

THE BRONX BOAST

A Publication of CitySquash, Inc.

An Urban Youth Enrichment Program

Fall/Winter 2005

BOARDING SCHOOL!



Jose Alvarez, Edgardo Gonzalez and Tanesha Jackson hung out on the steps of Edgardo's apartment building before heading off to the Canterbury School, the Salisbury School and the Hill School, respectively.

High School Scholarships Cap CitySquash's Successful Third Season

By Henry Porter

Bronx, NY – Three years after launching with an enrollment of sixteen middle school students, CitySquash began its fourth season a considerably larger and more enriching urban youth organization, with more activities for its team members, a high school program for its middle school graduates—extending the program experience from three to seven years—and an independent school placement program for the most academically oriented of its now fifty-five Bronx participants.

Of the ten team members of CitySquash's inaugural class who graduated from the middle school program in June, three were awarded scholarships to boarding schools. Together these scholarships amount to over \$300,000 in financial aid over four years. Edgardo Gonzalez is now a student at Salisbury School in Salisbury, Connecticut; Tanesha Jackson attends the Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania; and Jose Alvarez is a "third former" at the Canterbury School in New Milford, Connecticut.

Private school is not for all CitySquash team members, and for the ninth graders who will remain in the Bronx this fall, the program welcomes them to continue with CitySquash through high school. This was made possible by the generosity of Fordham University, which has donated additional use of its classrooms and squash courts. CitySquash's academic year enrollment now includes students from the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade. Each summer an additional fifteen children participate in CitySquash's five week day camp.

While CitySquash has increased in size, the quality of its programming has improved. In 2004-2005, team members earned more academic scholarships, performed more community service, spent more hours on the practice courts, and competed in more tournaments than ever before. Freddy

Hernandez, Diana Edwards and Jesse Pacheco studied furiously for five weeks in the summer as part of the selective A.G. Oliver Program, an organization that helps place black and Latino students in independent high schools. Jennifer Arboleda and Prince Mensah hit the books in July at Rye Country Day School's ACTION Program in Rye, New York. Katrina Intal and Danel Gimenez sharpened their writing skills for three weeks at the Kent School Writer's Camp in Kent, Connecticut.

While the world and all that is has to offer continues to expand for CitySquashers, it is also getting smaller. Through dozens of tournaments, team trips and summer camps, CitySquashers covered a good part of the East Coast and then some over the course of the 2004-2005 season: Boston, Providence, Hartford, New Haven, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, as well as Cincinnati. Willie Gonzalez and Bilal Abdulkader even traveled to London, England for a two-week squash camp. Colleges visited during the season include Dartmouth, Harvard, Yale, Northeastern, Princeton, Bowdoin, the University of Pennsylvania and Williams. CitySquashers also spent time at top prep schools such as Greenwich Academy, Rye Country Day, Pomfret, St. George's, Westminster, Loomis Chafee, Canterbury, Millbrook, Avon Old Farms, and Lawrenceville.

On the community service front, team members set a new standard for themselves, collectively volunteering more than 500 hours of their time to such places as the Belmont Public Library, Middle School 45, the Food Bank of New York City, a local homeless shelter, and their own neighborhood streets for a morning of trash pick-up. With the help of more than fifty generous individuals and families who sponsored team members to walk in the annual 10K AIDS Walk New York, CitySquashers raised more than \$3,000 to contribute to the fight against AIDS.

The season was "absolutely perfect," according to Alija Hogans, a seventh grader who recently began his second year in the program. "I love the people. I love the game. I don't ever want to quit CitySquash!"

Breaking Through to the Next Level

CitySquashers Bring Home More Titles

By Jack Donohue

Bronx, NY – "CitySquash is no longer just a positive force in the lives of its participants," commented one squash enthusiast at the Future Stars Nationals at Yale University in April. "The program is starting to have a real presence in competitive junior squash." It is, indeed.

Prior to the sixth grade, most CitySquashers had never even held a racket of any sort. In the past, when the time came each year for the new class of team members to play their first tournament, the disparity between their level of play and that of their opponents was usually substantial. It wasn't uncommon for CitySquash to enter a dozen or so team members in one tournament, and for them all to be knocked out in the early rounds.

