Tenacity’s 2007 Summer Program Expects to Break all Records

Could Tenacity break the 4,000 mark this summer? Believe it or not, it’s possible that more than 4,000 Boston kids will be on the courts this summer at a total of thirty-one neighborhood sites all across the City of Boston, making Tenacity one of the city’s largest summer youth programs. In 2006, over 3,600 kids participated in our fun, free and educational summer program; to accommodate these growing numbers, we will add four new locations this summer.

While most of our sites are licensed by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, Tenacity is also expanding its partnership with the Commonwealth’s Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Three new sites—Ryan Playground in Mattapan, Martini Shell in Hyde Park and North End Park, adjacent to the Charlestown Bridge at North Washington Street—will be in operation every weekday morning from July 2nd to August 17th.

An additional program site this summer will be at the new Camp Harbor View, a special initiative of Mayor Menino and the Boys and Girls Clubs. The camp, located on Long Island in Boston Harbor, will provide a variety of sports activities for an estimated 600 teens, and Tenacity will be there to provide tennis lessons and reading activities for the campers.

As in prior years, Tenacity’s Summer Tennis & Reading Program will feature Team Tennis again this year with over 20 teams crossing the city to compete for playoff positions. And, of course, we will continue to provide reading activities at all of our sites to ensure that all participants remain connected to books over the course of the summer.

It’s going to be a big summer—stay tuned to find out how big!
The 2006-2007 school year has been an exciting one for Tenacity’s After School Excellence Program (ASEP). This has been a year of many firsts including our first venture into the new world of Extended Learning Time (ELT) at the Umana-Barnes Middle School in East Boston; our first Coordinator from the nation of Colombia, Camilo Hernandez, who serves at the Umana-Barnes site; our first venture into Rebuild Boston through our partnership with the Washington Irving Middle School; and our first year as an approved Supplemental Educational Services provider for the MA Department of Education, the only sports-based after-school program to be so named. It’s been a busy year!

In Literacy Block, our Academic Coordinators created extraordinary learning opportunities for our students over the past year. During the first semester, all ASEP students worked hard in their Literacy groups to follow the story of Sacré Special and her unconventional but effective teacher, Miss Ponty. The semester culminated with final project presentations at the program site which included some creative chapter rewrites by students. Second semester was focused on the concept of “Story” — what is a story? why is it a powerful tool? how do you tell your story? and why does it matter? Students looked at the wide variety of ways to tell a story — narrative, verse, Rap, poetry, plays, fiction, non-fiction — and experimented with these many forms of expression to find ways to use their own voice. The final product at each site was an anthology/yearbook that included student writing. Examples of these personal stories are included in this newsletter and on our website. The anthologies were so popular that English/Language Arts teachers at one of our partner schools asked to purchase copies!

During the 2006-2007 school year, Tenacity’s Tennis Instructors participated in a new tennis initiative focused on improving the quality of our tennis instruction (more on page 10). Our Team Tennis program continued for a second year and the Crapeau Cup was won by the team at the Harvard site, with help from their Tennis Coordinator, Kara Guzman. All of our ASEP students had an opportunity to experience the world of competitive tennis when they attended the Champions Cup Boston Tournament at the Agganis Arena in May. Pat Cash was a particular favorite with the Tenacity students!

Over the past year, Tenacity served over 180 students at six program sites; participating students attended eight partner middle schools this year, we had our largest graduating class to date, with thirty-two 8th grade students moving on to high school. During the late fall and early winter months, Tenacity staff worked with each of these students and their families to help them find the best situation that requires a leader, while Gabe will be especially missed for his love of the outdoors which resulted in a number of hiking trips and camping excursions with our students. Nicole will be continuing her nonprofit career path by working as a Communications Assistant at Accion International, an international anti-poverty agency. Gabe will work as a Peace Corps volunteer after some travel this summer. We wish them continued success as they continue to make a difference in their future endeavors!

Update on Foundation Support

Wish List
Are you looking for a unique way to contribute to the mission of Tenacity? Please consider an in-kind or monetary donation to cover one of the items below to help with the continued growth of our programs?

> Network-compatible Laser Printer (black and white, 30+ pages per minute)
> Network-compatible Laser Printer (color, 20+ pages per minute)
> Copy Machine (4/colored)
> Laminating machine
> Binding machine
> Tickets to museums, sporting events, cultural events, etc.
> Gift certificates (sporting goods, bookstores, etc.)
> Digital cameras
> Video camera(s)
> TV and DVD players for Program Sites
> New Laptop (Dell Inspiron)
> Comfortable Reading Chairs (2)
> “Dance, Dance Revolution” Video Game (2)
> “Dance, Dance Revolution” Dance Dance Revol (2)
> Embroidery Services
> Travel Van (for transport of students to and from program; 7-10 seats preferred)

ASEP Roundup 2006-2007
By ANNE GREENBAUM, School Year Program Director

Notes
Staff Transitions
To help Tenacity reach its ambitious goal of serving 5,000 youth by 2007, Tenacity’s Development Department is growing. This past fall, Lindsay Snyder joined us as our new Development Manager, overseeing the planning and implementation of our annual Champions Cup Gala and other fundraising activities, while David Park is our new Development Coordinator assisting with day-to-day administrative and fundraising tasks.

