

# vantage point™

**15 LOVE**  
Giving Kids The Advantage

Capital Region Youth  
Tennis Foundation

**SPRING 2010**

Visit us online at  
[www.15LOVE.org](http://www.15LOVE.org)

## 15-LOVE GRADUATES

### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2010!

#### **Albany High School**

*Clinton Mathai* will be attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where he will major as a Physician-Scientist. Clinton will earn his B.S. along with his M.D. in RPI's Albany Medical College Program.

#### **Bethlehem High School**

*Christina Moloney* will be attending Florida Gulf Coast University majoring in Biology and Education.

*Francesca Moloney* will be attending Florida Gulf Coast University majoring in Engineering.

#### **Niskayuna High School**

*Sameer Modasra* is currently deciding between attending St. John's University, Hofstra University or the University of Vermont. Sameer would like to major in Foreign Languages.

#### **Watervliet High School**

*Djuan Blakemore* will be attending The College of Saint Rose majoring in Public Communications.

#### **The College of Saint Rose**

*Irene Carcache* earned her degree in Graphic Design.

#### **Union College**

*Kenny Williams* will be working with Teach for America in Chicago.

#### **Case Western Reserve University School of Law**

*Ryan Artis* received a job with Pearne & Gordon LLP in Ohio.

#### **Syracuse University College of Law**

*Sugam Langer* received a job with Harris Beach LLP in Albany.

## HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

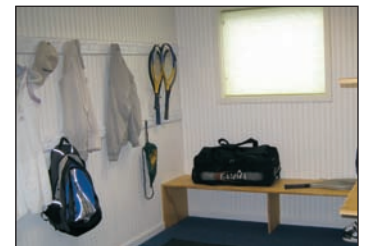


*Kids' Den in the basement of 15-LOVE*

Our new home at 785 Washington Avenue has given us, and especially our participants, a sense of pride and ownership. One of our many goals in purchasing the building was to transform it into a space that our kids could come to after school or before practice and catch up on school work, use the computer center or just take a break after a long day. Through the last few months we have been able, with ideas and suggestions from our kids, to transform areas in our new building into useable, active spaces.

The basement, or as we like to call it, the Kids' Den, was given a make over with the help and generosity of some local donors who donated TV's, Wii, couches and a ping pong table. The main purpose for the Kids' Den is for kids to have a space to hang out in and catch up with friends, but also to stay active during rainy or cold days. In the future, we're hoping to get cable to the TV's and host parties for the tennis Grand Slam finals.

On the main floor, we recently turned an unused space, just inside our back door, into a coat room for the kids. When they came in, coats, book bags and tennis rackets ended up all over the office and then misplaced by the time they left. The new space keeps them and the office organized.



*New coat and storage room*

As with any new home, it continues to be a work in progress, but we look forward to the numerous possibilities that our home has to bring to the Albany community and all of our 15-LOVE participants.

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## 15-LOVE Welcomes New Board Members

15-LOVE welcomes three new members to our Board of Directors.

**Philip Fields**, is the parent of three of our 15-LOVE participants, Josh (16), Rachel (14) and Jonathan (12). Philip and his family have been a big part of 15-LOVE for many years and we are thrilled to have a parent sit on our board and help advocate for our participants.

**Nuhar Jaleel** is the owner of the Pilates Principle studio in Latham. Nuhar has been a supporter of 15-LOVE for years. She was recently featured on News Channel 13 for donating the proceeds from all her classes the week of Mother's Day to 15-LOVE.

**Ronald Kohn** CPA and partner of Stulmaker Kohn & Richardson LLP joins our board and our Development and Investment Committee's. Ron will play an instrumental roll in helping 15-LOVE with our year end and capital campaigns.

We welcome and look forward to working with all of our new board members.

## From The Executive Director

My mother was (and still is) fairly strict about our family eating dinner together. As a kid, I just thought that was what every family did. Even when my brother and I were both playing basketball for months on end and heading to games / practices in different towns, it seemed like she found a way for us to eat as a family. As an adult, I quickly learned how important that was. Dinner, an essential part of the day, was where conversations about everything took place, where problems were solved, where schedules were formed, where a family came together. It worked. I am still close to my parents and I consider my brother to be one of my closest friends, even though he lives clear across the country. I talk to him about every other day, usually just "checking in."



As you may know from previous articles or speeches at our fundraiser, I consider 15-LOVE to be a family of its own. Our kids feel the same way. And now, we have a home for our family. If you haven't been here to visit, please know you are welcome and encouraged to drop by any time. The basement of our "home" is devoted to the kids – a place where they come when they get out of school and spend a lot of time on the weekends. There are donated couches, donated televisions, a donated Nintendo Wii, a donated ping-pong table, and most importantly, a donated kitchen. I like that everything is donated – it has a story to tell. It tells our kids how many people in our extended family care about them. Over Spring Break, we had about 30 kids in for a service day. Our tournament team kids are required to do at least 20 hours of service each year. Some of the kids prepared the invitations for Fore, Love & Money, some cleaned out the vans, some cleaned up around the outside of our home, and a group cooked lunch with me: tacos for 30. Probably the first time lettuce was chopped on the ping pong table, but it likely won't be the last. At lunchtime, we brought in extra chairs and squeezed in around the tables upstairs. We laughed and told stories. One of the younger kids walked around trying to make up nicknames for everyone. We planned out our schedule for practices for the rest of the week. We helped a few kids solve problems (in a fun kind of way). A meal in our new home was where this family came together.

