



## TENACITY: THE NEXT CHAPTER SPRING GALA RINGS IN THE FUTURE

Tenacity’s annual Spring Gala took place at the Boston Westin Waterfront Hotel on May 19. Billed as, The Next Chapter, the night marked the unveiling of Tenacity’s five year vision for expanded service to Boston and Worcester youth.

A crowd of 600 supporters and their guests listened while President & Founder Ned Eames laid out the ambitious plans. His presentation was punctuated by compelling testimony from partner principals Alex Montes McNeil, DaQuall Graham and Mike Sabin about the impact of Tenacity on their schools and their excitement over the future expansion.

With expert and beguiling assistance from Tenacity 8th grader Genesis Perez, Karen Holmes Ward, WCVB Director of Community Affairs and Host and Executive Producer of CityLine, hosted the feature event seamlessly. Moving speeches from Tenacity students detailed their own ambitions for the future, which Tenacity has invited them to envision and is helping them achieve.

Remarks from Board Chair Larry Greenberg included a symbolic passing of the gavel to Chair-Elect Bill Achtmeyer. Achtmeyer helped emcee an entertaining (and productive) auction by adding an impromptu item: seven tickets to a Bruins *Play-off* game that he suggested be used to take the youth who had spoken so well during the evening. Guests gave generously to the auction and to a fund-a-need program, helping to bring the evening’s fundraising to roughly 15% of Tenacity’s annual budget.

“This was Tenacity’s best gala yet!” raved a long-time supporter as the inspiring evening drew to a close.



WCVB’s Karen Holmes Ward and Tenacity 8th Grader Genesis Perez opened the Gala festivities as Tenacity launched its Next Chapter.

### Tenacity’s Next Chapter Details:

- A new 4th & 5th grade program to introduce tennis and identify kids who will benefit most from Tenacity’s intensive pathway.
- An intensive Pathway to Excellence from 4th grade through college graduation with short, medium and long term goals:
  - 75% read at grade level by 8th grade
  - 95% graduate high school
  - 85% attend and complete post-secondary school
- 1200 students on this Pathway to Excellence by 2016.
- Neighborhood-based recreation/learning centers to increase access to indoor courts & classrooms.
- Increased academics and job training for Pathway Youth during the summer.

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## MORE TENACITY STUDENTS THAN EVER TO ATTEND BEACON ACADEMY

Beacon Academy is a rigorous 14-month program which prepares students for admission to high-performing public and private high schools. With the help of Tenacity staff, four Middle School Academy 8th-graders have been accepted to Beacon, out of an incoming class of only 28 students. These Tenacity youth are now on-track to enroll in high schools such as Concord Academy, Buckingham Browne & Nichols, and to go on to attend top-tier colleges and universities.

"I am very proud and excited that Catherine was accepted to Beacon Academy," says Wayne Ashley, whose daughter Catherine is one of the students accepted. "Beacon is not only preparatory for high school, but it is preparatory for life."

Congratulations go to Catherine Ashley, Britania Morales Guerra, Sonny Huang and Genesis Perez.

## OUR PATHWAY TO EXCELLENCE PROGRAMS

### MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMY (MSA) (FORMERLY AFTER SCHOOL EXCELLENCE)

Working in close partnership with Boston Public Schools, Tenacity's Middle School Academy delivers an intensive three-year experience for middle school students which integrates literacy-based programming and supervised tennis instruction, all in a structured, supportive environment. The focus goes beyond tennis and literacy skills to promoting resilience among young people who face challenges on the path to adulthood, while preparing them for long-term academic success.

### SUMMER TENNIS & READING PROGRAM (STRP)

Tenacity's summer program is entering its 12th summer providing FREE tennis and literacy instruction to over 5,000 Boston youth from 6-16 at 30 sites all across the city. Our Worcester program will begin year four this summer, on track to serve 500 youth at three sites.

### COLLEGE PREP (FORMERLY ALUMNI SERVICES)

All participants who complete MSA continue their Tenacity experience through the College Prep program. College Prep offers a comprehensive, individualized program to help youth transition into the best high school for them, then provides academic and social support throughout high school, including an intensive college selection and application process that has resulted in 80% of our students going on to further education.

### ALUMNI SERVICES

Tenacity stays with Pathway Youth as they transition into college and remains a resource for them throughout their higher education. Ongoing mentorship and support, including college scholarships, helps ensure they successfully graduate from a two or four year college, or professional trade school.



## ABOUT TENACITY

Founded in 1999, Tenacity has provided over 30,000 at-risk Boston youth with high quality literacy and tennis programming. Tenacity provides a Pathway to Excellence from 6th grade through high school and beyond—and soon will be launching a program for 4th & 5th graders—building academic skills and improving fitness while fostering strong bonds between our students and caring staff, which instills the resilience needed to succeed in school and in life.