While no CitySquasher has yet to win an open tournament or be ranked in the top ten nationally, CitySquashers demonstrated soon into the 2004-2005 season that they were no longer beginners. Willie Gonzalez got the year off with a bang in October when he won the U13 division of the Bronxville Future Stars, making him the first CitySquasher to win a non-urban tournament. Prince Mensah followed suit in November with a title at the Sportsplex Future Stars in Stamford, Connecticut, and two months later he finished fifth at the Greenwich Junior Open.

At the Cincinnati Invitational, Ary Gimenez finished fifth in the U15 boys' division and Maylin Colon was the finalist in the U15 girls' draw. Jesse Pacheco routinely found herself deep into the draw. She placed fourth in the U13 division of the National Future Stars and ended the year ranked #35 in the country. Prince and Jesse were the only players from any of the country's urban programs to attend the U.S. Closed Nationals, an event that allows only thirty-two entrants in each division. At the U.S. Junior Open, Prince defeated the #8 ranked player in the country. His year-end national ranking was #32 and his season high ranking was #11.

CitySquashers also enjoyed success in the urban ranks. At the Urban Team Nationals at the SquashBusters facility in Boston, CitySquash won the U13 girls' division and the U15 boys' division without dropping a match in the final. In the only other divisions in which

CitySquash had teams, the Bronx-based program narrowly missed capturing titles. The U13 boys' and the U15 girls' teams both lost 3-2 heartbreakers to SquashBusters and StreetSquash, respectively. At the Urban Individual Nationals at the Groton School in Massachusetts, CitySquash was unable to win the Under 15 boys' draw, due to the dominant play of StreetSquash's talented David Nash, but it did field all three of the other semifinalists in Willie Gonzalez, Prince Mensah and Ary Gimenez. In the Under 13's, Chris Fernandez defeated SquashBuster Shekele Scott in four games to win the division. In the U13 girls' draw, it was an all CitySquash final, with Jesse Pacheco victorious over classmate Mirsada Bolic.

Determined to keep improving, CitySquashers did not spend the summer resting on their laurels. Almost all took part in CitySquash's day camp at Fordham University in July. Nineteen attended sleep-away squash camps, including Universal Squash, Holleran Squash Camp, Talbot Academy, Loomis Chafee, Princeton Training Center, Bowdoin College and Dartmouth College. Over the course of the entire summer, ten attended the Personal Program at Westchester Squash, an intensive day camp in Mamaroneck, New York. Four spent a weekend working with Jack Wyant, the coach of the varsity women's team at the University of Pennsylvania. Three students spent more than a week at the home of Jon and Cindy Calder in Essex, Massachusetts, training under the direction of KidzSquash director Ben Oliner. Others traveled Upstate to the home of David Armstrong and Ana Guerrero. The University Club, St. Luke's School, Greenwich Academy, the Heights Casino, the Harvard Club, and the New York Sports Club also opened their courts to CitySquashers during the summer.

While CitySquashers establish themselves more and more each year as capable players, they will be joined every fall by a new crop of sixth grade teammates who will be brand new to the sport like they once were. Seetreon Torres, a seventh grader fresh off his first year in the program, had encouraging words for his younger teammates. "Squash is a great sport," he explained. "It makes you fit. Our coaches are awesome. Good sportsmanship is very important. And once you get the hang of it at tournaments, it won't be frustrating."

LED BY BRIGGS CUP,
FUNDRAISERS
GIVE CITYSQUASH
BOOST

By Jonathon Birch

Rye, NY – Helping CitySquash meet its growing financial needs—the program has expanded every year since its launch—four separate fundraisers were organized during the 2004-2005 season to support the youth organization. The most financially successful was the Briggs Cup, the biannual professional doubles tournament named in honor of CitySquash board member Peter Briggs. Set at the Apawamis Club in Rye, New York, where Briggs is the head racquets professional, the event drew squash enthusiasts with six days of world-class competition in early February and raised more than \$100,000 for CitySquash. Behind the event's remarkable success were Briggs, who ran the tournament, co-directors Steve Mandel and Peer Pedersen, and the more than seventy-five families, businesses and foundations that generously supported the event. Other partner clubs were the Field Club of Greenwich and the Round Hill Club, both of Greenwich, Connecticut, and the Union Club in Manhattan.

