



East Boston site leader Drew Hendrickson and students who attended the summer program at Constitution Beach

East Boston Welcomes Tenacity

Drew Hendrickson, Site Coordinator

Offering more proof that Tenacity's borders continue to expand, the intensive **Summer Tennis & Reading Program** recently made an impact across the tunnel in East Boston for the first time. This summer, Tenacity offered their program at two different sites in East Boston: the Harborside Community Center and Constitution Beach in Orient Heights. Participants received about two and half hours of tennis instruction each day and dedicated at least one half hour to reading, either in small groups or as one large group.

Tennis at the Harborside Community Center, the site of Tenacity's morning sessions, took some creativity and threw conventional tennis rules straight out the window. Since the facility has no actual tennis courts, Tenacity took its act into the gymnasium, where we wrapped tennis nets around volleyball poles and used foam and pressureless tennis balls for the majority of the summer. Games of wall ball, various obstacle courses, and spirited rallies with the instructors (off the basketball hoop is "in play"!) made for a fun and exciting summer of tennis. Each day, after a quick lunch and a ride across town, we began our afternoon sessions at Constitution Beach. At 1:00, Tenacity students began their warm up activities, and by 1:15 were working on their strokes and playing games.

Over the course of the summer, partner programs such as the Harborside Summer Camp and the YMCA Summer Camp sent more than 150 of their kids to play and learn with Tenacity, and their high level of enthusiasm never wavered. "Throughout the summer the kids' enthusiasm was excellent," Jo Ann Panzini, director of the Harborside Summer camp, said. "I never heard any complaints—not even at the end of the summer when kids complain about almost everything."

The reaction to Tenacity's program in East Boston was all positive and word spread through this tight-knit community like wildfire. In the first week, seven children were signed up for the program. But just a few weeks later, the numbers had tripled. By the end of the summer, more than thirty kids had taken part in the tennis and reading activities.

The Constitution Beach site also put together a traveling team that competed against other Tenacity sites around the city. These kids were a scrappy bunch of young players who took their lumps in their first year, but under the leadership of head coach and ASEP graduate Richard Wilson, each player on the team learned a great deal and was proud to represent Eastie. The team even got one win—an 18-17 barn burner over Malcolm X Park. "Even though we didn't win very many matches, I still think we had a good season," said Wilson, "This year showed me that there will be many good years to come."

All the success this summer was just the first audition for Tenacity in East Boston. This fall, Tenacity, in partnership with the **Mario Umana/Joseph**

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A Message from Ned Eames



Dear Friend of Tenacity,

With the close of the summer and launch of a new school year, I want to provide some much deserved acknowledgement for Andy Crane, our tireless Program Director, as well as Josh Katzman, Drew Hendrickson, Anna Mickelsen, Kaytie Dowcett, Tyler Post, Sara DeMedeiros, Nicole Cassidy, Gabe Cohen-Leadholm, Janine Davic, Brian Tuttle, Rob Willison, and Sarah Shapiro, who comprise our full-time year round literacy and tennis staff. In partnership with Mayor Menino and his Boston Centers for Youth & Families and the Boston Youth Fund, this energetic and competent team recruited, hired, and worked alongside an additional 131 full-time summer staff (Monday – Friday from 9am – 4pm) delivering daily reading and tennis for seven full weeks to 3,159 Boston children at 26 neighborhood sites across the city.

In addition to the strong diversity of ethnic backgrounds among our students and staff, we are once again pleased that as part of our **Girls Centered Activities**, 1,552 (49 percent) of this summer's participants were girls. While over 1,500 boys and girls registered with us individually for a summer of reading and tennis, many of our students participated through partnerships we have formed with over 50 Boston-based youth serving agencies such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, YWCA, YMCA, and many community centers, such as the Agassiz Community Center in Jamaica Plain. In addition, with a grant from the LOYD initiative, we expanded our ability to serve youth with disabilities and actually served close to 300 of these children this past summer, with plans to continue this school year. The entire summer offering was greatly enhanced by the generosity of New Balance, City Sports, Wilson, and Good Sports.

Perhaps the biggest highlight of the summer was the opportunity to work closely with Bahar Uttam and Peter Mandeau of the Boston Lobsters at Harvard University. Our students and staff absolutely loved having the chance to support Peter and Bahar and meet the Lobsters' players—and the opposing teams'—on and off the court. Our students really felt like they had become members of the team. This opportunity for our kids, combined with a generous financial contribution from the Lobsters, made us feel like the luckiest youth development program in Boston for three action packed weeks in July.