## HIGH SCHOOL SELECTION SUCCESS!

100% of Tenacity 8th-graders participated in a year long High School Selection process. Staff mentor students over the year, discussing their goals for high school, and helping them with applications, essays and school visits. By spring, students and staff see the thrilling results of all that arm-twisting, when acceptances from high schools across the city are awarded!

## ESSAY WRITING WORKSHOP

Over 30 Tenacity 8th graders received one-on-one help in completing at least one high school application essay during Tenacity's annual essay-writing workshop on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Many thanks to ACCESS which donates their downtown office for this annual event.



Essay Writing Workshop

## HIGH SCHOOL READINESS RESULTS!

Tenacity's comprehensive, improved High School Readiness Program resulted in a WONDERFUL showing of high school acceptances for our youth. Congratulations to the kids and to the staff!

### CHARTER SCHOOLS

City on a Hill  
Community Charter School of Cambridge  
Health Careers Academy

### EXAM SCHOOLS

John D. O'Bryant School of Science & Math  
Boston Latin School  
Boston Latin Academy

### DISTRICT SCHOOLS

Brighton High  
Brook Farm/Media High  
Burke High  
Charlestown High  
Community Academy of Science & Health  
East Boston High  
Excel High  
Madison Park High  
Snowden International

### PILOT SCHOOLS

Another Course to College  
Boston Community Leadership Academy  
English High School  
New Mission High School  
TechBoston Academy  
Fenway High School

### PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Cristo Rey  
Beacon Academy



A great smile during the GPS game

## 8TH GRADE HIGH SCHOOL READINESS RETREAT AN OVERNIGHT SUCCESS!

The year-long "High School Readiness" curriculum for 8th graders culminated with a weekend retreat at the Doubletree Hotel in Boston over April vacation, with thirty-one 8th graders attending.

Highlights included Mervan Osborne, Associate Headmaster of Beacon Academy, as keynote speaker, who engaged students with a raw, honest, and inspiring story of his own teen years and the harsh realities of growing up and overcoming obstacles.

Other speakers included Mimi Arbeit from Tufts University Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, who introduced youth to the GPS Project: Goal Selection, Pursuit of Strategies, and Shifting Gears in the face of challenge. A morning "boot camp" workout was led by Joe Rindone, of Get Tone With Rindone, LLC.

Though short on sleep, participants were enthusiastic about the final activity, an afternoon resourcefulness-themed scavenger hunt, which pushed students to think outside the box, ask for information from strangers, request job applications, and collect college admissions materials. Thanks to everyone who made this such a successful pilot retreat!



Scavenger hunt team on the High School Readiness Retreat.





# TENACITY

## THE NEXT CHAPTER

### TENACITY 2011 SPRING GALA CELEBRATION

In the course of a glittering evening, guests at Tenacity's annual fundraiser were treated to a glimpse of Tenacity's future as well as moving insight into the dreams and aspirations of seven talented student and staff speakers, each of whom read a "Letter to My Future Self". A sure-fire prize winning video, commissioned just for the event, launched the lively program.







## LIFE LONG RELATIONSHIPS ALONG THE PATHWAY

Bashiru Akinfolarin was born in Nigeria, Carlos Lopes was born in Cape Verde, Patrick Lewis was born right here in Boston. But in middle school, they all found their way to Tenacity. They could not know how much it would change their lives or the lives of Board member Paul Collins and his wife Mary. Akinfolarin and Lopes are just finishing their first years at Providence College and Tufts respectively, and Patrick has just completed his first year at UMass Dartmouth.

When they met in Tenacity, all enjoyed late summer get-aways to Nantucket, where Paul and Mary Collins opened their house to a handful of Tenacity middle schoolers each August when Tenacity's summer tennis & reading program finished.

As Mary got to know the boys, she realized the uphill battle they were facing entering adolescence. Bashiru and Carlos enrolled in an intensive one-year pre-high school program at Beacon Academy, while Patrick enrolled at Governor's Academy, a boarding school North of Boston. Collins began tutoring them and found herself assisting the boys and their busy parents more and more.

"I enjoyed working with them on special projects, and tutoring them on the weekends," says Collins. "But we could never have gotten the kids to do their homework if we hadn't had the tennis carrot. Paul had the patience to hit with them for hours!"

Eventually all three boys were enrolled in challenging private high schools. It became clear that having something of a surrogate family would help them adjust, so the Collins opened up their home in Wellesley as a second haven for the teenagers.

"Their parents trusted me so much," says Collins, "It was such a pleasure getting to know their parents and families." She continued helping them with their academics and became the contact person for the boys' headmasters and school advisors.

The easy access to a quiet place to focus away from their boarding schools helped both Bashiru and Carlos become excellent students. Akinfolarin says that Ms. Collins pushed him to achieve more during a difficult transition to high school.

"There were a lot of times freshman year when I felt like giving up," he said. "I don't think I would be where I am today without that support."



