eyes of the residents, they were laughing so hard.

01.16-19 Urban Team Nationals at StreetSquash!

This year StreetSquash played host to the 2009 Urban Team Nationals in New York City. Urban programs from all over the country showed up; seven of the nine programs were present. We had SurfCity Squash from San Diego, SquashBusters from Boston, METROsquash from Chicago, SquashHaven from New Haven, CitySquash from the Bronx and SquashSmarts from Philadelphia. Over 270 kids attended, ranging in age from 10 to 18.

StreetSquash had teams in every age group; however it was the Girls Under 19 team that stole the show for the fifth time in a row. Talise Hall, a senior at StreetSquash, really wanted to defend this title, and that is precisely what she did. She was down two games to one at the number four position - the first match on court. Being the only senior on the top Girls Under 19 team, she knew she had to set the tone for her teammates. Talise kept her nerves in check and won a close fourth game coming back to win

after starting down 5-1. After that, it was all Talise. She gained momentum with each point and won the fifth game with ease. The other four girls on the team were Rakey Drammeh who won 3-1 at the number one position, Elizabeth Gatling who won 3-0 at the number two position, Rosemary Hidalgo who lost 3-2 at the number three position and Tynisha Avila who won 3-0 at the fifth position. This was a sweet victory for StreetSquash against the very talented SquashSmarts team.



Another exciting match was the Boys Under 19 showdown between StreetSquash and SquashBusters. There was a lot of tension in the air as everyone was waiting for this match; coaches and kids knew that these two teams would meet in the finals given their strong line-ups. StreetSquash won this title last year, but with different faces on the team. Defense of the title fell to seniors Ramon Potter, Joshua Gary, Jamel Key, and Nicholas Nicholson, as well as junior Guytaul Bennett. Despite strong efforts from the StreetSquashers, the SquashBusters boys were too good that day and ousted the StreetSquash boys five matches to zero for the ultimate crown on the boys' side. A number of other StreetSquash teams fared well over the weekend and won consolation plates.



The StreetSquash girls U19 champions pose with the runners up from SquashSmarts.

The event went smoothly, running Friday through mid-day Monday. Lunch was provided at the cafeteria of Public School 149, a partner school for the physical education program. In addition to competition on the court, there was also an essay contest. With the tournament taking place on Martin Luther King Day, it was easy to decide a theme for the essays! The StreetSquash finalists for the essay contest were Elhadji Mare, Raven Williams, and Julian Hackney. All in all it was a great weekend of squash and fun for the 270 kids who descended on New York City. It was wonderful to have so many parents come to cheer on their children.



01.07-08: The University of Rochester runs clinics for our kids

Martin Heath, world #4 turned Rochester coach, brought his team to train at StreetSquash. In addition to team practices in the evenings, they spent time coaching our 10th, 11th, and 12th grade players over the course of two days. Rochester went on to finish third nationally, only one year after finishing 10th. Coincidence?

To expose our children to team squash at such a high level and to provide them more interactions with student-athletes, we hope to have more college teams visit next season.



(L to R) Tariq, Ren, Sha-Real, and Ramsey.

01.10: Williams School

Braving a prohibitive weather forecast, the Williams School made the trip from New London, CT to Harlem. Their 11 players were only scheduled to play 7th and 8th graders but ended up playing the 9th graders as well. The match with Team 4 was close; the match with Team 6 was memorable because of how loudly Team 6 members cheered for their teammates!

01.31-02.01: Gow School

The Gow School came all the way from Buffalo to play StreetSquash over the course of a weekend, with even some parents making the trip. StreetSquash, led by strong play by Team 5, carried the day on Saturday. The Gow School prevailed by a wide enough margin on Sunday, however, to take the trophy as the overall winner. The weekend matchup marked the second year the two teams have played (StreetSquash won the first battle). We are anxious to reclaim the trophy when they return in 2010!



Nicholas high fives teammates during introductions.

Community Service

01.28: Yorkville Pantry

Team 7 students went to Yorkville Common Pantry on 109th Street and 5th Avenue, where they assembled food packages to be distributed as part of the Food Pantry program. In February and March, several more groups of 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th graders went to the pantry to help out Gladys Ortiz, the Director of Volunteering.

01.28: Food Bank of NY

Teams 1 and 2 went to the Food Bank of New York warehouse in Hunts Point, Bronx to package food for distribution to soup kitchens and food pantries (at many of which we have volunteered). The trip was part of our "Hunger and Homelessness" community service unit.

01.27: Studio Museum Tour

Team 3 toured the Studio Museum of Harlem, just ten blocks from StreetSquash. The Barkley Hendricks show, "The Birth of Cool" was a big hit. Our tour guide, Tanika Williams, later came to StreetSquash to lead a nutrition workshop at National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

01.23-29 StreetSquash @ the TOC

Denver Chapman, Lizandro Rodriguez, Danny Cabrera, Terrance Rose, and Sion Sennon played on the all-glass exhibition court at Grand Central Station with former world #1 Peter Nicol. StreetSquashers sat courtside at almost every match of the Tournament of Champions. The players were not anticipating so many autograph requests!