Given Tenacity's significant growth, you might be wondering how our capacity building plan, *Rallying to Serve*, is coming along. Well, we're in the third year of a plan to expand to serve 4,000 children in the summer and 1,000 in our after-school program by 2009 and we are happy to report that we're on track! (See related article on page 8.) As attractive as the vision of 5,000 city kids reading, studying hard, and playing tennis each year sounds and as committed as we the staff, board, and energy team are to the reaching this goal, the road is not without challenges. Whether the hurdle has been obtaining additional indoor courts, improving the quality of the program (while also increasing the number of kids served), finding adequate breaks in the program year to provide deserved rest for our key staff members, or a need for additional funding, our team has demonstrated the courage to press forward and find a way to meet each need. Undoubtedly, there will be more challenges ahead, but Tenacity is poised to move forward and is successfully taking each step along the path in order to fulfill our vision of serving 5,000 students a year by 2009.

One such step involves the growth of our intensive, multi-year **After-School Excellence Program (ASEP)**. To fulfill this year's goal, we have developed an exciting new partnership with the Umana/Barnes Middle School in East Boston this fall. ASEP is now serving 40 new students on makeshift courts inside the adjacent Harborside Community Center's gymnasium (see cover story). As with ASEP students attending one of our six other partner middle schools—the Edison, McCormack, Gavin, Lewis, New Boston Pilot, and the Curley—each East Boston student is with Tenacity three afternoons a week for literacy and tennis, three hours each day, for a minimum of 26 weeks each of the their sixth, seventh, and eighth grade years. A related ASEP challenge, however, will be the need for real indoor courts in East Boston. While Harvard University, the Reggie Lewis Track & Athletic Center, and the Boston Athletic Club have all been incredibly generous to Tenacity in their contribution of courts and study hall space for ASEP, ultimately we must consider building indoor tennis courts in East Boston and, in addition, locating another three new courts in a yet to be served Boston neighborhood in order to accommodate next fall's planned expansion.

Not surprisingly, our ability to continue to increase the level of funding from individuals, foundations, corporations, government, and our own special events will be essential to the success of *Rallying to Serve*. Since our last annual spring fundraising Extravaganza in April of 2004, we have been giving our special events activities a close look and have taken several steps toward integrating professional tennis into these efforts as a way to help raise additional funds for our expanding youth offerings. This fall, for example, we are pleased to be part of the Bosse Club's hosting of an ATP Challenger Tournament to be held October 31 – November 6th (see page 7 for more information).

In addition, we hope to include Todd Martin, Tim Mayotte, Rosie Casals, and many other past legends of tennis in our 2006 fundraising Extravaganza.

A warm thanks to each of you who support Tenacity. Your help is much appreciated as we follow the path toward serving 5,000 Boston children per year by 2009.



Tenacity's Vineyard Visit

Drew Hendrickson, Tennis Coordinator

The seas and winds were angry on a Friday afternoon in May as a brave group of Tenacity students embarked on their journey to Martha's Vineyard, but the cold and almost ruthless conditions were no match for this rugged bunch of middle-schoolers. They arrived in Vineyard Haven unscathed, with their journals in hand and their tennis raquets at the ready.

This first-ever Tenacity trip to Martha's Vineyard brought five **After-School Excellence Program (ASEP)** students to the island for a team tennis match against **Vineyard Youth Tennis (VYT)**, a free tennis club dedicated to youth tennis on the island. Tenacity's five representatives, accompanied by tennis coordinators Tyler Post and Drew Hendrickson, went straight to the Vineyard Youth Tennis club after arriving and got in an evening session of tennis on the pristine Har-Tru courts.

At the end of each activity—tennis, the ferry, or dinner with one of the host families—the kids brought out their journals and wrote down their thoughts. Doing this was an important part of helping the kids think deeply about the trip and fostering a love and an appreciation for literacy.

The following excerpt from Corey McMillen, a seventh grader at the Lewis School in Roxbury, shows how he thought about his experiences. The free and unrestricted nature of journal writing allows writers like Corey to get all their ideas out there in an uninhibited way:

To me it's not fun to be on the boat because I got boat sick and my hands are very cool. Tyler's wife's cookies are very good and I hope I can have more when we get off the boat ...I hate to play tennis on clay because it makes you slip and makes the ball speed so slow. I'd rather play on a regular tennis court like at the Reggie Lewis Center.

