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Capital Region Youth
Tennis Foundation

FALL 2006
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Denise McCoy Scholarship Names Three New Recipients

Now in its third year, 15-LOVE is proud to announce three new recipients of the Denise McCoy Scholarship: Irene Carcache, Alida Hysenllari and Kendra Williams. Irene and Kendra have started classes at Hudson Valley Community College and also are playing tennis on the HVCC Women's team. Alida is at Siena College.



Irene Carcache (left) and Kendra Williams.
(Not pictured: Alida Hysenllari)

All three students were a part of 15-LOVE's College Prep Program, and worked hard during their senior year on admission and scholarship applications, making it clear to the committee that they have what it takes to succeed in college and beyond! Past recipients, Mary Nguyen, Paul Kuhne and Kenny Williams are still receiving the scholarship and have given us semi-annual reports on their successes at SUNY Buffalo, Temple University and Union College, respectively.

PROGRAM NEWS

Jamboree Wraps Up Record Breaking Summer

For the first time in its seventeen-year history, 15-LOVE held two Jamborees this August, wrapping up the largest summer program 15-LOVE has ever seen. Over 1,600 participants at 11 sites in Albany, Schenectady, Troy and Rensselaer were overseen by a top-notch staff, with 17 of the 21 instructors coming from the program.

The two Jamborees were held at the Washington Park tennis courts on August 10th. The morning and afternoon events drew about 300 kids who had fun playing games, winning lots of prizes and eating lots of cake (donated by Hannaford Supermarket.) At the end of the day, an off-court session was held where kids shared with each other the lessons they had learned all year. Prizes were handed out and instructors profusely thanked. JIF, the peanut butter company, sponsored the event and provided a coupon for a free jar of JIF peanut butter to the winners of the site awards for Best Attendance, Best Attitude and Most Improved. Before heading for home, each participant received a bag full of school supplies and a 15-LOVE tee shirt. The event was a huge success, with many parents commenting on how it had capped off a great summer for their children.

On a Courtside Note: The Russell Sage courts were not usable this summer due to unsafe conditions, so that site was closed for the first time. This allowed, however, for a full-day site in the City of Rensselaer at Riverfront Park, which drew many more participants from that city. In addition, a new site was added in South Albany at Hoffman Park. In Schenectady, Riverside Park was replaced by Hillhurst Park in the Bellview neighborhood.

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College Prep Program Receives 3 Grants to Build Computer Center

For years, 15-LOVE has been working hard on formalizing our College Prep Program. It is now a four-year, comprehensive program that walks students through their interests and talents, down potential career avenues, onto college majors and finally through selecting colleges they would be comfortable attending. We are beside them every step of the way, particularly during their senior year through the application and financial aid processes.

By working with students, we realized an increased need for computers as the search process becomes more reliant on an internet connection and as more and more colleges put their applications on-line. 15-LOVE was fortunate to receive grants from the *Ronald McDonald House Charities*, *Citizens Bank* and the *USTA's Tennis & Education Foundation* to build a computer center and purchase additional books for our College Prep library. The computer center is currently a work in progress, and the students are getting excited. It includes five new Dell computers and a projector that will permit large group presentations. Look out for a grand opening event for the College Prep Computer Center in the near future!

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Instructors an Invaluable Resource To Success of Summer Program

It is difficult for me to express how proud I am to be a part of 15-LOVE and how proud I am of our instructors. 15-LOVE had one of the best summers we have ever had, with the highest number of participants in our 17-year history! This was a tough summer weather-wise with the rain in June, then the extreme heat in July and August, but our staff worked hard and found a way to keep the kids safe and interested. I received phone calls and emails to prove it. Out of the blue, I received phone call after phone call telling me how amazing our instructors were and how much these parents appreciated the program. A single mother called to say that she couldn't afford much for her kids, so that when she found out about 15-LOVE she was thrilled. But, she was mostly driven to call and thank us a few weeks into the program after seeing the positive attitude of the instructors, and seeing how her kids couldn't wait to go to class. "I can't believe how upbeat those instructors are - even at the end of the day, when they've been out in that hot sun for 6 hours. They are always positive and have so much energy!"

Those are the calls that keep the instructors positive, and those are the calls that keep us going. The one thing we always talk about during instructor training is that every kid should hear something positive at every class - even if they miss every single ball they swing at, give them constructive feedback, then compliment their shoes. And they did.

My sincere thanks to our instructors and to everyone who made this past summer such a wonderful success. I look forward to the winter sessions and the challenges of the year ahead.

With kind regards,



Amber Ablan Marino



"I am so proud of our instructors."



Instructors Onessa Williams (left) and Nathan Zach (right) with student Rachel F.