Tosin, Denecia, Shanice, and Malasia playing a trivia game about women in sports.

NATIONAL GIRLS and WOMEN in SPORTS DAY

On February 7, 2009, StreetSquash hosted its first annual National Girls and Women in Sports Day celebration. Eight former collegiate women squash players, a handful of CitySquash girls and all StreetSquash female participants joined in for a day of squash playing, workshops, and fun activities honoring the significance of women in sports. The day started with an hour-long clinic run by the visiting former collegiate players. Open squash play, workshops on Health and Nutrition, the History of Women in Sport, and a poster-making activity called "I am an athlete" came after the clinic. Over lunch, special guest Beth Rasin spoke about making her film about the life of squash legend Hashim Khan and also about her personal experiences as a top squash player. The day concluded with a nail-biting exhibition match between Kyla Grigg and Miranda Ranieri, both past winners of the intercollegiate title. Overall, National Girls and Women in Sports Day was a stimulating event that will surely become an annual fixture in the StreetSquash calendar!

02.13: FRIDAY PROGRAM GALA!!!

The middle schoolers took a day to showcase all of their accomplishments during the first semester of the Friday program. Highlights included:

- The 8th grade Mathletes Team defeated the 7th grade Mathletes Team in a contest of sports math mastery.
- The 8th grade's Autobiography Group had a publishing party to showcase their original autobiographies and memoirs.
- The 7th grade Creative Writing Group celebrated their achievements by sharing poetry, character sketches, music reviews, and photography.



02.25: Harlem After School Providers

StreetSquash hosted a conference for after school providers in the Harlem community. The day included a morning talk on the economy as well as round table discussions on academics, athletics, and college preparation. This was a great opportunity to network and share resources with other after school providers in the community. Also, participants took home useful information regarding how non-profits can weather the recession. Representatives from Harlem Children's Zone, Harlem RBI, Children's Aid Society, and Columbia University's Double Discovery Center participated in the event.

02.27-03.01: Heights Casino

Rakey Drammeh, Liz Gatling, Tynisha Avila, Jazmin Matos, Julian Hackney, Daequan Washington, Josh Gary, and Jamel Key played in the Heights Casino Silver Championships in Brooklyn.



Wandy and Adonis on the farm in Princeton.

03.01: Princeton Match

Thirteen 7th graders traveled with Sage and Katie to Princeton, NJ. The day began at a local farm, where we met sheep, horses, and chickens. Some brave students climbed up on the tractors while others fed the animals corn from their hands. After making the rounds through the country store, Team 6 moved on to the Princeton campus where they walked in and around the buildings and sat in a lecture hall imagining their futures as collegiate scholars. In order to work up an appetite for the renowned two-foot-long hoagies that Sage had promised everyone, the team took to the Tigers' football field and raced back and forth several times. The day concluded with two hours of squash with the Princeton Junior Squash at Princeton University's Jadwin Gymnasium.



03.07: Baptist Temple

Early Saturday morning, a few 8th and 9th grade boys, led by Tony, went to the Baptist Temple around the corner from StreetSquash to help distribute food to the hungry and to the disabled. Michele Kennedy, the program's director, was happy to have help from such strong young men! More than 200 bags were distributed.



03.07: StreetSquash vs. Squash Haven

We walked from New Haven's Union Station to the courts so that the players could see a bit of the city and Yale. Squash lasted from 12:45 until 3:30 with most of the team having at least three matches. Our players got along really well with Squash Haven's and mixed in with them from the second we arrived. The team also loved all of the different courts at Yale and took turns playing on the glass courts and the others that were more hidden away. We heard some of the Squash Haven players whispering about how much better their StreetSquash peers had gotten since Urban Teams!

We were ready to leave the courts at 4pm to make the 4:32 train, but one of our students realized as we were walking out that he had forgotten his sneakers upstairs! After rushing everyone back to the train, we missed it by about five minutes. In all of the confusion, we somehow missed the next train as well and finally got onto the 5:55 train back to 125th. We managed to walk everyone back to the building by about 8:15 and to send them home despite their begging to play more squash. I think it's safe to say that they slept well on Saturday night.

03.09: Food Drive Begins

Laura and the members of Team 3 began a month-long canned food drive as well as a "penny war" in which teams competed to collect the most change while sabotaging other teams by putting dollars in their jars. Team 7, aided by their competitive parents, won both the penny war and the canned food drive. The victory was celebrated with pizza.

03.07: NDC Outing

Twelve StreetSquashers and National Development Council staff went for another exciting outing: Christopher Norman Chocolatier. The children learned how to make hand-made gourmet chocolates and, even better, got to sample them. After the event the children were treated to Adrienne's Pizza Bar located on 54 Stone Street. It should be noted that normally StreetSquash provides exclusively healthy snacks for the kids!

