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AmeriCorps: 20 Years of Service Strengthening Communities

On September 12th, AmeriCorps celebrated its 20th anniversary with events around the country, including the Massachusetts ceremony hosted by the Massachusetts Service Alliance at Tufts University. Four U.S. Presidents commemorate the anniversary, with Presidents Obama and Clinton attending the White House ceremony, President George H.W. Bush joining a ceremony in Kennebunkport, Maine, and President George W. Bush sending best wishes in a video.

Across the country, thousands of people took the pledge to be AmeriCorps members, including 28 Tenacity AmeriCorps Fellows. Since AmeriCorps’ inception in 1994, 900,000 Americans have served in the program and have committed 1.2 billion hours of service to help solve some of our nation’s toughest challenges, community by community. Tenacity’s AmeriCorps fellows work directly with our Middle School Academy students on academics, family engagement, independent reading, high school selection, fitness/tennis, and more, significantly increasing the impact of Tenacity’s efforts to close the education and opportunity gaps for underserved Boston youth.

Alan D. Solomont, Dean of Tufts University’s Tisch College, summed the spirit of the event up perfectly in his address kicking off the Massachusetts AmeriCorps ceremony: “The number of young men and women willing to serve in their communities for a small stipend should inspire us. Service isn’t a Democratic idea or a Republican idea, it is an American idea that speaks directly to who we are as a nation.”

AmeriCorps Fellow Opportunities

We are seeking great people to fill our Tenacity AmeriCorps Fellow roles for 2015-16. Do you have a loved one or neighbor who graduates from college this spring? Or is there someone you know who is considering a career change and thinks education mixed with tennis and fitness might be a great next step? If so, this could be the perfect opportunity.

Tenacity offers a one-year service opportunity leading to a rich experience in youth development, whole child education philosophy, and urban education in our Middle School Academy (MSA) program. Tenacity AmeriCorps Fellows lead middle school youth and teach a literacy and tennis/fitness curriculum in one of our five partner schools in Boston. Responsibilities include leading small groups of students in various academic and fitness activities in an after-school or school-day classroom setting during the school year. Fellows also help create lesson plans for literacy blocks as well as tennis and fitness blocks, recruit and manage volunteers, assist in data entry, and facilitate family engagement initiatives. In the summer, Fellows take leadership roles, running summer camp sites in Tenacity’s Summer Tennis and Reading Program. To apply or for more information, email: Apply2BFellow@tenacity.org.

80% OF GRADUATES ENROLL IN COLLEGE* OR APPROVED POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS

* More importantly, 70% of Tenacity Pathway graduates have either completed or are currently enrolled in a post-secondary program

POST-SECONDARY SUCCESS
The pinnacle of the Pathway

Tenacity Pathway college student, Jason Mejia, pictured on the campus of Tufts University, where he is a freshman this year.
Outstanding MCAS Scores Highlight Significant Academic Gains

The results from our Middle School Academy (MSA) students’ MCAS scores for the previous school year are in, and they are impressive! In English Language Arts test results, Tenacity Middle School Academy students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades are outperforming their classmates both in our five Boston Public Schools (BPS) partner schools as well as across the city.

Tenacity 3-Year Cohort % Proficient and Above

Student results on the MCAS tests are reported according to four performance levels: Warning/Failing, Needs Improvement, Proficient, and Advanced. The goal of an English Language Arts curriculum is to teach learners how to reason and use language purposefully as they comprehend, construct, and convey meaning.

Tenacity Middle School Academy is our core, intensive after-school or integrated school-day program (depending on the partner school) that combines literacy, life-skills, family engagement, and tennis/fitness. Our partner schools are Dever-McCormack Middle School, Jackson/Mann K-8 School, Curley K-8 School, Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School, and Maria Umana Middle School Academy.

Tenacity’s impact in middle school helps build the foundation that students need to acquire the knowledge, confidence, and skills necessary for ongoing success in high school, college, and beyond.

Tenacity students improved 100% in proficiency as compared to 75% improvement for the district and 30% improvement for our partner schools as a whole.

LITERACY PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:
DEVER-MCCORMACK MIDDLE SCHOOL

In September, MSA students at Dever-McCormack Middle School (DMC) read about the lives of Venus and Serena Williams and discussed life skills that they can use to achieve their own greatness. Students also read Fish Cheeks, an interesting short story written by Amy Tan about the strength we can draw from our differences.

In October, the focus was science fiction. Students started the month reading He-Y Come on Ou-Ti! Lessons focused on how science fiction uses strange and outlandish occurrences to teach us about important social issues.

The November focus was on writing strong paragraphs about Venus and Serena Williams. Using evidence from the books, students wrote paragraphs that highlighted positive character traits.

Since the beginning of the year, DMC students have read over 50 books!