CONGRATULATIONS

The following Excellence Program participants hold **USTA Eastern Section/Northern Region** rankings in their age divisions: *Matt Benton* (4th), *Khadijah Peek* (11th), *Shalini Nagaraj* (15th) and *Sameer Modasra* (30th).

Also, 15-LOVE had three Champions and three Finalists at the July 4th **NETA Championships at Yale University**:
CHAMPIONS: Boys' 10 Doubles – Matt Benton/Jon Fields, Girls' 16 Doubles – Andrea Carrillo/Kadijah Peek and Boys' 16 Doubles – Vishnu Nagarag/Tim Dise. **FINALISTS:** Girls' 16 Singles – Irene Carache, Boys' 16 Doubles – Robert Carache/Kevin Sullivan and Girls' 16 Doubles – Kendra Williams/Devan DalCol.

KidsVantage

Stories Written by 15-LOVE Participants



Tommy N. attends USTA/NJTL Camp in San Diego

Over the years, 15-LOVE has had the opportunity to send Excellence Program participants to the USTA/National Junior Tennis League Leadership Camp each summer. A small group of children from around the nation is chosen by the NJTL to attend the camp for a week of tennis, leadership activities, talks, and fieldtrips. This year, our 15-LOVE 2006 "Participant of the Year" Tommy Nguyen, 13, earned a spot at the camp. We asked Tommy to reflect on his experience...

This summer I went to the NJTL leadership camp in San Diego, California. I stayed on the campus of San Diego State University with 40 different kids from all over the country. I was surprised at how diverse the camp was.

We spent a lot of our time on the courts at the university. We did lots of running, but it was mostly about

teamwork. If someone did something wrong, then the whole group of kids would have to do more running. This meant that the leader had to switch pace every couple seconds so that everyone could run as a group. One coach, Mr. Phibbs, was kind of hard on us on the court. He would make us repeat after him and if we all didn't do it, we kept running and doing it again until everyone did it. His biggest saying was "What you do affects other people". And it was true because if one person did something wrong it had an effect on everybody else. For example: Say that in the morning, somebody didn't wake up on time. The whole group would have to wait for that one person to get ready and we would all be late for breakfast. Once we did arrive late and the chefs had to stay later to cook us more food. This really did happen and that was when I found out he was right about what I did affecting other people.



Tommy (right) cooling off on the side of the court with fellow camper Matt (from Horizon City, TX) at the NJTL Leadership Camp in San Diego, CA.

The best part of the trip was meeting new friends and playing tennis with all of the kids in just one week. Time flew by very quickly because we went on many trips and tours. My favorite was Sea World (well... except the part where we had to wait an hour and a half to get on one ride). It was sad to leave after the camp was over but I still keep in touch with some kids, even though the camp was two months ago.

My Story – by Rumeal Lewis

Leadership Weekend Participant

High school students attend 15-LOVE's Leadership Weekend, held once per year, and perform a year long service project.

This year's 15-LOVE trip to Silver Bay for Leadership Weekend was my first, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Silver Bay itself was gorgeous, the weather was nice, and aside from a certain infestation of ladybugs, so was the cabin we stayed in. While we were there we did all sorts of activities, each subtly teaching us the intricacies of leadership. We wrote speeches, we collected items, and we taught others, each focusing on skills such as teamwork, listening, trust, and creativity. We were also responsible for taking care of ourselves. While cooking and cleaning for yourself is one thing, it becomes something else entirely when done for others. While we were learning about leadership, we also learned about each other. We learned about our opinions, thoughts, and backgrounds; our hobbies, our strengths, and our weaknesses. We learned through each other. Throughout the whole weekend, I never felt like I'd stop having fun. Making s'mores at the bonfire, playing kickball, hide and go seek, manhunt, Cranium, and scavenger hunts were all things I had a blast while doing. But, what I learned about being a leader, public speaking, and most of all working with others, are what I will never forget.

"While cooking and cleaning for yourself is one thing, it becomes something else entirely when done for others."

15-LOVE Alumni Q&A



Domingo Montes

Domingo Montes (pictured above, left) grew up in Albany's South End projects just down the hill from the Lincoln Park tennis courts. Now in his second year as both Men's and Women's Head Tennis Coach at his alma mater, Lincoln University, and a 1st grade teacher at the Erin Dudley Forbes Charter School in Oxford, Pennsylvania, Domingo spent some time with Program Director Ryan Artis who asked him to reflect on his experience growing up as a student in the 15-LOVE program.

How many years have you been involved in the 15-LOVE program?

DOMINGO: I started in 1992 and I have come back to coach most of the summers since graduating High School.

What did you study in College?

DOMINGO: I chose to pursue a double major, in Spanish and Elementary Education, because I wanted to become a teacher.

Take us back to your days in the 15-LOVE program... give us your most memorable moment.