The boys and Mary on their way to Bollettieri Tennis Camp

For Patrick, who encountered different hurdles, the Collinses became a critical resource when Governor's Academy was not working out, enabling him to repeat Junior year and go on to graduate from Wellesley High School.

Because of the Collins, all three boys were able to attend the tennis camp of their dreams, Bollettieri Tennis Camp. All three boys started for the varsity tennis teams of their respective schools, a rarity for most high school freshman.

College visits, financial aid and applications became the Collins family's next projects, to great success.

"We encouraged them to look for best-fit colleges," Collins said, who says it took one visit with Lopes to Tufts University before he "fell in love" with his future campus.

All are still in touch with Paul and Mary, and Bashiru and Carlos still visit on weekends and holidays just as they have for the past eight years. They know they can call for any kind of help, at any time of day and often prefer Saturday nights playing Scrabble or bringing friends to the Collins in Wellesley to nights out.

Though Paul and Mary never set out to become a second family to the alumni, the incredible benefits of the unexpected connection have come full circle.

"My husband was right there along with me, tutoring the boys, and playing endless hours of tennis," Collins said. "It brought a lot of joy to our lives."

**"I don't think I would be where I am today without that support."  
--Bashiru, now a sophomore at Providence College**



## MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMY AT IRVING CONNECTS

Tyseph Hodges-Austin never played much tennis before joining Tenacity's Middle School Academy at Washington Irving Middle School. Now, his father, Joseph Hodges, says his seventh-grader wants to be a professional tennis player when he grows up. "I was like, 'Wow, where did this come from?'" says Hodges.

Tyseph says Tenacity has introduced him to a sport he can use to focus his energy when he gets home. He regularly practices hitting a foam ball off the wall in the new apartment he shares with his father. He says Tenacity has helped him with much more than just academics.

"Now I can concentrate more," says Hodges-Austin. "Tenacity helps me get rid of my mental anger because when I am home I can practice when I am angry."



Mr. Hodges says that since Tyseph joined Tenacity in November 2010 he has seen a marked difference in his character. "I think it has boosted his confidence tremendously."

Mr. Hodges credits Tenacity's literacy curriculum and the assistance the staff offers during homework time as affecting "tremendous" improvements in Tyseph's study habits. "What he doesn't finish [in Tenacity] I make sure he finishes at home," Hodges added.

Hodges also described how he and Tyseph make it a point to go out to a court each weekend and practice before Tyson's Team Tennis match with other Tenacity players from different schools.

"Now we have a father-son sport!" says Tyseph.

## TENACITY COLLEGE PREP STUDENT AWARDED FULL SCHOLARSHIP TO BC!

CONGRATULATIONS to Rosemary Onofri who was just awarded a Boston College Allston-Brighton Scholarship! As one of only ten recipients to receive this scholarship, 100% of her tuition will be covered for all four years of Boston College Connell School of Nursing. Tenacity has been with Rosemary every step of the way. "We are SO proud of Rosemary, she is a reminder of why we do this work!" says College Prep Director, Stephanie Gendron.



Rosemary Onofri

## LOOK WHERE TENACITY YOUTH ARE HEADED: 2011 COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

Congratulations to all graduating seniors, who have been accepted to over 50 colleges and universities! And congratulations to Tenacity's College Prep Program--which has certainly earned its new name--for helping make it all happen!

### LIST OF COLLEGES

Assumption College

Becker College

Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology

Boston College

Bridgewater State University

Brigham Young University,

Idaho

Clark University

College of the Holy Cross

Curry College

Emerson College

Emmanuel College

Green Mountain

Johnson & Wales University

Keystone College

Mass Bay Community College

Mass College of Liberal Arts

Mass College of Pharmacy

Merrimack College

Middlesex Community College

Mt. Ida College

New England College

Newbury College

Northeastern University

Pine Manor College

Salem State University

St. Joseph's College

St. Michael's College

Stonehill College

Suffolk University

Thomas College

Umass Amherst

Umass Boston

Umass Dartmouth

Umass Lowell

University of Hartford

University of New Hampshire

University of New Haven

University of Southern New Hampshire

Wentworth Institute of Technology

Wheelock College

# TENACITY

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## SUMMER SET TO SERVE 5,000!

Are you ready to see Tenacity EVERYWHERE this summer?



The Summer Tennis & Reading Program (STRP) staff has set ambitious goals for the summer of 2011: over 5,000 kids and 30 sites around the city. STRP begins July 5 and running through August 12. Plans are already well underway for another very successful summer.

Weekly reading themes, a health and wellness curriculum and partnerships with over 50 programs including such community pillars as the Boys and Girls Club and various YMCA youth groups are just some of the highlights. Program coordinators also plan to pump up the competitive play with advanced-level programming

at Carter Playground in Roxbury and great opportunities on a traveling New England Junior USTA tennis team. Tenacity truly will be all over the city this summer—come out to one of our sites, pick up a racket and jump in the game, or sit down under a tree on your lunch hour and read with one of our kids.

See you in July!

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