The 2nd Annual CitySquash Bash was held on Thursday, June 9 at Guastavino's, a restaurant built into the 59th Street Bridge that is part-owned by squash player David Emil. Attended by 379 guests, the Bash was made possible by event co-chairpersons Ben Loehnen, Peter Wertheim, Maja Byrnes, Trey

Kuppin and Blair Endresen, the event's generous patrons, silent auction donors, and the thirty-three volunteers who served on the organizing committee.

CitySquash benefited from two new fundraisers as well. Mary Kim Brewster and Coco Kim of Brooklyn teamed up with their daughters, Katy and Elizabeth respectively, and hosted a jewelry trunk show for friends and family on May 1. The event was held at the Brewster's home and featured jewelry presented by S'Bejeweled, a company run by Sarah Brokaw.

Last, the Tournament of Champions, of which CitySquash is an official charity along with StreetSquash, held a raffle to support CitySquash and StreetSquash. Organized by Beth Rasin, the ToC's director of marketing, the raffle drew upon the support of hundreds of area squash players and helped raise awareness as well as much-appreciated dollars for the worthy programs.

In addition to raising money, the fundraisers helped spread the word about CitySquash and introduced the young program to a wide swath of interested people. According to CitySquash's executive director, Tim Wyant, "It is in no small part because of these events and the many hundreds of people who supported them that CitySquash's future is bright."



Letters from Summer Camp

CitySquash, Inc.

An Urban Youth Enrichment Program

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Needs Your Help!

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To learn more about how you can help our team members thrive and our program grow, please contact Tim Wyant at 718-220-7400 or tim@citysquash.org.

Reaching for the Sky

To the Editor:

I had the most wonderful experience of my lifetime on Outward Bound! I learned valuable lessons and I made new friends. When I first arrived at the camp base, I was amazed to see so much beauty in the mountains, trees, rivers, and other beautiful things that Mother Nature had to share.

Outward Bound taught us to make our own decisions and then take the course into our own control. I will admit that it was not easy work hiking, canoeing, and rock climbing, but it was fun at the same time doing these activities.

In the end, we were rewarded with dinner and rest for our hard work throughout the day. My favorite part of the course was when we did the rock climbing part because when I made it to the top, I felt so proud that I had pushed myself as hard as I could to make it to the top. I was glad when graduation came because I thought of all the people I would have made proud by making it through the course without being sent home.

Bogar Avila, 9th Grade

Challenging the Mind

To the Editor:

I really enjoyed participating in the Kent School Writer's Camp. Going to Kent was the best experience of my summer. Before Kent, I had never been away from home for so long (three weeks), but the camp made it easy for me to feel comfortable and at home. I really hope that I can participate next year.

Katrina Intal, 8th Grade

To the Editor:

I had a good summer. I spent most of July going to the ACTION Program at Rye Country Day School. I had a great experience up there. We had classes such as Drama, Math, ELA, Humanities, Science and Art. The class I enjoyed the most was Humanities because we learned about how people who are or were privileged used their resources to help make a big impact on other people. I also spent some of my summer at Westchester Squash working as hard as I could to improve my racquet skills, fitness and movement. I went up to another squash camp at Dartmouth where I had a wonderful time. Overall, I had a smashing summer.

Prince Mensah, 8th Grade

To the Editor:

I'm really glad I had the opportunity to be a part of the A.G. Oliver Program. I had an awesome time during the five weeks. I met a lot of cool people and made some friends. I hope I did well enough to stay in the program and continue next year.

Jesse Pacheco, 8th Grade

Squash Camp, Sleep-Away Style

To the Editor:

What I did this summer was a lot of fun. I went to squash camp at Bowdoin, and I stayed for almost two weeks in Massachusetts with a great family called the Calders. I spent great time with my family and enjoyed the summer heat.