Jose Pereira, a seventh grader at the Curley School in Jamaica Plain, wrote, "Drew introduced us to a lot of his friends. They were nice enough 2 let [us all] into their house cause not a lot of people would do that." That night, the girls on the trip stayed at one house and the boys slept over at another. The generosity of these host families was incredible as they accepted the Tenacity students into their homes with open arms. "It was great to have the kids here," said Nina Thayer, one of the hosts, "they were so much fun. It was really a great weekend."

Lewis Middle School seventh grader Fredwin Rivera described the home-stay this way: "The place is nice. I have my own bed to sleep on because there is a bed for everyone in the house. And [Nick] let us play with his dog who is 9 years old and really big. And Drew and Tyler were playing table tennis and I could hear them yelling all over the house."



Tenacity and VYT competitors

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SAVE THE DATE

***Celebrity Pro Tennis!
Tenacity Students!
An even more Electrifying Extravaganza!***

On April 26, 2006, our 7th Annual Extravaganza will captivate you with the excitement of celebrity pro tennis! In its triumphant return, the Extravaganza promises to elevate the annual Tenacity shindig to an entirely new level. The 7th Annual Extravaganza will be an unforgettable occasion, featuring past professional tennis legends, inspirational student testimonials, and much more!

Please stay tuned!



Tenacity was proud to provide reading and tennis instruction to 3,159 Boston children this summer!



Our students were creative all summer long!

Luis

Luis is sweet, Luis is neat
Luis is a friend I think you should meet.
Sometimes he is mean
Sometimes he could never be seen.
He is really hard to beat
But when you get us to it you'll think it's neat.
He always comes ready for tennis
and really play like the pro Venus.

Candice

If Tenacity would to be rated 1-10, I would vote 11. Tenacity has so many new experiences waiting for young minds and bodies to explore. Many of the instructors are determined to help you along the way in the program. Tenacity also tries to bring out game in you. To show you that hard work, determination and pride can bring [you] to a whole new level. As well as make you enjoy literature (reading). The program brings so much happiness and fun to most of the kids. It makes you feel the experience of being in a really life Tennis match. Whole new experiences for many. I just like for the fun, everything else mixes together to make it better like a watermelon fruit smoothie. So are you ready? Game. Set. Life!

Nathalie Reyes, age 13



Aysha McIntosh, age 13



Tenacity Graduate Yves Singletary, age 15

Measuring Progress

Anna Mickelsen, Office Manager

In the spring edition of the Tenacity newsletter, we reported on the launch and preliminary results of an exciting new measurement initiative. After the first year of conducting enhanced school-year measurement, we are pleased to announce more detailed evaluation results from our four major areas of concentration: academic skills, life skills, physical skills, and program feedback. As the 2004-2005 academic year was considered a pilot phase for **After-School Excellence Program (ASEP)** evaluation efforts, the majority of measures were administered to approximately half of all ASEP students, resulting in sample sizes ranging from 40 to 70 participants for each measure. The 2005-2006 academic year represents "Phase II" of these evaluation efforts, during which measures will be administered to all ASEP participants. We also received informative feedback from students and parents in our recently completed **Summer Tennis & Reading Program**. The results were encouraging across all areas of measurement.

ASEP students complete a validated test at the beginning and end of each academic year that measures literacy and reading skills. As we have previously reported, students demonstrated significant improvement in listening comprehension and reading comprehension last year. In addition, at post-testing, 86 percent of students reported an enjoyment of reading and over three-quarters of students reported reading "for fun" at home. In addition, 87 percent more students reported reading "on [their] own" at the end of the program year, reflecting a notable increase in free-time reading. As we begin a new academic year, we are excited to build on the literacy results of last year as we refine our specialized reading program and administer a new group of literacy tests at our six partner middle schools.

To measure students' emotional and social development as they participate in the program, they are administered tests at the beginning and end of each academic year that describe their abilities in the core life skills that we focus on: respect, awareness, honesty, responsibility, and motivation. Data from the initial measurement period suggests that girls in the program are becoming more conscious of personal strengths and weaknesses, a skill that can help lay the groundwork for identity development and self-understanding. Both male and female ASEP participants demonstrated an improved ability to complete tasks successfully, potentially reflecting improvement with respect to sustained attention, concentration, and motivation. These initial findings suggest remarkable progress in life skills development for ASEP participants, and we hope to further explore and expand on these findings in the next phase of our evaluation efforts.