The Next Chapter
Moving the Baseline for Success

Tenacity has developed “The Next Chapter” capacity building plan which raises the bar from high school graduation to achieving post-secondary success. Key goals include:

- Expanding the partnership with Boston Public Schools (BPS) in order to close the achievement and opportunity gaps for more underserved BPS students
- By 2019, doubling from 1,000 to more than 2,000 students served in the school year Pathway programs while continuing to serve 5,000 children in our summer reading and fitness program
- Ensuring Pathway students are not only prepared to succeed in high school, but also college and other approved post-secondary pursuits

As we move toward reaching these goals, we are continuing to grow in size and impact, adding new staff to build capacity and increasing the number of Boston Public School students served by our school year Pathway programs.

The Elementary Program (EP), which has five BPS partner schools, re-aligned to better serve our Middle School Academy partner schools by adding Mather Elementary School in Dorchester. Mather Elementary is a BPS feeder school to both the Lilla G. Frederick and Dever-McCormack middle schools.

The Next Chapter - continued on pg. 6

POST-SECONDARY STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Bennie Ramos, who emigrated to the U.S. from El Salvador, joined Tenacity’s Middle School Academy (MSA) program at Mario Umana Middle School Academy in sixth grade. After graduating from the MSA and Umana in 2009, Bonnie went on to great success in high school, graduating from Boston Community Leadership Academy (BCLA) in 2013. All of her hard work and determination at BCLA led to earning $6,500 through Tenacity’s Scholarship program as well as a scholarship through BCLA that funded her first year at Bunker Hill Community College.

Currently, Bonnie is enrolled and thriving in the Nursing program at Bunker Hill Community College, where her academic achievement earned an invitation to the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. After completing her associate’s degree at Bunker Hill, Bonnie plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree and medical school. In addition to excelling academically, Bonnie has stayed involved with Tenacity, working with children in Tenacity’s Elementary and Summer Tennis and Reading programs.

Tenacity Pathway college student, Bonnie Ramos, pictured on the campus of Bunker Hill Community College, where she is in the Nursing program.
Tenacious Journey

From the time I was introduced to the Appalachian Trail (AT) as a sophomore at Bates College, I developed a fascination with the idea of “thru-hiking” it from end to end. The idea became this romantic vision, an endeavor of physical and mental endurance, a peaceful aloneness and a connection with a part of the world that makes me feel whole. It wasn’t the first or last of these ideas that would make people shake their head. There was the idea that I would become a professional tennis player and compete at the four majors. There was the idea that along with Ned Eames, we’d create an organization that would use tennis to give thousands of children in Boston a pathway to having a successful and productive life.

Now that I have some small perspective on the pursuit of these “romantic visions,” I’ve come to a realization that there are just three skills needed. The first is an imagination that uses one’s education and life experiences to develop a fascination that turns into a passion. The second is an ability to tune out the doubters and critics. Lastly, you need tenacity which will propel you past those inevitably difficult times that weren’t part of your romanticized version of the experience. The beauty of these collective skills is that anyone can develop and tap into them.

It is my hope that over the past year engaging with Tenacity students around the hiking of the Appalachian Trail, seeds of having and chasing a “romantic vision” will have been planted. It’s my hope that the skills needed to realize their vision will be forming the foundation to their future. It’s my hope that they develop the tenacity to persevere through the difficult times everyone faces when pursuing something worthwhile. It’s my hope that the community around these children sees the value in Tenacity creating a pathway for their success.

I have been incredibly lucky in my life to have the opportunity and support of so many people as I’ve chased my passions. It’s been humbling to say the least, that so many friends supported this effort. To the Tenacity community, thank you and have a great 2016!

Bud Schultz
The Next Chapter - continued from pg. 5

The Middle School Academy program (MSA) added two full-time coordinator level positions dedicated to ensuring the best possible support for students and families at each site while the MSA program at Dever-McCormack Middle School is 50% larger this year. Across our five MSA partner schools, we are reaching over 250 middle school students.

In order to serve Tenacity’s heightened focus on post-secondary program access, persistence, and completion, the College Prep and Post-Secondary Services team added three new staff. The team’s expansion will enhance the services offered to College Prep and Post-Secondary students, ensuring that each receives the support he or she needs to thrive and achieve post-secondary success.

All participants who complete Tenacity’s MSA are offered continued support and opportunities through College Prep and Post-Secondary Services.

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

NEW BOARD MEMBERS
Tenacity warmly welcomes Adiel Brown, Karen Holmes Ward, and Peter Renner to our Board of Directors. Adiel, a Tenacity Pathway alumnus, is currently Vice Chairman of the Shining Stars Montessori Academy Board of Trustees and a J.D. Candidate at Harvard Law School. Karen is the Director of Public Affairs and Community Services at WCVB-TV. Peter is the Managing Director at Pacific Crest Securities.