Liz James, an AmeriCorps Vista Member, has joined Tenacity’s Program team as the new Volunteer Coordinator. Liz will be working closely with Anne Greenbaum, the School Year Program Director, to recruit and match potential volunteers with the wide range of service opportunities available to both our summer and school year programs.

It is with sadness that we say goodbye to two members of our outstanding Academic team, Nicole Casady (Academic Coordinator) and Gabe Cohen (Academic Assistant). Nicole and Gabe have made many contributions over the past three years through their hard work, unwavering dedication and their good humor. We will miss Nicole’s flexibility and her ability to jump into any situation that requires a leader, while Gabe will be especially missed for his love of the outdoors which resulted in a number of hiking trips and camping excursions with our students. Nicole will be continuing her nonprofit career path by working as a Communications Assistant at Accion International, an international anti-poverty agency. Gabe will work as a Peace Corps volunteer after some travel this summer. We wish them continued success as they continue to make a difference in their future endeavors!

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2007 Champions Cup Boston: A Week of Outstanding Events

On May 1st, Tenacity hosted the 2nd Annual Champions Cup Kick-Off Gala to welcome the participants in this year’s Champions Cup Boston Tournament to Boston. Held at the spectacular Boston Convention & Exhibition Center, this year’s gala generated a record-breaking $1.1 million to support Tenacity’s after-school and summer programs!

Once again this year, the success of our annual fundraising event was predicated upon “partnership.” We owe a very special note of thanks to Jim Courier and his fellow Champions Cup Boston tennis legends, including John McEnroe, Pete Sampras, Pat Cash, Wayne Ferreira, Petr Korda, Todd Martin, and Mats Wilander who joined us at the Gala prior to participating in an exciting week of competitive matches at BU’s beautiful Agganis Arena. In addition, we are grateful to the Champions Cup Pros and other tennis greats such as Rosie Casals, Bob Green, Tim Mayotte, Mel Purcell, and Bud Schultz who joined us for our annual celebrity Pro-Am Student Clinic, held at Harvard University’s Muru Center on May 3rd.

Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino joined us once again for the festivities and his remarks focused on the highly successful public-private partnership that the City has enjoyed with Tenacity over the past eight years. Thanks to our media partner, WCVB-TV, Natalie Jacobson and Mike Dowling served as exceptional emcees for the Gala and once again, Tenacity’s good friend, Bud Collins, revealed his unrivaled wit, tennis knowledge and flair for fashion.

Thanks to our growing list of corporate and individual supporters including our Lead Sponsors, Fidelity Investments and Intercontinental Real Estate, the financial success of this year’s Champions Cup events has put Tenacity one giant step closer to achieving our Rallying to Serve capacity-building goal of serving 5,000 Boston youth per year by 2009.
"Walk a Mile in My Shoes"

By ELIZABETH CABRAL, 6th Grader, Gaunin Middle School, Winner, Camille Cosby "Walk a Mile in My Shoes" Essay Contest

Let me tell you about the life of the one and only Elizabeth Cabral. It is tough being me.

My father calls me a lot, but I don't care. I get to see him more. He says he loves me. I believe my father and I love him, too. However, I have the world's worst brother, Moses. He has one girl-friend then another then another. I get sick and tired but sometimes I'm sad. Sometimes I really get to know them. And then we become the best of friends. But then Moses breaks up with them, so I don't become friends with them anymore.

Then, there's my cousin, Ione. I think my cousin is crazy but I love her and we talk about anything together. Also I know that my cousins get my back no matter what and I love her for that. My other cousin is Andrea and I love her but sometimes, she can be a pain in the behind if you know what I mean. She always runs her mouth. Her eyes open big and she just starts yapping away. Of course, you know I love her and I know she better love me. Vania, my third cousin, is cute and sweet but sometimes she could be the devil! She is so rude and selfish. She snitches an awful lot, but you know how fourth graders are because they're going to fifth and then sixth grade. So they have to act tough and all that.

Who I think is the center of my family is my grandmother. But she always yells at me which gets me mad. When I'm around my mom, I get mad but I still love them just like I do my mom. I love her so much and I know she loves me. I just need one week to describe my mother. Actually two words, no six words: The Best Mother in the World.