Alija Hogans, 7th Grade

To the Editor:

My favorite part about the summer was when I was given the opportunity to go to Princeton. Mirsada, Nina and I went for six days. On Wednesday afternoon, there was a water bug in the dorm. Mirsada and Nina were screaming and made the boys come out. I then slapped the bug with my slipper, while Mirsada was saying, "Watch it! It will bite you!" That moment was hilarious.

Angie Morales, 8th Grade

To the Editor:

My favorite part of CitySquash this year was when I went to Princeton camp. I had a ton of fun. I played in a tournament and played through a match when I was injured. I wanted to give up but I didn't. I came out winning and had fun.

Mirsada Bolic, 8th Grade

To the Editor:

The Holleran Squash Camp at Lawrenceville was a lot of fun. I made a ton of new friends. Since I had never been to a squash camp before, I was a little nervous about going, but thanks to Demer and the other coaches I felt very comfortable there. It was a great experience for me. Even though I took a lot of work, practice and running, it was still a lot of fun.

Jennifer Arboleda, 8th Grade

To the Editor:

I did three weeks at Westchester squash camp this summer. I worked with Richard, Ahmed, Mike and Lester. We worked on forehand, backhand, cross court drops, straight drops, volleys, footwork. Lunch was extraordinary (Subway: Eat Fresh!).

I also did one week of squash camp at Williams. The funniest thing we did was talk to the volleyball girls. We had a tournament. We saw a lot of squash footage on tape. Nick Taylor was a great coach. Zafi was a funny guy.

And last, I spent one week at the home of the Calder Family, which is near the beach in Massachusetts. We ate extraordinary meals: steak, macaroni and cheese, granola bars, cookies and milk. We rode bikes and I fell into the mud. My favorite part was playing with the little kids.

Anneudy Saldana, 8th Grade

CitySquash Camp at Fordham

To the Editor:

At CitySquash summer camp I practiced my backhand a lot. My serves are a little too soft, but I am improving a lot. Sarah helped me improve a lot and Brian let me play a lot of squash.

Michael Kelly, 3rd Grade

To the Editor:

I liked CitySquash's summer camp this year because of mostly everything. I liked the Jeopardy game we played in academics because of the excitement. Also, the trips that we took were great. The one trip I liked the most was to Greenwich. I liked it because when we played squash we had a lot of time to play. The best part of CitySquash is playing the sport. I think I've gotten better at squash. It's a great sport. My favorite shot is the drop shot.

Johnathon Guzman, 8th Grade

To the Editor:

In CitySquash, I liked everything. I liked academics because I didn't know much before about New York City. Our teacher Sarah taught us about the important monuments around New York. I like to play squash. Some people say, "your racquet is your best friend in squash." I enjoyed the trips.

Myriam Kelly, 8th Grade

To the Editor:

My favorite part of CitySquash camp was that we went to places and played squash on Thursdays for field trips. I had a lot of fun and kept hitting the ball. Sometimes, I even missed, but it was still fun. We played jeopardy every Wednesday. If we won at Jeopardy, we won prizes.

Maria Avila, 6th Grade

To the Editor:

When I started CitySquash's summer camp I didn't really know how to play squash. I was really nervous. I was good at the forehand but not the backhand. After I started the program I got better and I improved my backhand. I thought squash was so great that I told my brother and he joined the summer camp, too.

Alejandra Flores, 6th Grade

To the Editor:

It was fun in CitySquash. Sometimes you played games like King/Queen of the Court. Squash was fun and it was probably the best sport I've ever played. You'll like it, too. You might even get so used to squash that you will never shut up about it. Academics was fun too because we played Jeopardy. The team that won got a prize, so it was important to study good and hard if you wanted to win. You had to do your homework if you wanted extra points for your team. You have to do your best if you want to stay in squash.

Joshua Guzman, 6th Grade

PROGRAM EDITORIAL

In Boarding School, An Unexpected Opportunity

March 10, 2005 was a special day for CitySquash. On that Tuesday, eighth grader Tanesha Jackson, a member of our inaugural class, was awarded a full scholarship to the Hill School, a boarding school in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Tanesha found out in the morning when she snuck into the library to log on to her applicant account through Hill's website.