The StreetSquash Mentoring Program is offered to all interested StreetSquashers. Many of the relationships begin when students are in middle school and continue through the students' years in the program. Mentors and StreetSquashers arrange outings on their own and with other mentor pairs throughout the year, in addition to the two events organized by StreetSquash. On **March 8th** we had our first mentor outing at Harlem Lanes. Over 30 people came for this event. The students and mentors connected really well and each lane ended up having serious competitions amongst the students and mentors. For three hours the mentors and children socialized, playing games and eating. Mentors are an invaluable addition to StreetSquash and we would like to thank all of them for their ongoing support! Look out for our next mentor/mentee outing in early summer at the StreetSquash Center.



Lizandro (right) with his devoted mentor Yasser, a former pro player.

03.20 - 03.22: Basketball, Maple Syrup, and Squash for Team 6

Team 6 left the city Friday afternoon after school and arrived in Northampton, MA around 7:30pm. We had a great dinner of lasagna, veggies and fruit at Katie's parents' house and dispersed to the different homestays. Little sleep was had on Friday night.

The children kicked off Saturday morning with an 8am basketball game in the driveway, followed by a trip to the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield. They played games testing their rebounding, vertical jumping (Rick has a 17" vertical!) and shooting skills, and looked around the museum a bit. The majority of the time was spent playing basketball on the museum's "center court."

We went to Ashfield (a tiny rural hilltown) after lunch to visit a sugar house where maple syrup is made. The owner, Tom, took us from tree to tree to see the taps, and fired up the evaporator for us so that we could see the process of making maple syrup. Everyone had a silver dollar pancake and sampled the syrup. We enjoyed the gorgeous weather.

Around 4pm we went to Smith College where we played squash with two girls from the Smith team and a beginning squash class. The competition was great!

Saturday night, we went out to dinner at an Italian restaurant, which proved to be interesting. The children each added about eight packets of sugar to their drinks before we could stop them.

The waiters brought over extra sugar thinking that they were helping. They weren't. Team 6 also had an interesting experience with a salad bar... Although we tried to direct the children towards the veggies, there were several plates filled half with bacon bits and half with croutons. All in all, they had a really good time.

Sunday morning we went back to Smith College and participated in a field-day type activity for two hours, facilitated by a youth sports class from Smith. We played capture the flag, kickball, and basketball. We had lunch around 12:30pm and left about an hour later.

On the ride home, there were a few requests to go back for Christmas. I told them we'd think about it.



Nazier and Taim.

03.14: Liberty Science Center

We took Team 7 to the Liberty Science Center in New Jersey for their team trip. There were terrific exhibits on skyscrapers, immunology, sustainability and Hudson River wildlife.

We spent the first two hours doing a scavenger hunt (provided by the LSC) throughout the building. We were all enthralled with the exhibits. (Everything is interactive and perfect for inquiring kids.) Many of us took the opportunity to walk on a high beam (18 ft. in the air) with a harness, an experience meant to simulate a construction site.

We had lunch at the LSC, which had a great array of healthy options. We were proud of our team happily munching on apples!

After lunch we spent a bit of time looking at the fish, reptiles and insects, blew giant bubbles, and did many other things. The grand finale was a workshop in which the StreetSquash children dressed up in lab coats and goggles and tested "samples" for HIV.



Taylor and Oumar.

03.21: Baptist Temple

Toshar Melville, Lawrence Daise, and Hakeem Elliot helped at the food pantry at the Baptist Temple as part of Team 4's community service work.

03.20: Harlem Community Justice Center

10th graders, accompanied by Sage and Mary, met with Chris Watler, Project Director of the Harlem Community Justice Center on 121st Street for a discussion on the criminal justice system and alternatives to incarceration.

03.21: Summer Fair

StreetSquashers got to see what options they have for summer camps. New options included squash trips to various other cities, thanks to peer National Urban Squash and Education Association programs.

03.21:

Volunteer Day

StreetSquash recognized the special contributions of our most loyal volunteers by having open squash time during which they could hit with friends. We will do this periodically in the future.

03.28: Facility Cleaning

A large, energetic group of Columbia students armed with squeegees, vacuums, paper towels, and spray bottles descended on StreetSquash. Aided by StreetSquash students, they went through the building cleaning absolutely everything. For a few glorious days, the building sparkled.

03.27-29: Visiting Liberal Arts colleges in Pennsylvania

The sun was shining on Friday, March 27th when we departed Harlem for four prestigious liberal arts colleges in Pennsylvania: Haverford, Franklin & Marshall, Gettysburg, and Dickinson.

The two vans carrying 10th, 11th, and 12th graders made great time to our hotel near the King of Prussia Mall in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. That night we ate dinner at the California Pizza Kitchen and went bowling. Mary posted the high score of 147!