Some of the kids in the program used to jokingly call me "mommy," but these days it's more like grandma. Now with 2 little ones of my own, I don't get to spend as much time with my 15-LOVE "kids", but their current instructors were once my "kids" and I get to tell stories about them when they were participants. The touchy part is that I still call the instructors and graduates my "kids" and some of them are over 30 – not much younger than me. I'm trying to stop, but it's a mindset – I will always be there to take care of them, in whatever way I can. My mother understands. And, luckily, my older 15-LOVE "kids" don't mind because they, too, understand. I see it in how they treat our current 15-LOVE participants. I am truly grateful to have this family as part of my life.

With kind regards,

Amber Marino



### *It's an Honor...*

- Board Member **John Nigro** and his company the Nigro Companies received the Tech Valley Non-Profit Business Council Corporate Partner Award from the Albany-Colonie Chamber of Commerce.
- 15-LOVE participant and Albany High School senior **Clinton Mathai** was selected by WNYT News Channel 13 and St. Peter's Hospital as one of the *13 Kids Who Care* for his endless volunteer work and dedication to 15-LOVE.

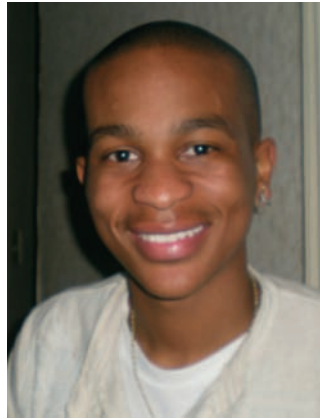
# KidsVantage

Stories Written by 15-LOVE Participants



## A Different Perspective

By Djuan Blakemore, Age 17, Watervliet, NY



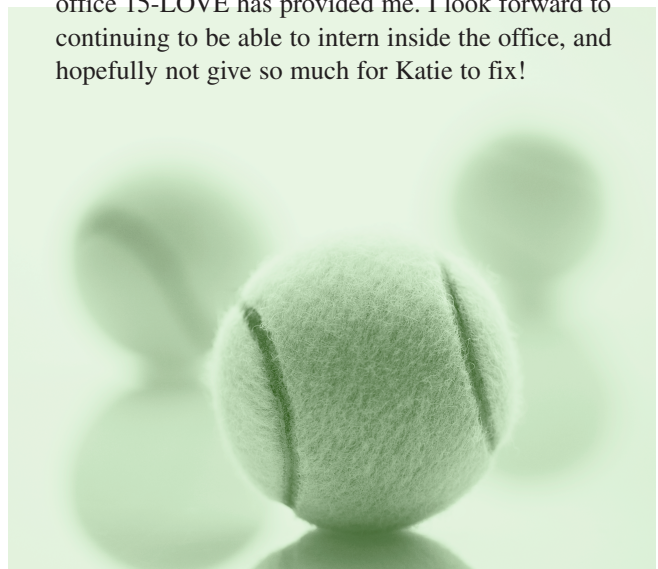
**E**xcruciating ninety degree weather, dozens of kids running around the court, combined with those few who just don't want to listen. All these things instructors have to deal with on a daily basis, and no matter how much we love our job, at times, it could get extremely frustrating.

The whole time I would think to myself, "What are the people in the office doing?" In my mind they had the easiest job in the world. While I have to stay in the sun all day and listen to eight year olds complain about exhaustion after approximately three minutes of exercise, everyone in the office just sat behind the computer and asked for donations; sounds easy enough to me. Well, after having the opportunity to become an intern at the office and assist our Director of Development, Katie Genovese with public relations and daily office duties, I realized my preconceived feelings were wrong.

From the moment I started work in the office I realized it's not what I thought it was. Many things had to happen everyday that I was not previously aware of. For instance, no one just sat behind the desk and asked for donations, it was a lot more hands on work than that. Often I would see Amber Marino dealing with upset parents, staff that were slacking, all while standing on one foot and vacuuming the floor at the same time. Ok, that last part might have been a hyperbole, but you get the idea. Also, Katie would be writing four different business letters, answering the always ringing telephone, trying to figure out ways to promote 15-LOVE, all while fixing the mistakes I made. Fixing whatever mistakes I made alone is definitely enough work for one person to handle.

With all the commotion and pandemonium going on almost routinely, I had to somehow fit in and gain all of the possible experience in public relations that I could. At first I had no idea what I was doing or where to start, but I knew that I wanted to help make 15-LOVE become famous! As an intern I started with the minor things, such as making photocopies and sending e-mails. However, it took little time for me to jump into hands on work. I was able to assist Katie and Amber with the daily projects that were brought up. I was able to offer my ideas for new and exciting promotional items that 15-LOVE could use, as well as, researching different ways that we could promote 15-LOVE. However, my favorite thing that I have had the pleasure of doing during my internship is helping with the spring newsletter. I was able to offer ideas of what should go inside, as well as, being able to interview a 15-LOVE alumni, an interview which made it inside of the newsletter!