When Sarah Petrie, our director of academics, happened to see her at Middle School 45 a little while later, Tanesha sprinted down the hall to hug her, crying tears of joy. Tanesha's mom, Maria Vasquez, immediately broke down in tears when she learned the news over the phone. "Thank you, God," she said over and over, "thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you."

The opportunity to go to Hill will change Tanesha's life forever. An African-American, Tanesha grew up on 161st Street in the Bronx, some forty blocks from Middle School 45, in one of the toughest parts of New York City. When it was time for her to enter sixth grade, her mom fought to get her into M.S. 45, which was attractive because of its strong chess program. Maria managed to enroll her youngest of seven into M.S. 45, but as fate would have it, Tanesha didn't stay on the chess team for long.

Tanesha was one of the hundreds of sixth graders who we invited to try out for CitySquash's inaugural class in the fall of September 2002. She not only made the team; she quickly established herself as one of our best players and went on to win her division of the Urban Individual Nationals two years in a row. She is bright, tenacious, energetic, and determined to succeed. Just as she is fortunate that Hill has given her this opportunity, Hill is fortunate, too.

She will excel there and contribute greatly to the school.

Of course, it is not CitySquash's mission to place all of our team members in private high schools. It's not an experience suited for, or even desired by, every student. Yet one reason Tanesha's scholarship excited everyone at the program is that we were confident that Tanesha would not be the last CitySquasher to have the opportunity to attend a great high school such as Hill.

Indeed, less than a month later, Jose Alvarez, another CitySquash eighth grader, received a full scholarship to Canterbury, a boarding school in New Milford, Connecticut. And not long after that, Edgardo Gonzalez won a scholarship to attend Salisbury School in Salisbury, CT. Word has spread among private schools that our team members are talented athletes and smart, hardworking students. A number of those schools have expressed an interest in CitySquash becoming a feeder program for them.

We're working hard to make that happen, and so are our team members. This past summer, many CitySquashers participated in intensive academic programs like the A.G. Oliver Program, Rye Country Day School's ACTION Program and the Kent School's Summer Writing Program. They are doing everything they can to challenge themselves academically and put themselves in a good position for the high school application process.

When CitySquash was launched more than three years ago, helping our team members strive to attend independent schools seemed a lofty, perhaps unrealistic goal. We are proud and grateful that it is no longer.



Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrion Jr. and Glen Alleyne, the Borough President's Office Deputy of Youth Services, visited a practice at Fordham University in February.

Thank You and Welcome

CitySquash gratefully acknowledges Sarah Petrie and Louisa Hall for their dedicated service to the organization. Sarah, who joined CitySquash in the fall of 2003 as the director of academics, is exploring graduate school studies and full-time teaching positions. Louisa, who joined CitySquash in the fall of 2004 to launch the summer and high school placement program, is pursuing a career in medicine.

CitySquash warmly welcomes to the staff Terence Li, a 2004 graduate of Yale College who coaches squash and runs CitySquash's development efforts and mentoring program; Courtney Knowlton, a 2004 graduate of Amherst College who manages CitySquash's placement program and assists with the academic program; and Becky Cohen, a 2003 graduate of New York University who runs the academic program.



Maria Vasquez and her daughter Tanesha Jackson the week before Tanesha left the Bronx to begin her first year at the Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania.



Katrina Intal and Angie Morales goof around while painting the bench at the Belmont Community Park.

My Daughter's Special Journey

By Maria Vasquez

Bronx, NY – It was the summer of 2002 and I knew I had to find a good middle school for Tanesha, one that had a strong chess program. At P.S. 73, Tanesha had excelled in competitive chess since second grade. She and her twin brother, Tyrell, had won numerous trophies, ribbons and awards, and they competed nationally. So when they graduated from grade school, I was all in a panic. Where do we go from here?