TENACITY CONNECTS WITH CITY AWAKE
In December, City Awake brought together over 200 partner organizations for a festival celebrating and connecting Boston’s vibrant social enterprise community. With over 70-planned events, the purpose of the 10-day festival was to highlight and amplify the work being done by Boston’s impact sector. Tenacity was excited to partner with City Awake at our Middle School Academy’s annual Holiday Classic tennis tournament at Harvard’s Murr Center. By connecting the Holiday Classic with City Awake, the tournament became an opportunity to showcase the academic and fitness impact of Tenacity’s Pathway programs to the surrounding community.

In addition to presenting a wonderful speech about how meaningful the new Curley K-8 School playing field will be to students, 7th grader and Tenacity MSA student, John Villalona, had the opportunity to meet Mayor Walsh.

Second year Tenacity AmeriCorps Fellow, Jacob Vlahakis, was honored by the New England Patriots Charitable Foundation as their “Patriots Difference Maker of the Week” as part of their Celebrate Volunteerism Initiative.

In September, members of the Tenacity Leadership Council Committee got together at the beautiful Longwood Cricket Club in Chestnut Hill for a spirited evening of tennis, camaraderie, and refreshments.

Tenacity

Tenacity Marathon Team Coach and 12-time Boston Marathon qualifier, George Dobrow, running in 2014.
### Tenacity - Impact and Numbers

#### The Next Chapter - Current and Future

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#### Summer Tennis & Reading Pathway
- 5,000 Students

#### Middle School Academy (MSA)
- 1,180 Students
- 600 Students
- 300 Students
- 250 Students
- 160 Students

#### College Prep
- 340 Students

#### Post-Secondary Services
- 255 Students

### Show Your Tenacity

Save the Date for the May 9th Tenacity Gala!

Each year more than 700 guests join Tenacity’s staff at our annual gala to celebrate the success and impact of the Pathway Programs and mark the amazing achievements that Tenacity students have accomplished. This year’s gala theme, *Show Your Tenacity*, highlights the many ways that our students, staff, board members, partners, volunteers, and supporters demonstrate our namesake quality. The evening will be filled with fun, friends, and fine dining to go along with exciting entertainment, inspiring stories, and exclusive auction items. Mark your calendars and come out to show your support for the tenacious students we serve. Together we can help close the opportunity and achievement gaps for Boston youth.

#### The 2015 Tenacity Gala
- Saturday, May 9, 2015
- Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel
- 425 Summer Street, Boston, MA 02210

### Student Data Snapshot

**IN THE 2013 - 2014 SCHOOL YEAR**

- **95% OF PATHWAY STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL**
- **46 MSA STUDENTS BENEFITED FROM TARGETED HIGH SCHOOL SELECTION ASSISTANCE**

**SUMMER TENNIS & READING PROGRAMS SERVES 5,000 KIDS**

**TO-DAY POST-SECONDARY PROGRAM ENROLLMENT**
- **77% 4-YEAR COLLEGE**
- **8% 2-YEAR COLLEGE**
- **13% OTHER PROGRAMS**
- **1% GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

**SUMMER TENNIS & READING PROGRAMS SERVES 5,000 KIDS**

For 15 consecutive summers, Tenacity has offered its dynamic Summer Tennis & Reading Program (STRP) to help stem summer learning loss and build a love for tennis in kids throughout the city of Boston. This past summer, over 5,000 children and teenagers read books, honed literacy skills, learned the basics of tennis, and competed in friendly matches at 24 Boston sites. Having reached its sixth season, the STRP in Worcester continued to grow, serving 600 youth at four Worcester sites.

In addition to being a fun, free, and educational summer program for participants, the STRP in Boston also provides job skills and leadership development opportunities for over 40 Tenacity College Prep students and Pathway program alumni each year. This is often the first job many of these students have had and the experience helps them develop a sense of agency and personal accountability while fostering positive identities as mentors and leaders. In the end, they come away with deeper connections to their Tenacity peers and a strong sense of community.

**Help inspire tenacity in the lives of less advantaged Boston youth**

[Make a secure online donation at http://ow.ly/HniwX](http://ow.ly/HniwX)

- BPS School - 52%
- BPS Vocational - 7%
- Pilot School - 14%
- Commonwealth Charter - 5%
- BPS Charter - 2%
- Exam School - 9%
- Independent School - 11%

- **17 High Schools**
- **86% COLLEGE OR APPROVED POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS**
- **77% 4-YEAR COLLEGE**
- **8% 2-YEAR COLLEGE**
- **13% OTHER PROGRAMS**
- **1% GRADUATE PROGRAMS**

Summer Tennis and Reading Program (STRP) participants are proud to have fun on the court. Kids in the STRP not only keep fit, they stay sharp with 30 minutes of daily reading curriculum woven into the program.

Tenacity Pathway Program students (clockwise from top left) Francisco Gonzalez, Sowadahou Barry, Jonathan Martinez, and Brenda Ramirez.

![Tenacity Pathway Program students](image-url)
SAVE THE DATE
The 2015 Tenacity Gala
Westin Boston Waterfront Hotel
Saturday, May 9, 2015
SHOW YOUR TENACITY