To measure progress in tennis skills and physical fitness, we administered skill assessments to gauge each student's knowledge of and performance in tennis, as well as shuttle runs to measure students' levels of physical fitness. Students demonstrated increased

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Tenacity Builds for the Future

We would like to thank immediate past Board Chair **Ernie Klein** for his leadership and ongoing service to Tenacity and welcome **Larry Greenberg**, who has recently assumed the role of Chairman. Ernie will now take the title of Chairman Emeritus. We also welcome four new members to our permanent staff! **Rob Willison** has joined as our newest Tennis Coordinator; he will be working at our BAC site. Rob has worked with Tenacity in several capacities since its founding in 1998. In 2003, he received his BA in Social Studies from Harvard, where he founded CityServe, a Harvard student group that provides Tenacity with volunteer tutors and tennis instructors. In the two years following his graduation, Rob taught U.S. History, Government, and Economics to juniors and seniors at East New York School of Transit Technology in Brooklyn.

We would also like to welcome three staff members who will be filling the new position of Academic Intern (providing support to the staff at each ASEP program site): **Sarah Shapiro**, **Gabe Cohen-Leadholt**, and **Janine Davic**. Sarah, who played tennis throughout high school, got her BA from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Psychology with minors in Child Advocacy and Holocaust Studies and recently received her MA from Boston College in Counseling Psychology with a concentration in school counseling. Gabe received his bachelor's in Psychology from Connecticut College in 2001, then worked for an immigration law firm specializing in business and refugee immigration, and as the paralegal for the PBS program NOVA.

Kamryn Eddy and **Lissa Dutra**, expert program evaluation consultants from Psychological and Education Research Associates, have recently agreed to partner with Tenacity in our ongoing mission to measure student achievements through a comprehensive process. We would also like to welcome **Amy Cluff**, who has joined the staff as a part-time Operations Assistant.

Congratulations to **Brian Tuttle** and **Drew Hendrickson**, who began work during the last academic year as academic liaisons and have been promoted to Academic Coordinator and Tennis Coordinator, respectively. Brian will oversee the academic aspects of the ASEP program at our Harvard site, while Drew is spearheading the tennis component of the new East Boston ASEP program site located at the Umana/Barnes Middle School.



Tenacity is pleased to support **Bosse Sports**, the **USTA**, and professional tennis in Boston as we welcome the **USTA/ADTECH Challenger Tennis Tournament at Bosse Sports**. This event, which represents the largest tournament of its kind on US soil, will attract players ranked between 30 and 150 in the world, many of whom recently competed in the US Open.

Qualifying rounds begin on October 29, with the main draw set to begin on Monday, October 31st. The semi-final round will be played on Saturday, November 5th, and the exciting final round will be played on Sunday, November 6th.

For tournament information

- visit www.bostonchallenger.com or www.bossesports.com
- call 978-443-4613
- email info@bostonchallenger.com



Tenacity Graduates Profiled in *Boston Globe*

Alexandre, Wilson Reflect on Transition from Boyhood to Manhood

Rob Willison, Tennis Coordinator

In the fall of his freshman year at Harvard ('99), Kevin Hartnett met Renaud Alexandre for the first time, as a volunteer tutor in Tenacity's **After School Excellence Program (ASEP)**. "I remember being somewhat chagrined that I'd volunteered to tutor a sixth grader, and he turned out to be taller than me," Kevin (who stands a charitable 5'7") recalls. All too quickly, though, Kevin discovered that Renaud's emotional and intellectual maturity (to put it equally charitably) hadn't quite kept pace with his physical development. "My earliest memories of Renaud involve constantly having to defend myself against being used as a prop for various unsavory 'professional' wrestling moves during study hall," says Kevin; but, within a few sessions, Kevin had Renaud sitting intently, pencil to paper. He's saved (and still cherishes) that first work that Renaud produced: doodles depicting Renaud, in the role of the professional wrestler "The Rock," performing his patented "Rock Bottom" attack on a helpless Kevin.

Miraculously, only six years later, Renaud, along with fellow Tenacity alumni Richard Wilson and David Qin, was profiled in a *Boston Globe* article about Boston boys making a strikingly successful transition into becoming responsible young men ("Going from Boyhood to Manhood," August 18, 2005, p. H1). *Globe* Staff Writer Barbara Meltz praises all three Tenacity grads for their "loftier, healthier ideas about becoming a man," as each defines the desire and ability to help others as an essential characteristic of manhood. All three high school seniors plan on attending college, and all three placed special emphasis on continuing to develop the skills that will help them take responsibility in their family roles, both as sons and as future fathers and husbands.