I grabbed the Yellow Pages and went through each school district. When I called around to different middle schools, I had two questions. Does your school have a chess program? And if so, does your chess club compete in Nationals? Some schools said yes to the first question, but no to the second. That wasn't good enough. The school had to have a chess club that attended the Nationals every year. Middle School 45 did. But I had to scheme and sell my children to get them into the school. You see, M.S. 45 is out of my school zone. We live by Yankee Stadium, and M.S. 45 is located off of Fordham Road about three miles away. I had to use other people's address just so they could get into M.S. 45. Once they were in, I had to tell them every day not to let anyone know where they really lived.

It wasn't simple, but everything seemed to be falling into place. The chess club started and the school year seemed to be going smoothly. Then Tanesha comes flying in one afternoon after school and asks, "Mom, can I try out for CitySquash please?" And if she were to be chosen, of course, she couldn't stay with chess. So I said, "What the #\$\$* is squash?" She tried to explain but all I kept imagining was a vegetable!

2004-2005 Awards

CitySquasher of the Year: Jesse Pacheco

Academic Excellence:

Diana Edwards and Katrina Intal

Most Improved Student: Jennifer Arboleda

Community Service: Dashawn Genoval

Most Valuable Player: Prince Mensah

Most Improved Player: Freddy Hernandez

Volunteer of the Year: Ben Mandel

She pleaded so much that I eventually decided to let her try out. I thought she would see that she didn't really want to leave chess for squash. Little did I know. She made the team and decided to join. I was sad, but I knew that when Tanesha makes up her mind, there's no changing it.

Tanesha is my last child, my seventh, and she made sure I didn't have any more after her. She was so active in the womb that she tied a knot in her umbilical cord and I had to have a C-section. Every time I had a contraction, Tanesha would press against that knot and her heart rate would drop. The doctors told me they had to take Tyrell and Tanesha out because Tanesha was in distress.

To make a long story short, Tyrell weighed 7.5lbs and Tanesha was amazingly a perfectly healthy 3lbs 14oz baby. She was so healthy that she was able to come home before she weighed the mandatory 5lbs. I was a wreck, but Tanesha was here. All of my other children were a wiz to have—no problem. I'd have them and three days later I was home cooking for my family. Tanesha knocked me out for about a month.

So Tanesha is a strong girl, and she decided on her own to join CitySquash. Soon she came home with these funny looking shoes, funny looking racket, and funny looking goggles. She loved it, and I must admit that CitySquash turned out to be the best thing to ever happen to her. Tim, Brian, Sarah and Louisa are the best. I often asked them, "Do you have a life other than CitySquash?" Tanesha and her friends on the team are a handful, but the CitySquash staff loves them.

The program was a mixture of academics, athletics and exposure to a world we didn't know we could be a part of. I mean, we as a family were exposed to college life. Some of the tournaments were at Ivy League universities and elite boarding schools. We even spent one weekend at the home of a Harvard professor on the university's campus. Through CitySquash's tutoring help and the expectations CitySquash had for Tanesha, her grades improved 100%. In seventh grade, she was promoted to Giordano Prep, the most competitive and challenging mini school at M.S. 45.

She loved the squash. That's all she thought about. She dreamed and ate squash. She would beat that ball to death. And to think—a little ball with so little air. When I tried to bounce it on the floor, it barely came up. I told her, "The ball is dead, Tanesha—you've got to get another one." I was wrong again. The first time I saw her play was in Boston. I thought she was going to be nervous, but she did a really good job. And she kept improving. She ended up playing #1 on her team for all three years of middle school, and she won the Urban Nationals twice. She also helped her team win the Urban Team Nationals two years ago in Boston.

At the beginning of eighth grade, CitySquash asked us if Tanesha would be interested in applying to boarding schools. We jumped at the chance. She visited schools like Loomis Chaffee, Canterbury, Hill and Westminster, and Louisa helped her with the application process. She took her to the interviews and that experience alone was great for her. The campuses were beautiful.