All in all, even if you work in an air-conditioned office all day, the heat gets magnified when the intensity of work goes up because the pressure is on. This experience has made me realize that every employee at 15-LOVE plays a vital and important role. Whether you are getting screamed at by angry parents because somehow it is your fault their child cannot make contact with the tennis ball, or you're sitting in a board meeting; every part is equally challenging, but also equally rewarding. At the end of the day I would choose to play any role that I had to. I enjoy being able to teach the sport of tennis along with interning inside the office 15-LOVE has provided me. I look forward to continuing to be able to intern inside the office, and hopefully not give so much for Katie to fix!



# 15-LOVE Alumni Q&A



## NINO ALIVODIC

Nino Alivodic is currently an Auditor at PricewaterhouseCoopers in Albany, NY

### *What brought you to 15-LOVE?*

**NINO:** When I moved to Arbor Hill in 1996 (when I came to America) I joined 15-LOVE to make friends and just to have something to do during the summer. It quickly became a big part of my life.

### *How have you changed as a person since being part of 15-LOVE?*

**NINO:** I have grown up both personally and professionally. I can measure my maturity in life through my tennis game when I play. I learned to be patient, accept mistakes and learn from them instead of getting angry and losing it. Most importantly, I had a chance to be a part of something that is much bigger than myself and I absolutely loved every minute of it.

### *How have the lessons you've learned while being at 15-LOVE changed your perspective on things either from what you wanted to be or where you were going to college?*

**NINO:** Initially I didn't want to go to college. While I was at 15-LOVE I made many friends who are my peers and my coaches, and those people have inspired me to go on and get a college degree, which I ended up earning from Siena College. That degree helped me get my first job.

### *What is your fondest memory of 15-LOVE?*

**NINO:** My last year of full-time coaching and the last day I taught the adult class, and seeing the participants with tears in their eyes and saying how they witnessed me growing up through my years as a coach for them and their kids. That stuck with me because I realized how important we are as coaches to our participants and that we are very much appreciated, even though it may not seem like that all the time.

### *What advice would you give a young kid trying to find their way and succeed?*

**NINO:** Respect yourself and everyone around you. Always be positive and take every challenge as a learning experience.

### *Of all the lessons you've learned at 15-LOVE which one do you use in your every day life?*

**NINO:** Hard work really does pay off. You have to be persistent, open to ideas and ready to learn. Everyday I come to work, I take my experience as an instructor and player with me and I never forget the lessons I learned on and off the court at 15-LOVE.

### *Has there been a particular person at 15-LOVE who you felt really helped or changed you to the person you are today?*

**NINO:** There hasn't been just one particular person that has done that for me. I think that's what makes 15-LOVE so special. Everyone chips in to help each other. We work as a team and through my years as a participant and coach I learned the importance of teamwork. At my current job, it's all about teamwork and with everything I've learned from 15-LOVE I feel comfortable to travel and work in teams for a living.

### *Favorite quote that you've heard from a 15-LOVE instructor, board member or staff person*

**NINO:** A profound quote from one of the people I admire the most at 15-LOVE, the current Program Director and former participant Domingo Montes, "When you get your first real paycheck, you're buying me dinner."

## 15-LOVE Participants Cheer on the Siena Saints



Board Member John Nigro stands with 15-LOVE participants after the Siena game



15-LOVE participants pose with Siena senior Ronald Moore



Over 20 15-LOVE participants were treated to delicious pizza from Inferno's and a Siena basketball game at the Times Union Center on January 9. The 15-LOVE participants cheered on the Siena Saints as they beat Niagara University 83-65.

Thanks to the Siena College Athletic Department, all 15-LOVE participants were given free Siena book bags, had the opportunity to meet powerhouse senior guard Ronald Moore and have their picture taken and book bags autographed.

## — Give A Gift Today —

No matter how small or large, every gift counts!

Simply fill out and mail the coupon below to 15-LOVE at: 785 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12206

- Fifteen-LOVE \$15.00
- Thirty-LOVE \$30.00
- Forty-LOVE \$40.00
- Game \$60.00
- Set \$80.00
- Match \$100.00

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Capital Region Youth  
Tennis Foundation



**If you are interested in any of the items below, please check the box.**

- I would like more information about becoming a 15-LOVE mentor or tutor (*no tennis skills needed*)
- I would be interested in volunteering for the Book Power Club
- I'm interested in sponsoring an event for the 15-LOVE participants



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Katie Genovese, Development Director  
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## SAVE THE DATE

### Monday June 14, 2010

Schuyler Meadows Club  
Loudonville, NY

FORE LOVE



MONEY

*A golf and tennis outing to benefit the*

### **15-LOVE Program**

of the

### **Capital Region Youth Tennis Foundation, Inc.**

*Lunch, Tennis, Golf, Dinner, Silent Auction and more...*

For sponsorship information or more details,  
call the 15-LOVE office at 438-2039.