The next morning, the students awoke to cloudier weather, but nonetheless felt energized to tour Haverford College. There, we walked around the campus and learned about the Honor Code. At first it struck our children as pretty weird that Haverford students can't tell others about their grades, but most of our crowd seemed to think it was a good way to discourage extreme competitiveness and stress.

After a quick lunch, we headed to Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, where we saw some horse-drawn buggies and Amish folk. At F&M, we met Gabrielle Robinson and Sheena Suckoo (two StreetSquash alumnae in their freshman year there) for a VIP tour of the campus. Most of the group hopped on court and played three-quarter court after the tour. The

group really enjoyed the school and reacted favorably to the ease with which their former teammates had adjusted to college life.

After a bittersweet goodbye, we left for Gettysburg College, where we settled in for the night before the final day of our trip. The group enjoyed Gettysburg's campus, which was beautiful in the morning fog. We got a kick out of the fact that the school's swimming pool is on the second floor of the student union. We took a couple of great group photos, most notably with a statue of Dwight Eisenhower. Much to our chagrin, we didn't have enough time to stick around to see the battlefield.

Any lingering disappointment faded when we rolled into Carlisle, PA to see Dickinson College. Admissions officers Cathy Davenport and Alan Paynter gave us a warm curbside welcome, providing us with free meal passes and informational packets. We ate lunch in the main dining hall and had a chance to see Dickinson students on a regular Sunday morning. We enjoyed the food, and especially liked being able to go back for second servings. At the end of lunch, some Dickinson students on scholarship through the Posse Foundation came and chatted with our contingent about life at college and their experience transitioning from New York City to Carlisle. Afterwards, Cathy and Alan conducted an information session in a lecture hall in the brand-new science building. The StreetSquashers found the talk very helpful and asked good questions. They also enjoyed the comfortable chairs.

As the trip came to a close, StreetSquashers reflected on what they had learned and seen over the past two days. Some students liked the architectural aesthetics of the different campuses. Others enjoyed seeing campuses in suburban and rural settings. Still more liked the idea of pursuing a liberal arts education. As a whole, the group came away from the trip with the desire to pursue higher education and the motivation to realize that goal.





04.04: Baptist Temple

Sion Sennon helped at the food pantry at the Baptist Temple as part of Team 4's community service work.

04.05:

StreetSquash Cup Warm-up

In anticipation of the StreetSquash cup fundraiser tournament on May 9th, the YLC helped run a day-long handicapped tournament at StreetSquash. The draw featured StreetSquashers, staff, volunteers, YLC members, donors, and other squash enthusiasts. William Walter was the last man standing. Yasser El Halaby and Julian Illingworth played an exhibition before the final.

04.04: StreetSquash vs. SquashBusters

When 29 StreetSquashers set out early on the first Saturday of April to square off with Squashbusters, our Boston-based counterpart, nervous excitement filled the air. At that moment, the 2009 victor of the annual competition might have been in doubt, but the intensity of the match at hand was without question. StreetSquash had captured the coveted trophy the year before, but a strong SquashBusters performance at Urban Team Nationals loomed over us as we departed for the match.

The two teams arrived at the Brady Squash Center at Yale University in New Haven, CT with equal parts determination and desire. Apart from 2008 when the match was played at The Westminster School, the world-class facility at Yale has always hosted the annual showdown. After welcoming remarks and a spirited introduction from StreetSquash captains Joshua Gary and Talise Hall, the players fanned out to 11 different courts. In all, 29 matches were played: 15 between the boys and 14 between the girls.

The match offered few surprises from the outset, as we traded victories with SquashBusters in almost sequential fashion. The day reached its climax when hard-fought victories by StreetSquashers Elizabeth Gatling, Talise Hall, and Tynisha Avila knotted the match score at 13 apiece with three battles remaining. Unfortunately, SquashBusters prevailed in all three matches, but not before Dachele, Joshua, and Lizandro put forth gutsy four- and five-game efforts.

After the dust settled, SquashBusters had won narrowly, 16 to 13. Twelve of StreetSquash's 13 victories came from the girls, with An-Khe Tomer (at number 15) providing the lone victory from the boys. All told, it was a great match. Both teams exhibited exemplary sportsmanship, which culminated in a team-wide hand shaking during the trophy presentation. We even managed to share food from Yorkside Pizza afterwards.



The teams crowd the court before the match.



04.06: Baking at the Shelter

Laura took Team 4 members Lizandro, Danielle, Sade, and Denver to the Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter on the Upper East Side. They baked cookies and brownies at the kitchen, then sat and chatted with residents while enjoying their baked creations.



04.07: HealthCorps

Dan Moccia-Field, given a grant by the HealthCorps to assuage childhood obesity in NYC, taught a lesson on nutrition to Team 3.



Rakey (white headband) and Diosmiry (blue sweatshirt) mix in with the International Visitors.