And then one day in March, we found out that Tanesha got into the Hill School. I almost passed out. I was so grateful. I couldn't stop calling people in my family and telling them the good news. The emotions were too much. Tanesha was especially excited about Hill because she felt comfortable with Dana Perry-Hunter, who had interviewed her. Ms. Hunter made her feel she could make it at Hill and fit in there. Hill offered Tanesha a full scholarship. They saw the potential in my child. I saw it all along, but CitySquash made it possible. For that, I thank CitySquash—for plucking my child out of the city, the inner-city, and giving her this magnificent chance in life.

Maria Vasquez, a teacher's aid at Public School 152, regularly attends CitySquash events and can be seen in the Bronx proudly wearing her new Hill School sweatshirt.

STRIVING TO DO BETTER

By Ary Gimenez

Bronx, NY – CitySquash has changed my life. When I started sixth grade I was this little chubby kid from Argentina who didn't know much English. In the first

month of school, Tim came to my classroom and told us about CitySquash. I thought it was pretty cool. I wasn't on any teams at that time and squash caught my attention. Tim invited me to the tryouts and I thought that this might be a good opportunity. I worked hard at the tryout, and after Tim called me to tell me that I made the team, I was really happy.

I was excited to be on the team and made good friends. I trained hard and I was able to become #1 on the team. It was hard staying #1 because I had Prince as competition. He is like Superman. The fact that I was good at squash made me feel good and it made me train even harder.

The things I liked the most were the trips. We got to meet new people and see new places. One of my favorite trips was when we went to the Empire State Building. Another favorite was going up to the Groton School in Massachusetts for the Urban Individual Nationals. All the urban teams got together and had fun playing squash and hanging out with each other. The whole year we trained really hard, and this tournament was a good way to see how much we had improved.

But the problem was that I was focusing too much on squash instead of school. Before I started the program, my grades weren't very good, and they had not gotten better. This past year I was suspended from the team by CitySquash because of my bad grades and my

“I began to realize that I really had to focus on school.

I started studying every day and doing all of my homework.”

mom made me cut my hair, too. I wasn't very happy. Neither were my coaches or my mom. When Tim had a meeting with me, he said, "Ary, do you know how you love to play squash? You should use the passion that you put into squash into your schoolwork.”

But the thing that motivated me the most was when he said, "We all believe in you and we think that you can do better." I began to realize that I really had to focus on school. I started studying every day and doing all of my homework. I finished the eighth grade with an 83.1% average. My coaches were amazed by what I had accomplished. I was pretty amazed myself.

Just a few weeks after I got my report card, I went to squash camp at Williams College with my teammate Anneudy. I worked really hard all week and we had lots of fun. On the last day, the head coach, Zafi, saw me play a match with this good player, and even though I lost he said I could be a really good player, and he invited me to train in Williamstown during the year one weekend each month. I think this is a great opportunity for me and I'm going to take it. I think I've got what it takes to become a great player.

Zafi also said that if I could get my grades up even higher, I might be able to go to a good college like Williams. This really inspired me. I am now in ninth grade, and I know that I have to keep my focus on school. It's going to take a lot of hard work and discipline.

Ary Gimenez, a member of CitySquash's inaugural class of team members, regularly visits the CitySquash office during his free time to do home work and check e-mail.

Program PROFILE

Mission: To provide children from economically disadvantaged households with a nurturing and structured team environment to help them fulfill their academic, athletic and personal potential

Activities: Academic tutoring, squash instruction and competition, mentoring, travel, high school placement and community service

Founder: Sanford M. Schwartz

Founded: 2001

Home Base: Fordham University

Facility Partners: Westchester Squash, Greenwich Academy, Concordia College, and the Lutheran Church and Chapel School

2005-2006 Student Enrollment: 55
Team Members: 40
Summer Campers: 15

Staff: 5

2005-2006 Budget: \$300,000

CitySquash thanks the people and organizations that made our third year a success.

Fundraising Year: September 1, 2004 – August 31, 2005 If you note that any names below are missing or misspelled, please contact us at info@citysquash.org or 718-220-7400.

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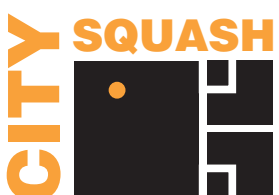
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