I have this friend named Ellen. I can tell her anything and she tells me everything. Don't you agree it's weird that Ellen and I were in the same fourth and fifth grade classes and now we are in the sixth grade together? If we are in the same class next year, now that would be just plain old freaky!

Let me tell you a little about where I live. I live next to Bowdown Street in Dorchester. I live on Richfield Street. One thing about my neighborhood is that it's bad news. The other night I heard garbage truck sirens in every corner. I see people throwing their lives away to gangs. And they know once you go in you can't come out unless you're in a box. It's a game of chance. Is a game of chance. All I see are dice. What ever I roll, the time I have left is only a matter of time. Even I know Life is not a bet.

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My Experience as Tenacity’s First Americorps Fellow Shows “Promise”

By XANDY BROWN, Assistant Academic Coordinator at Umana-Barnes Middle School site

In the spring of last year, I knew I was ready for a new job. I remember beginning my job search, not knowing exactly what I was looking for, other than a chance to learn, grow, and meet interesting people. I came across a Tenacity posting and thought to myself, “Hey, I like sports! I love to read! I seem to have developed life skills…why not?”

Serving as Tenacity’s first Massachusetts Promise Fellow would mean doing a year of community service without a salary; I would have to subsist on a small monthly stipend with health insurance, food stamps, and an AmeriCorps educational scholarship after 12 months of service. However, I was searching for a way to get more involved with the community around me and recognized that my early 20s was a great time to get involved and give back. I have no dependents, I have minimal bills, and I am still young enough to ask my parents for if I needed it. So, I sent in my resume, set up an interview, and from the moment that I sat down with Tenacity’s staff, I knew that I had stumbled across something truly amazing.

Serving as an AmeriCorps Fellow this past year has exceeded my expectations. Whether working on site at the Umana-Barnes Middle School in East Boston or in the office with the entire Tenacity staff, I am constantly surrounded by interesting, intelligent and caring individuals. Since joining Tenacity, I have had a lot to learn yet I have received help at every turn from my co-workers and the students we serve.

In addition to my hours of direct service at Tenacity, the Mass. Promise Fellowship Program also provides me with training sessions related to youth development and I have gained a powerful network comprised of the other twenty-nine Fellows who are working in a wide variety of youth development programs throughout Massachusetts. The Fellows have become my friends, my resource center, and my support group, sharing contacts and good advice (including mass email notices whenever a local restaurant or ice cream parlor is offering freebie’s).

My year of service as Tenacity’s first Mass. Promise Fellow has provided me with an exceptional opportunity to learn and to grow, both personally and professionally. From small things like creating my first excel spreadsheet to huge things like making a positive connection with a struggling middle school student, I can now navigate an office environment as well as the halls of a middle school with a new sense of confidence. As I begin to weigh my options for next year, I look forward to helping Tenacity recruit a new Fellow for next year and know that he or she will also benefit from this exceptional and rewarding learning experience.

Serving as Tenacity’s first Massachusetts Promise Fellow, Xandy Brown, shares a book with Umans-Barnes 7th-Grader Marco Flores who is participating in his second year of ASEP.

Striving for Success: Tenacity Improves School-Year Tennis Curriculum

Tenacity has offered tennis programming as an integral part of our After-School Excellence Program (ASEP) since its inception in 1999. The Tenacity model includes formal tennis programming three days per week, using a games-based approach which follows the guidelines recommended by the USTA. To date, our approach has helped more than 180 at-risk Boston middle school students acquire tennis skills and develop an interest in the sport that we anticipate will last throughout their lives.

Over the course of this school year, Tenacity’s Tennis Coordinator have been involved in a process to improve our school-year tennis curriculum at all five ASEP sites. To help them develop and implement the new curriculum, Tenacity’s tennis staff has been working with Tim Smith, a Co-Director of the New England Academy of Tennis in Natick since 2001 and Director of Junior Tennis at the Longwood Cricket Club in Brookline since 1998.

The new tennis curriculum will address three themes that are essential to Tenacity’s tennis model including (1) Tennis Skills; (2) Life Skills; and (3) Physical Fitness. The new Tennis Initiative is a professional development model that will support Tenacity in developing a comprehensive program-wide approach to the tennis component of our after-school program. Working with Tim Smith, have created a year-long model that will result in a more consistent and focused Tenacity-wide approach to teaching tennis. Our Tennis Coordinators will learn additional teaching strategies designed to: 1) increase the rate at which student improve their tennis skills, 2) increase the student’s level of physical activity and 3) better serve our students with disabilities in 2007. Tenacity employed five full-time Tennis Coordinators who are responsible for implementing the tennis program at each of our five after-school program sites.

This new curriculum is intended to be a guide for current and future tennis coordinators to help them work with individual students to maximize their understanding and enjoyment of tennis over the course of the three years they participate in ASEP. The overall goal of the new Tennis Initiative is to increase the odds that ASEP students will succeed, both on and off the tennis court.
Tenacity Congratulates our Graduating 8th Grade Students!