04.06: International Visitors Leadership Day

Twenty-five members of International Visitor Leadership Program, Foreign Service Officers, and staff from the United States Department of State came to the StreetSquash Center to meet with a group of high schoolers. For many of the International Visitors, it was their first time in the United States. In an engaging ice-breaker, the visitors and StreetSquashers gained awareness in sharing details about their hometowns and their favorite places. From there, everyone participated in wide ranging discussions about youth leadership and civic participation, exchanging experiences and perspectives across cultures and nationalities. It was a special afternoon for everyone in attendance, especially for the StreetSquash students who emerged with a greater appreciation for their relationship to the world beyond Harlem and what they have learned in their school books.

The Berkshire Open is a professional tournament hosted at Williams College. For the first time this year, there was also an amateur tournament: The Brint Coxe Invitational. Eight StreetSquashers and Tony competed. We faced local adults and juniors, as well as some of the best college players from Williams and Trinity. Everyone was able to play on the temporary glass court installed for the tournament. We had the chance to watch some hotly contested professional matches.

The children all stayed with host families in the area. The Schoenbaums served Danny and Lizandro eggs fresh from their chicken coop. The Deweys took Dachele and Rosemary to an a capella concert. The Swanns had everyone over to their place for a big cookout Saturday evening. Our group played kickball, flashlight tag, and basketball with the numerous children of the host families. Bennie Bernhardtsson and Kate Swann are now honorary members of StreetSquash!

The weather was beautiful. Hot and sweaty after a few solid hours of squash on Saturday, the group took a dip in the Green River before an informal campus tour led by Tony that culminated in a visit to Lickety Split, the local ice cream establishment. Coming from a city on the cusp of a hot summer, it was great to escape to a picturesque mountain setting and go swimming and walk around barefoot. We lucky nine are eager to return to Williamstown for the Urban Individuals Tournament in June. Hopefully we can reconnect with some of the host families, as some of our group really had a good time with their respective hosts, their kids, and their pets (besides Rosemary, who is allergic to dogs).



The group in the Green River.



On the Cornell campus.

04.24-26: College Prep Trip to Upstate New York

Ten team 2 and 3 members visited four colleges in the Ithaca area as part of the last college prep trip of the school year. The trip started off with a quick tour of Binghamton University, led by StreetSquash alumni Sonia Gaona and Keith Keith. After a late arrival in Ithaca Friday night, the group visited three different campuses Saturday: Ithaca College, Cornell University, and SUNY Cortland. While all three schools are within 30 miles of each other, each has its own unique characteristics giving students enough distinctions to compare and contrast. The students also enjoyed a true college dining experience as they had lunch in the Ithaca dining hall. Before heading home Sunday afternoon, the group continued a College Prep tradition and squeezed in two games of bowling at a local alley. Thank you to all the tour guides and admissions officers. Extra thanks to Ithaca College for the incredible hospitality.



The seniors. Not pictured: Jennifer Houston, Talise Hall, Lavonda Howe.

We are excited to announce that all 12 StreetSquash graduates are set to go to college next year. Take a peek to see where they will be continuing their education.

Joshua Gary – SUNY Delhi

Talise Hall – SUNY Morrisville

Jennifer Houston – Lincoln University

Lavonda Howe – SUNY Albany

Jamel Key – SUNY Canton

Cody Levy – Buffalo State College

Jennifer Moses – SUNY Albany

Nicholas Nicholson – Medgar Evers College

Shanese Patterson – SUNY Plattsburgh

Ramon Potter – John Jay College

Derrick Sales – SUNY Purchase

Melissa Sandoval – Franklin & Marshall College

StreetSquash and F & M

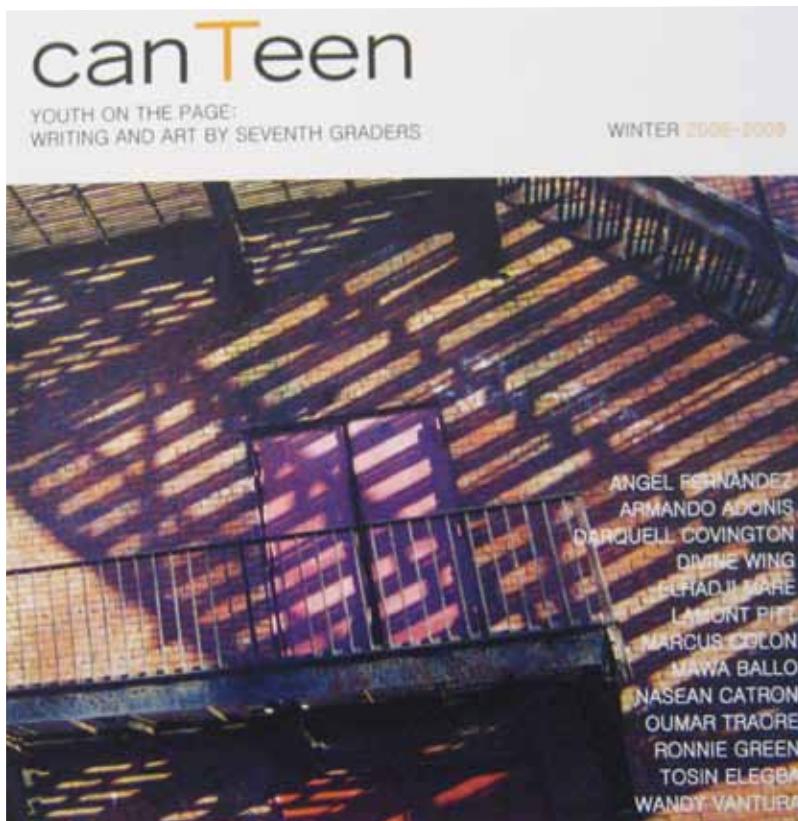
When you ask a group of StreetSquash kids which college they want to attend, chances are that several of them will say Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. While this may seem like an unusual choice for a high school student from Harlem, the students' response reflects the growing partnership between our program and this elite liberal arts institution. For the second straight year, a StreetSquash senior has been admitted to F & M and offered a generous financial aid package. In the fall, Melissa Sandoval will join StreetSquash alumnae Gabrielle Robinson and Sheena Suckoo as members of the F&M community.