Renaud, for one, credits Tenacity with playing a critical role in his remarkable transformation. Especially, he believes his three years in ASEP, and his subsequent experience as a tennis instructor in Tenacity's **Summer Tennis & Reading Program**, helped him to revolutionize his social skills: "Tenacity helped me become less shy, and more interactive with people from every background – from the classmates I met on the first day of programming, to the adults that I've met at Tenacity's fundraising events," said Renaud in a recent interview. "Tenacity's also helped me learn to structure my time, so that I can be more successful in the adult world. I always had to finish my homework before I could play tennis; that's given me a greater ability to meet my responsibilities as a man."

Richard, meanwhile, appreciates Tenacity's efforts to open his mind to the adult world, and to help him imagine a life for himself that he wouldn't otherwise have thought possible. As he put it, "Since starting with Tenacity, I have a better understanding of what I can do in life. Before, I didn't know my options and what I wanted to do – but Tenacity had people that graduated and they showed me that I could succeed in life." Further, he learned to enjoy reading during Tenacity's academic program. He especially enjoys the mystery genre "where you can't piece everything together until the very end," and, for sports buffs like himself, he recommends *Coach Carter*, which he describes as "way better than the movie."

While those of us who tutored and coached Renaud, Richard, and David during the Dark Ages of their adolescence may have been frankly astounded to open our morning newspapers and find them featured in an article about successful and responsible young men, those of us who know them today can't deny that the honor was well-deserved. Yet Renaud, despite telling Ms. Meltz that he became a man at fifteen ("when I got facial hair"), isn't ready to leave childhood behind altogether. He's taken one of Tenacity's most popular Tennis Coordinators, the charismatic Drew Hendrickson, as a role model: "I want to grow up to be like Drew," Renaud explained. "You know how he acts like a kid, all funny, sometimes? That's how I want to be. I only want to be serious when absolutely necessary."

How's the match going?

A Progress Update on our Rallying to Serve Capacity Building Plan

Jeff Juell, Development Coordinator

You might ask us “What does it take to serve 5,000 youth per year by 2009?” The question undoubtedly can be answered with countless tennis and academic related supplies, excellent staff, and astute vision and execution! But these elements cost money, whether obtained through a partnership, an in-kind donation, or straight out purchases. So the answer to the question is very aptly answered with the total amount budgeted to run the operations of our **Rallying to Serve** multi-year capacity building plan from 2004-2009. It will take a cumulative total of \$10 Million to grow Tenacity to serve 5,000 kids per year throughout the city! Looked at another way, this is an eight digit dollar figure that promises to enhance the lives of thousands upon thousands of young Bostonians with tennis, literacy, and life skills!

Let's take a look at some measures of how Tenacity progressed through its second year of **Rallying to Serve**. Our **Summer Tennis & Reading Program** recently completed its seventh season with 3,159 kids participating all over the city at 26 neighborhood sites! With our overall goal to serve 4,000 students per summer by 2009, we are on track and attaining our yearly benchmarks. Meanwhile, our **After-School Excellence Program (ASEP)** is currently serving 150 at-risk middle school students, who are carefully selected from seven partner public middle schools, with plans to serve 250 students three years from now. Both our Elementary School Tennis, High School Tennis League, and ASEP Alumni Club are growing alongside these core programs.

However, numbers only give you a view from the backcourt. From a closer perspective, we gladly report that, using validated pre- and post-tests, our ASEP students are improving their listening and reading comprehension skills, becoming more aware of the importance of life skills, and increasing their physical fitness while learning new tennis skills and etiquette! In addition, not one of our ASEP graduates has dropped out of high school, despite the over 20 percent dropout rate in Boston Public High Schools. It is clear that our Pathway to Excellence, serving students from fifth grade all the way through high school, is enabling us to have a significant positive impact on all participants.

Having taken a look at how thousands of students are growing and learning through Tenacity's programs, it is equally important to ask “How are we doing in accomplishing the financial goals of **Rallying to Serve**?” The answer to that question closely parallels the growth of our programs to serve an increasing number of at-risk youth: We have been able to enlarge and deepen our programs because of the increased funding we have received!

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knowledge of tennis etiquette and improved the times of their shuttle runs by an average of two seconds over the course of the school year, with some students decreasing their times by as many as twelve seconds! In addition, students demonstrated satisfactory tennis skill acquisition over the course of ASEP programming. This academic year, we are incorporating a stronger emphasis on wellness that includes diet and physical fitness and is supported by rigorous tennis activities.

We are also very interested in how students and parents participating in the ASEP program feel about the overall effectiveness of the program and its ability to help students achieve excellence in their daily lives. To gather this information, the Tenacity program team has developed internal program feedback forms that are distributed to students and parents. On a scale of one (poor) to five (excellent), students gave the overall program a 4.3 rating. Parents rated all aspects of the program, on average, between four and five with an average “overall program” rating of 4.6. When asked if they would recommend Tenacity to other families, 95.6 percent of parents confirmed that they would. We are very pleased with the positive reception of the ASEP program, and hope we can even improve on these results this academic year.