DOMINGO: Winning the 14's Regional Team Tennis Championship with Onessa, Angela, and Tony. When I was at Albany High School, we also won the Big 10 Championship as a team twice... a lot of the top players on our team were 15-LOVE students. I also won a Big 10 doubles title with Nithin Raikir (another 15-LOVE participant.)

Do you have a favorite coach?

DOMINGO: I've had a lot of good ones but I would say one of my first coaches Pat... he looked out for me on and off the court.

What advice would you give to younger kids currently participating in 15-LOVE?

DOMINGO: Well if they want to be good tennis players, they should practice hard and often... and use the pointers that their coaches give them. Also, as 15-LOVE continues to grow, they should take advantage of all the opportunities that come along.

“...He looked out for me on and off the court.”

— Domingo Montes

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Fore Love and Money Golf and Tennis Outing Sets Record Numbers

Under sunny skies and warm breezes, 15-LOVE hosted its 14th Annual Fore Love and Money golf and tennis outing June 12th at the Schuyler Meadows Club. The event netted over \$65,000, the largest amount in the outing's history.

One hundred golfers and forty tennis players took to the links and courts. New to the event this year was the addition of a morning round of tennis which attracted twenty-four participants. An additional twenty players participated in an afternoon tennis session as well. The day was made complete with dinner under the tent and a silent auction, which alone raised over \$12,000. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in the event, especially our corporate sponsors:

Gold Level: *Fenimore Asset Management, Inc., Nigro Companies.*

Silver Level: *Stuyvesant Plaza, Albany Valve and Fitting, Times Union.*

Bronze Level: *Citizens Bank, CDPHP, First Niagara, Kasselmann Electric Co., Key Bank, Christopher J. Lyons, D.M.D., M&T Bank and Picotte Companies.*



*Pictured left to right in the CDPHP foursome:
Bill Cromie, Jim DiNapoli, Geoff Smith and Dave Buicko*



*All smiles - The team at the end of the
NETA Championships at Yale University*

Tourney at Yale Both Fun and Hard Work

Every year, 15-LOVE attends the NETA Championships at Yale University over the July 4th weekend. Participants cram into hotel rooms, spend all day at the tennis courts, and hang out with teammates and coaches. Here is one child's perspective:

When we went to Connecticut this year, I was scheduled to play 14s doubles, but I had no partner. My friend Andrea had to play in 16s because her birthday is before mine, but she also had no partner, so we decided I should move up to 16s so we could play together. Knowing that I was going to be playing 16 year olds was kind of scary and a rush for me because I didn't know what they were going to look like or play like. When we stepped on to the court and saw who we were playing we got frightened because these girls were bigger than us and looked tough. We started out winning, which surprised us, but then they tied it up. We got up in games again, and then they tied again. They were good and one had a powerful serve, but she wasn't consistent. When we finally got to the last point and won, we were so excited. We didn't think we were going to win, but when we changed our attitude, we did win. After we won, we wanted to pass out, but we had to give the score to the guy who was in charge, and take our picture with our trophies. It was one of the happiest days of my tennis career because I know I played hard and overcame challenges. – K. Peek

Volunteer Appeal

Are you looking for a rewarding, yet flexible volunteer opportunity? 15-LOVE needs volunteers for our Book Power Club. You would work one-on-one with various third grade students, reading, writing and doing some simple correlating art projects. The books, supplies and plan for the day are always laid out. You simply have to be there to guide the students along. The Book Power Club runs Wednesday afternoons at Arbor Hill Elementary School and Thursday afternoons at Giffen Elementary, both in Albany. You do not have to be present every week, but we do ask that you share your schedule with us so we can plan accordingly. Call 438-2039.

Capital Region Youth Tennis Foundation

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REVIEW

Heavenly Evening Spent Watching Venus

Thanks to the generosity of CDPHP and a donation by John J. Nigro, over 240 15-LOVE participants and their families enjoyed world class tennis amidst a sellout crowd at the CDPHP Tennis Complex in Schenectady's Central Park.

Said Nigro, "I was happy to donate as I saw this as a real opportunity to get a few children exposed to a world class athlete who started out less fortunate in life and yet who serves today as a role model for hard work and perseverance. It was a 'must do' for me."

Williams was applauded as she walked on to the court and received more than one "WE LOVE YOU VENUS" chant from the crowd. She waved, bounced up and down, and even danced when Will Smith's 1997 hit "Gettin' Jiggy Wit It" boomed over the stadium speakers. A great evening of fun and friends was had by all.



CHARITABLE GIVING

DID YOU KNOW... Currently, if you are over 70? years of age, you are eligible to make disbursements from your IRA directly to a charitable organization such as 15-LOVE tax free, up to \$100,000. As long as the distribution goes directly to the charitable organization, the money never becomes part of your taxable income. This is currently only in effect for 2006 – 2007. Contact a financial planner or IRA consultant for more information.