When the StreetSquash College Prep Program visited F&M in April, it was obvious how happy Gabby and Sheena are in their new home. They proudly toured us around campus with a friend from the Posse program and showed off the squash courts where they spend plenty of time during their season. The girls are excited about their liberal arts course work, which has allowed them to delve into subjects ranging from race in American society to economics. They are enthusiastically taking advantage of opportunities outside the classroom, such as Gabby's grant to travel to China this summer. Although the transition to studying in such a challenging academic environment has been a struggle at times, the girls both feel supported by the school's faculty and staff, especially Steven O'Day, a Dean who volunteered to serve as a mentor for our students.

The opportunity for our graduates not only to attend such a prestigious college but also to receive the support they need to succeed will have immeasurable impact on them for the rest of their lives. We look forward to continuing our relationship with F&M and hope that many more of our students have the chance to enjoy the academically and personally enriching experience of studying there.



Gabby and Sheena with John White, the F & M squash Coach.



May 2009: Sex Education

StreetSquash staff ran sexual education workshops with all the teams. The curriculum this year was developed in-house by Laura Lindstrom and Sareen Pearl, with three lessons each for middle schoolers and high schoolers.

05.01: CanTeen Magazine comes out

The magazine is a compilation of literary pieces and photography done exclusively by StreetSquash students in the 7th grade. Stephen Pierson and a group of volunteers came to StreetSquash every Friday with exciting prompts and energy, providing the stimulus for this amazing publication. View the whole thing at <http://www.canteenmag.com/studentissue.shtml>.

05.08: The Parent Board met to discuss the upcoming NUSEA summer camp at StreetSquash, to talk about the staff opening for a parent to work at our front desk, and to finalize fundraising efforts. The New York Sports Club visited from down the block to make a membership pitch to the parents.

05.01: StreetSquash's First Annual College Fair

On a rainy Friday in May, the StreetSquash library was bustling with college admissions representatives and students participating in StreetSquash's first annual college fair. Representatives from 20 institutions ranging from liberal arts schools such as Haverford College to City University of New York came to learn more about StreetSquash and to educate our students about their offerings. Students from CitySquash and Thurgood Marshall Academy also came to the StreetSquash Center to participate in the fair.

Lively presentations informed the students about the State University of New York college system and the opportunity to attend college and graduate school at no cost as a recipient of the Gates Millennium Scholarship. StreetSquashers engaged college reps with questions about campus life, academic opportunities and study abroad programs. The admissions officers reported that they found our students well prepared for the fair and excited about their futures on college campuses. It was a successful day that exposed the StreetSquashers to more college options while strengthening our organizational connection to a variety of colleges and universities. We hope for an even larger event in 2010!



Nasir talks to Nakia Noble, an admissions officer from Fairfield.

05.09: First Annual StreetSquash Cup

The first annual StreetSquash Cup, held on May 9th, 2009 at the StreetSquash Center in Harlem, was a smashing success. Teams came together for an action-packed team squash tournament. In addition to some fantastic squash, the players, friends, and supporters raised more than \$50,000 in college scholarships for StreetSquash alumni and raised the bar for team squash in New York City.

Each team entered the tournament with four amateurs and a pro. Based on team fundraising totals, each chose from among the top-ranked StreetSquashers to fill out its roster. These included the top three StreetSquash boys, all high school seniors who will be graduating from Thurgood Marshall Academy in June and heading off to college in the fall. Their high level of play and team spirit set an example for the rest of the StreetSquashers who were in attendance.

In the first round, each team faced off against the others in a round robin, playing five matches, one game to 11 points each, from the pros down to the StreetSquashers. Following a flurry of matches, the total aggregate points for all teams were tallied to determine the playoffs, which set up the showdown among the four teams with the highest combined scores. From top to bottom, the games were tightly contested, with several matches decided by a matter of two or three points!