This month, Tenacity celebrates the achievements of our graduating 8th graders who are moving on to an exciting array of excellent high schools. Each of these thirty-one students has actively participated in Tenacity’s After-School Excellence Program (ASEP) during their middle school years, and they represent Tenacity’s largest class of graduates to date.

A key component of Tenacity’s intensive after-school program is to guide each 8th grade ASEP student through the often-challenging high school selection process. Tenacity staff and volunteers expose these young people to the wide variety of high school options that are available to them including public, private, charter, and specialty schools. However, applying to a variety of schools is not an easy process as it requires students to conduct research, write essays, and prepare for interviews. Tenacity is there every step of the way to ensure that each of our students finds a high school that suits their interests and helps them move closer to achieving their goals.

Although they may be completing ASEP, Tenacity will continue to support our growing list of alumni through our new Alumni Services Program which will allow our graduates to remain connected to Tenacity and to one another. This new array of services will help ensure that our alumni remain “tenacious” throughout their high school years and continue on a pathway to higher education.

C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S

Graduate          | High School
Arivi Amankanth  | Boston Latin School
Shayna Barz       | Brighton High School
Alex Berry        | Boston Community Leadership Academy
Sierra Brown      | Jeremiah E. Burke High School
Chenelle Burton   | Health Careers Academy
Kevin Chan        | John D. O’Bryant High School
Miguel Chavez     | Boston Community Leadership Academy
Miguel Codero     | City on a Hill Charter Public School
Mireya Inez Colon | TechBoston Academy
Catherine Denis   | TechBoston Academy
Tuta Ekpobor      | Beacon Academy
Hector Flores      | Madison Park High School
Saquon Gaul       | Charlestown High School
Mitchell Jean-Louis | Boston Community Leadership Academy
Wesley Jones      | East Boston High School
Fatumata Kaba     | Beacon Academy
Jaron Kizzie      | Madison Park High School SNAP Program
Christian Leal    | Brighten High School
Richie Louisiant  | Boston Community Leadership Academy
Dylan Mitchell    | City on a Hill Charter Public School
Karen Ngo         | Boston Arts Academy
Rosemary Onofri   | Boston Arts Academy
Helen Orellana    | Another Course to College (ACC)
Amalia Perla      | Boston Community Leadership Academy
Douglas Rivera    | Madison Park High School SNAP Program
Kevin Rodriguez   | Another Course to College (ACC)
Luís Romero       | English High School
Emest Sandefur    | City on a Hill Charter Public School
Alex Wren         | Brook Farm
Chelsea Watts     | TechBoston Academy

2007 ASEP Graduates Chenelle Brown, Amalia Perla, and Tuta Ekpobor say goodbye to their Literacy Instructor Sara DaMorer (not), Tenacity’s Site Director at the Reggie Lewis Track & Field Center

Ford Foundation and USTA Select Tenacity for Exciting New Demonstration Project in East Boston

Tenacity has been selected as one of only four pilot projects across the country to participate in a new initiative being funded by the Ford Foundation and the United States Tennis Association (USTA). The East Boston Health Initiative seeks to promote the role of recreation, and more specifically, the sport of tennis, to build community in a “shifting sands community”, defined as a neighborhood experiencing economic and social change.

Tenacity has chosen the neighborhood of East Boston as our pilot site since it is a neighborhood that is experiencing significant social, economic and demographic changes. In recent years, the social and ethnic composition of the community has changed dramatically with a new influx of Hispanic immigrants settling in the neighborhood. At the same time, higher-income residents have been moving in as they purchase the rash of high-end housing units being constructed along the neighborhood’s waterfront, offering spectacular views of downtown Boston.

The East Boston Health Initiative seeks to address the issue of obesity and related health concerns that impacts East Boston’s increasingly diverse community. By coordinating, supporting and enhancing community-wide efforts to address the many causes of obesity, Tenacity’s new neighborhood-wide initiative seeks to help East Boston residents adopt healthier habits and routines, including better nutrition and more physical activity.

For the purposes of the demonstration project, Tenacity will partner with local neighborhood-based organizations including the Umans-Barnes Middle School where we currently serve as a provider for their Extended Learning Time initiative as well as the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center and the East Boston Tunga. The health center and the Tunga have a history of collaboration including their support for the Let’s Get Movin’ Program which targets overweight youth between 7-14 with supervised exercise, nutritional guidance, and family interventions including parent education.

The Ford/USTA funding will be used to build upon these existing programs and to increased opportunities that will encourage local residents to improve their eating habits and increase their level of physical activity proposed programming will include a variety of options including tennis clinics, support groups, health screenings, educational workshops, and community meetings.

11 Summer 2007