Our ongoing measurement effort also extends to the courts and reading groups of the Summer Tennis & Reading Program. 417 students who participated in the summer program completed evaluations, while 81 parents also completed the survey, and feedback was generally very positive. Eighty-five percent of students reported that they enjoyed the summer program most or all of the time, while over half indicated that they would be interested in returning next summer and that they would recommend the program to a friend. Over half the students improved their tennis skills and expressed an interest in continuing to play after the summer program ended. In addition, almost half the students indicated that they had been more physically active, and enjoying activity more, while participating in the summer program than they would have been if they had not been involved with Tenacity. In terms of our reading activities, about one third of students indicated that they read more in the summer program than they would have otherwise and felt that they experienced an improvement in their reading skills over the course of the summer.

Parent feedback regarding the summer program was also very positive. Ninety-three percent of parents reported that they would recommend the program to other parents for their children. The vast majority of parents noted improvement in their children with respect to tennis skills (80%), physical conditioning (96%), and reading skills (86%). In addition, three-fourths of parents suggested that they believed their children were reading more during summer than they would have if they had not participated in Tenacity's program.

We are very pleased with these encouraging results from both the After-School Excellence Program and Summer Tennis & Reading Program and are excited to begin the next phase of our measurement efforts. Pre-testing of ASEP students began in late September at all of our partner middle schools, and we hope to report results from this year's group of tests in future newsletters.

Tenacity Kids Dominate Mayor's Cup Competition

Andy Crane, Program Director



Team Tennis Silver Medal Winners from Ringer Playground

Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) and the Sportsmen's Tennis Club, was host to 250 Boston youth ranging in age from 8 to 18. Several of the draws were extremely large, including 46 boys in the 14 and Under singles.

Congratulations to all of Tenacity's Champions: **Carl Reid** in the Boys 10 and Under Singles; **Michael Fedorouk** in the Boys 12 and Under Singles; Carl Reid and **Mike Pisano** in the Boys 12 and Under Doubles, **Marie Fleming** in the Girls 14 and Under Singles, and, along with **Megan Mulrooney**, in the Girls 14 and Under Doubles; **Patrick Lewis** and **Carlos Lopes** in the Boys 14 and Under Doubles; **Alicia Cautericcio** in the Girls 14 and Under Singles, and, along with **Sasha Solis**, the Girls 14 and Under Doubles; **Sokun Phy** in the Boys 16 and Under Singles; **Tony Xing** and **Josh Li** in the Boys 16 and Under Doubles; **Bashiru Akinfolarin** in the Boys 18 and Under Singles, and, along with **Roland Abichaker**, in the Boys 18 and Under Doubles.

Our thanks to BCYF's **Barbara Hamilton**, who deftly handled tournament logistics; **Mercedes Tomkins** and **Nigel Griffith** of Sportsmen's, who provided the courts for the tournament, and to longtime sponsors and supporters **Comcast**, **Legal Seafoods**, and **USA Tennis New England**.

East Boston, continued from page One

H. Barnes Middle School, launched another offshoot of its **After School Excellence Program (ASEP)**. Kaytie Dowcett directs the academic programming and Drew Hendrickson coordinates all tennis activities.

East Boston is a rapidly changing area. While Eastie is home to a large number of Italian families, in recent years, it has become the area of Boston with the highest concentration of Latino families. These shifting demographics, along with a strong community feeling, make it a dynamic and exciting place to begin a new Tenacity site. Both Kaytie and Drew are excited to be working in East Boston and both bring valuable experience to the job. Kaytie has worked for Tenacity for three years and initiated Tenacity's programming at the Boston Athletic Club in South Boston. Drew will be in his second year with Tenacity and speaks fluent Spanish as a result of living two years in Colombia.



Han Nguyen enjoys her reading this summer in East Boston

Once again this year, Tenacity concluded the summer in exciting fashion by hosting the week-long **Mayor's Cup Tournament** at Sportsmen's Tennis Club in Dorchester from August 15-19. Tenacity students and junior instructors dominated the competition, which brought an exciting end to our **Summer Tennis & Reading Program**. Tenacity kids came out on top in 12 of the 18 draws, and also took the silver medal in the team competition. Bashiru Akinfolarin, Tenacity's best player during the last school year, won the Boys 18 and Under Singles and Doubles titles even though he is only 14 years old!