In the playoffs, the University Club played Racquet & Tennis on one side of the bracket, and StreetSquash's YLC took on the Union Club – with the pros, #1, and StreetSquashers representing their teams. In the end, the University Club prevailed against StreetSquash's YLC team in the final, winning the two deciding matches between the #1's and the StreetSquashers. The outcome already determined, pros Julian Illingworth and Carl Baglio merely played for fun; their fantastic play was a treat. It was quite a statement by the University Club, which not only took home the trophy but, even more impressively, raised more than \$20,000 towards the overall tournament total!

The University Club also took home a prize as the highest fundraisers: 4 box seats to see the Mets at Citi Field. The Harvard Club Team took the second prize for their \$10,000 fundraising effort and received a dinner for two from Blue Smoke Barbecue, which also provided a delicious spread of ribs, brisket and chicken, that was devoured by all in attendance.

Thank you to everyone who played, cheered, volunteered, and donated to the StreetSquash Cup. A special thanks to the team captains who led the charge in pulling off this inaugural effort, the pros who showed us all how the game can be played, and the StreetSquashers whose energy and hard work inspired the whole effort. With this first installment under our belt, we are looking forward to making the StreetSquash Cup an annual tradition for us and for the New York City squash community.



STREETSSQUASH CUP TEAMS

UNIVERSITY CLUB

Carl Baglio (Pro)
Hamed Anvari
Michael Fensterstock
Rob Coakley
J.D. Cregan
Josh Gary**
Captain: Andrew Fink

UNION CLUB

Jonny Smith (Pro)
Satya Seshadri
Javier Rodriguez
Jorge Rodriguez
Adam Savin
Guytaul Bennett**
Captain: Edmonds Bafford

HARVARD CLUB

Richard Chin (Pro)
George Polsky*
Richard Mines
Michael Mass
Eric Mass
Jamel Key**

RACKET & TENNIS CLUB

James Stout (Pro)
Soli Mehta
Howard Cushing
Taylor Robinson
Matthew Sharnoff**
Rakey Drammeh**

TEAM TAXI

Yasser El Halaby (Pro)
Eddie Fishman*
Alan Ripka*
Julianne Chu
Bruce Huberman
Lizandro Rodriguez**

STREETSSQUASH YLC:

Julian Illingworth (Pro)
Rob Weller
Evan Teiger*
Evan Shore
Greg Kantrowitz
Nicholas Nicholson**

* Team Captain
 ** StreetSquasher

The Parent Board Raises Funds for New Warm Up Jackets!

This year, the StreetSquash Parent Board raised enough money to buy all of our new students warm-up jackets. Every couple of years, as the students grow out of their old jackets, parents have taken on the challenge of buying them new ones. This year, however, with jackets only a year old and no need for new ones, the parents still picked up the tab for the very newest members of StreetSquash, who have never received a warm up jacket before. Because in our new space we have room to serve more children, we had an unprecedented number of new recruits this year. To initiate them onto the team and to make them feel like a part of the StreetSquash family, the parents (new and old) decided to band together to suit these kids up!



Nereida, Michelle, and Laura show off the new warm up jackets. Go StreetSquash!

Three parent leaders emerged from this endeavor by spearheading fundraising initiatives. Rena Bolds put together a fundraiser through Little Lamb Cookie Dough, through which the families sold enough cookies to raise the bulk of the money going toward the jackets. Nereida Soto sold StreetSquash T-Shirts on which purchasers could have printed anything they wanted. Look out for StreetSquash supporters in these personalized T-Shirts! Dalton Rodney used his expertise in Defensive Driving and taught a class at the StreetSquash building. Half of the proceeds were donated to StreetSquash. Thank you to the parent leaders and all parents for reaching the goal of providing a new jacket for every new StreetSquasher!

Parent Board meetings are held the second Friday of every month. This year the Parent Board has roared to life, and has many plans to support their children and StreetSquash programming by becoming involved in a variety of ways. Parents, let your voice be heard, and join us at our monthly meetings!

05.16: Million Trees.....

73 kids went to Red Hook, Brooklyn to plant trees with the organization Million Trees. All together there were 79 StreetSquash representatives, including Ryan, Jade, Miss Frierson, Shellonda and Katie.

Registration was well organized. The kids ate an assortment of muffins, bagels, fruit, and pastries provided by the MT staff. We also were given gardening gloves, tool belt pouches, t-shirts and ponchos.

Everyone was divided into five different groups that fanned out to different sections of the nearby housing projects and were given a brief lesson on tree planting. From there, groups of three and four were assigned specific holes to dig and trees to plant. Each group managed to put between two and four trees in the ground.

It was a really wonderful experience and nice to get such a big group of StreetSquashers together.

Back row: Sha-Real, Tariq, Maiyah, Yushisha, Dalton, part-time staff Shellonda.
Front row: Taylor-Von, Kevin, Azania, and Paulina.



05.22: World Squash Day.....

World Squash Day was decreed by the squash powers that be in an effort to promote the sport, with the ultimate objective of the sport's inclusion in the 2016 Olympics. Four candidates remain on the short list for the host city: Rio, Moscow, Chicago, and Tokyo. StreetSquash middle schoolers combined with CitySquash middle school kids to form four teams, named for the candidate cities. The teams faced off in an afternoon tournament, with Chicago prevailing against Tokyo in the final. It was charming to have our middle school students start to form friendships with their peers from the Bronx program, as they will undoubtedly encounter one another at squash events for years to come, maybe even at the Olympics!



The winning team of StreetSquash and City Squash players.

ALUMNI UPDATE

At the start of the 2008-09 year, StreetSquash dedicated a full time staff member to our growing number of alumni when former Squash Director Chris Tom became the Alumni Outreach director. Thanks to a generous grant from the Carl Marks foundation, Chris has formalized and extended the services StreetSquash had provided to alumni in previous years. As always, StreetSquash continued to support alumni enrolled in college with a yearly scholarship check of up to \$1,000. To date StreetSquash has disbursed nearly \$40,000 in scholarship money to our alumni, and we expect that amount to rise significantly in the coming years as more and more StreetSquashers move on to college.



Alumni gathered at Family and Friends Day.

Beyond our traditional scholarship program, the Alumni Outreach program has expanded the services and support offered to alumni in many ways. For those students in college, Chris made a series of visits to their respective campuses. These trips ranged from short train rides to Brooklyn to longer excursions to northern New York and Baltimore, but in all cases, the alumni welcomed Chris with open arms and showcased their schools. In addition to meeting the students, Chris introduced StreetSquash to various members of support and academic staff. Not only did these visits help create more awareness for StreetSquash, but they started working relationships between StreetSquash and the colleges that ensured better advising and support for our alumni.

The Alumni Program also continued to grow our internship and career services support to alumni. With the support of the Young Leadership Committee, alumni attended a resume workshop in August and career panel in January dedicated to helping them understand the job search process and how to prepare themselves during this difficult economic period. We also extended our internships to companies such as CNBC, Vineyard Vines, and Keating and Company as well as continued our long-standing relationship with National Development Council. As the number of alumni grows and the Alumni Outreach program continues to expand, we are excited to expand our internship possibilities to different companies and fields.

Thanks to everyone who was involved in making the 2008-2009 year such a success!

Academy for Social Action	Neighborhood Coalition for Shelter
ApplyWise	New York Cares
Baptist Temple Church	New York Public Library
Blue Smoke Restaurant	North General Hospital
Books for Kids	Outward Bound
Bowdoin Squash Camp	Pingry School
Camp Dudley	Poly Prep
Camp Kiniya	Power Squash Academy
Canteen Magazine	Princeton Junior Squash
Carter Burden Center for the Aging	Princeton Squash Camp
CACNY	Public School 149
Columbia Community Outreach	Riverside Park Fund
Columbia Squash	Rochester Squash
Food Bank of New York City	Squash and Beyond Camps
Frederick Douglass Academy II	Studio Museum, Harlem
Grand Central Racquets	Squash Design
Greater Harlem Nursing Home	Squashsite.co.uk
Harlem Community Justice Center	Summer Search
Harlem Success Academy	The Chatham Club
Harvard Club of New York City	Thurgood Marshall Academy
HealthCorps	Total Squash Camps
International Squash Academy	Tournament of Champions
Keating & Co.	US Dept. of State
Liberty Science Center	Universal Squash Camps
Longacre Leadership Camp	Vassar Squash
Metropolitan Squash Racquets Assn.	Vineyard Vines
Middlebury Squash	Wadleigh Secondary School
Million Trees	Westside YMCA
National Development Council	Wilbur Herrlich
NUSEA	Windsor Mountain
Navy Squash Camp	Yorkville Common Pantry



Volunteer Spotlight: **Neireda Soto**

StreetSquash has been fortunate to have awesome parent volunteers this year. Whether it's assisting in community service projects, feeding hundreds of students during our Urban Team Nationals, facilitating arts and crafts workshops for our middle schoolers, or tutoring during our weekly after school sessions, Nereida Soto is the parent who is always up to the task. Mother of a 7th grade student, Marcus Colon, Nereida not only found a program her son loves but one she loves also. She is active on the Parents' Board submitting ideas, raising funds, translating for Spanish speaking parents and doing whatever else is needed. Thank you Nereida! You have been immensely helpful to both the children and the staff.

Academic Tutoring * Literacy Enrichment * Squash Instruction * Community Service * Mentoring

Get Involved!

Volunteering with StreetSquash is a rewarding experience that allows you to make a difference in the lives of New York City's youth. We are looking for academic tutors, squash instructors and mentors to join the StreetSquash family. If interested please email Sareen Pearl at sareen@streetsquash.org.





**An Urban Youth
Enrichment Program**

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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.