The tournament, directed by Tenacity's Andy Crane and Josh Katzman, in partnership with the

A Special Moment

The Mayor's Cup, while first and foremost a competitive event, is also a time for students to meet new people and, perhaps, form lasting friendships. Brian and Lynn DeLacey, parents of summer program participants Lisa and Andrew DeLacey, shared this story with us after the competition:

"Early in the week, there was a young boy [ASEP student Damion Collins] walking around the Sportsmen's club. He happened to end up sitting down next to Lynn to watch our son, Andrew, play in the singles competition . . . As it turned out, there was an odd number of players who showed up for Damion's age group on the day of doubles. Andy asked our son Andrew, who was the same age, if he'd partner with Damion. Damion and Andrew played their way to the finals and became good friends in the process. I was struck by how thoughtful and sharp Damion was in all our conversations. He talked about teamwork and the need for good communication on the court. He also talked about how nervous he was. It was also very clear how much he loved tennis and how important it had become to him in his life since he began playing with the Tenacity program. So many nice little things like this happened as part of Tenacity—day after day. They added up to having a huge impact on young lives. Thank you for bringing this program to have such a positive impact on the lives of so many schoolchildren."



Damion Collins and Andrew DeLacey

Watch Those Lobsters Roll

Larry T. Lobster (Josh Katzman, Mascot Extraordinaire)



Larry the Lobster, surrounded by his Tenacity crew

Patrick Rafter and Martina Hingis. Another regular sight at the matches were the ball boys and girls that were members of Tenacity, the official charity of the Lobsters.

What an experience it proved to be for those kids. They were on the court with some of the biggest names in the sport. By the end of the season as I strolled through the crowd, I would see the Tenacity ball-kids joking with and hi-fiving the players. It was inspiring to see the faces of the sport's future getting to learn something from some of the greats.

Because of the fan support and their great play, the Boston Lobsters got on a great roll and qualified for the WTT playoffs. Who knows, maybe some of those Tenacity ball-kids will be on the team!

The life of a mascot can be tough. Fortunately my job was made easier because people get pretty excited over the likes of tennis superstars Martina Navratilova and James Blake. It doesn't take much to get people to cheer for someone with 18 Grand Slam singles titles and 20 Wimbledon titles. Even the boiling days of summer didn't frighten this Lobster, as I got the great fans of World TeamTennis and the Boston Lobsters out of their seats for what was a wild and exciting season of tennis.

In case you missed out on the excitement, the Boston Lobsters played seven home matches during July at Harvard's Bright Arena. In addition to the superstars, there was an unrivaled lineup for the home team: Daja Bedanova, Kristen Schlukebir, Johan Landsberg, Jonathan Chu and fan favorite Thomas Blake (I only wish I could have hair like that covering my shell!).

This team regularly played host to superstars like



Rita Valcimond, Yamirah Lacy, Sokun Phy, and Lilly Li

Capacity-Building Update, continued from page Eight

The annual operating budgets for the first two years (2004 & 2005) of our capacity-building plan totaled over \$2.35 million. During that time we were successful in raising over \$2.7 million in cash contributions and pledges from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government sources, with over 30 foundation grants received in 2005 alone. This success in raising funds for our day-to-day operations has enabled us to expand our staff so that we can continue to grow and transform the lives of more youth and their communities. To support our future efforts, we currently expect to receive just over \$1 million in pledged funds during 2006-2008, while we also anticipate that our annual Extravaganza, annual fund, and public funding will provide another \$800,000.

Encouraged by our fundraising success thus far, we look forward to both new and continued support from individuals, foundations, corporations, government, and special events to be able to raise the remaining \$5.5 million to fund operations for **Rallying to Serve** through 2009. Increased funding from supporters is crucial since this year's operating budget increased to \$1.6 million so that we can expand and improve our youth programs. As we explore ways to raise this money, we are excited by the prospect of elevating the level of our annual spring extravaganza. Utilizing the pro-tennis and corporate relationships that we built this past spring in our Pro-Am at Harvard University, hosted by Bud Collins, we are exploring options with tennis stars such as Jim Courier, Todd Martin, and new American tennis hero James Blake, to create events that will draw larger support from both individuals and corporations.

We have also had some notable developments on the other major component of **Rallying to Serve** that will enable us to build the capacity of our programs. To complement the \$10 million needed for Operations, we have planned a \$2 million capital campaign to address the need for more indoor tennis courts in Boston. This past August, Tenacity hosted a series of neighborhood convenings with local community leaders from a few key Boston neighborhoods, representatives of the Ford Foundation, the United States Tennis Association, and the City of Boston's youth serving agencies. Together we explored the potential for mobilizing these vibrant communities along with local and regional funding resources to build a new youth development facility that includes tennis courts. These gatherings deepened several vital partnerships, and we anticipate that further steps will help us examine the ways in which we can build both the collaboration and funds to make this possible.

Plans to continue our fundraising growth are well underway so that we have adequate operations and capital funding to fulfill our vision, mission, and goals. Just as our students look to their instructors and mentors in Tenacity, we look to you for support in the shape of financial backing of our daily work, volunteer efforts, and input for funding or program ideas. With these developmental plans pointing to continued success of **Rallying to Serve**, we are proud to say that we are "on serve" in our effort to raise the necessary funds to deliver high-quality programming to 5,000 Boston kids annually by 2009!

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Photos: Jeff Juell, Daniella Boucher, Tenacity Program Team



Jose Pereira writes in his journal

After having breakfast with their host families, the students went to the VYT club, where tennis activities began at 9:00 AM. The team match was the first ever for all of the Tenacity players. Each kid played at least five sets. They played both singles and doubles—usually partnered with another Tenacity student, but everyone also got to partner at least once with a VYT player. The tennis matches lasted for about three hours and culminated in an all-inclusive round of Dungeons and Dragons (one of Tenacity’s tried and true games).

Gordy Ernst, tennis director at Vineyard Youth Tennis, bought pizza for everyone involved and as they enjoyed their lunch, Tenacity students and the kids from VYT exchanged T shirts from their respective programs. From the club, the Tenacity party on Martha’s Vineyard rolled its way to Long Point beach. Nick and Nina Thayer, year-round island residents, accompanied the whole group to the beach for what was supposed to be a tranquil walk along the sandy and picturesque shore.

That is not exactly what these fun-loving middle-schoolers had in mind, however, and it wasn’t long before Nicole Blount, a seventh grader at the Curley middle school, dove into the water despite the frigid temperature. Seeing Nicole enjoying the waves and braving the cold inspired the rest of the kids to throw caution to the wind and dive in themselves. “Today I thought it was a little cold at the courts,” wrote Chelsea Watts, a seventh grader at the Curley, “but at the beach it was mad cold. I was freezing.” Corey McMillen wrote, “The trip is mad ill. We just came back from the beach. It was so fun and so cold but kids and me jumped in like it was summer and even Drew jumped in.”

Wet and cold, but fulfilled, the Tenacity group cleaned up and made their way back to the ferry. They returned to their homes in Boston that Saturday evening. Everyone was sad to leave the island because it was so much fun, but the memories of this trip, the new experiences, and the generosity of our hosts is not only fresh in the kids’ minds, it is also preserved on the pages of their journals.

Jose Pereira wrote, “This is the last day of our trip with Drew and Tyler, and I’m kinda bummed out. It was so cool. We went on the boat trip, we had a barbeque, got to sleep in a friend of Drew’s house, have a tournament with another team, and we went to the beach.” Hopefully, additional Tenacity trips to Martha’s Vineyard will take place in the future. If things go as well as they did on our maiden voyage, Tenacity students will be enjoying island life for years to come.



Chelsea Watts enjoys the Vineyard’s brisk surf

*Special thanks go to Nick and Nina Thayer and Gavin and Penny Franklin for hosting the Tenacity students.

Tenacity Notes

Tenacity would like to thank the following people and organizations for their important contributions to our efforts this past summer:

We greatly appreciate the support of our strategic partners the **Boston Centers for Youth & Families** and the **Boston Parks and Recreation Department** during this year’s **Summer Tennis & Reading Program**.

Tenacity would like to give special thanks to **New Balance** and **City Sports**, who provided clothing for use by summer staff and children participating in the summer program, as well as enabling us to offer discounts at City Sports to our participating families. We would also like to give thanks to **Good Sports** and **Wilson Sporting Goods**, for equipment generously donated for use in the summer and school year programs.

Thanks to **Rodman Ford** for their assistance in procuring the new Tenacity van, **Longwood Cricket Club**, for its continued and invaluable support of Tenacity, **Windridge Tennis Camps** and **Ted Hoehn**, for generously hosting four ASEP students for two weeks on scholarship in Vermont, and **Quinn Printing**, for its continued generous support.

Many thanks also go to **Margaret Willison** for her diligent work during the Summer Tennis & Reading Program.



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Visit us online at www.tenacity.org!



Juan Crespo, one of 3,159 summer students, prepares for reading activities at our English High site