

# vantage point

**15-LOVE**  
Giving Kids The Advantage

Capital Region Youth  
Tennis Foundation

FALL 2009

Visit us online at  
[www.15LOVE.org](http://www.15LOVE.org)

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## Program News

### Jamboree 2009 A Great Success

On a rare dry Thursday at Washington Park in Albany, over 250 kids ran across the tennis courts in their new 15-LOVE t-shirts to celebrate the end of a fun-filled summer with 15-LOVE. Instructors hosted kids' favorite tennis games, offering countless chances to win prizes, and every half hour, the kids took a water break at a carnival area, allowing them the opportunity to win even more prizes. The day ended with a review of all of the summer off-courts (life skills sessions) while feasting on cookies and other tasty treats all baked by Barbara Yake (she made about 80 dozen treats!). Prizes were awarded for the Art & Essay Contests and for Best Attendance, Best Attitude and Most Improved at each of the 13 summer sites. Finally, every participant was sent home with school supplies donated by the Community Foundation for the Capital Region's Standish Family Fund that were packaged in backpacks donated by Stewart's Shops. The day was a huge success, with many parents and kids offering words of gratitude and compliments about the high quality of instructors. Many thanks to the 15-LOVE staff and instructors for all their hard work over a tricky summer with all the rain and chaos of moving our office to our new home. Many thanks also to everyone who supported the Jamboree. We're looking forward to a great (and relatively dry) Summer in 2010!

### A Place to Call Home!

#### *15-LOVE purchases building at 785 Washington Ave. in Albany*

15-LOVE has lived a nomadic life during the past two decades, with five different locations. Our new permanent location at 785 Washington Avenue, on the corner of North Main Street, near Albany High School will enable more consistent program delivery and more confident planning for the long-term future. The capital campaign that supports this new building provides us with an excellent opportunity to further realize the vision of those who, over the past 20 years, helped create a haven for inner city youth.

Our new home will create a home away from home for our youth, thereby developing in them a sense of ownership and pride. It will give stability to their lives, as a place they can come to every day. It will help to create a family environment, one of acceptance and multiculturalism, where youth are embraced and nurtured. It will increase the quality of our services and create permanency. It will also enhance the legacy of our 20 year program. As a fiscally responsible long term investment, it will allow cost savings to be returned to program services. The location is accessible and convenient for our kids. It has ample office space and parking and provides easy access to arterial roads for our regional programming. Finally, it provides great visibility, thereby enhancing the public awareness of 15-LOVE's services.



## inside



<b>A Place to Call Home</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A Message from Board President Herb Shultz</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Kids Vantage</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Alumni Q&amp;A</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>FLM Wrap - Up</b>	<b>6</b>

## Denise McCoy Scholarship Winners

We are proud to announce two new recipients of the Denise McCoy Scholarship. Khadijah Peek and Andrea Carrillo are both long-time 15-LOVE participants and very deserving recipients.

Khadijah was practically born into 15-LOVE. She has been a participant since she was 4 years old. As she grew, so did her role in 15-LOVE, which included the Excellence Program, Leadership Program, College Prep Program, and during her high school years, she was a volunteer at our Giffen Elementary Book Power Club. She is headed to Syracuse University.

Andrea entered 15-LOVE upon moving to the US from Colombia as an eager eight year-old. Like Khadijah, she also participated in the Excellence Program, Leadership Program, College Prep Program, and during her high school years, was also a volunteer at our Giffen Elementary Book Power Club. She is headed to SUNY New Paltz.

These two young women will be sorely missed during the year. They were great friends and truly the student leaders of the 15-LOVE Program. We wish them well and hope to have them back as instructors over the summer!

### A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

## Going for the Winning Shot

During a tennis match, there are times when circumstances allow one player to go for a winning shot. Rather than playing conservatively and just keeping the ball in play, the player has an opportunity to go for a winning shot and, by hitting the ball effectively, the player will likely win the point outright and decisively. I use this example from a tennis match to make an analogy to a recent real life situation here at 15-LOVE.



In February, the 15-LOVE Board of Directors, after a great deal of deliberation and evaluation, took a bold step (not unlike the tennis player who goes for the winner). We decided to purchase a building at 785 Washington Avenue in Albany and make it our permanent home. We could have taken a safer route and looked for a new space to rent, rather than purchase a building. Given the depressed economic climate, a strong argument could be made to “play it safe” and to “wait it out” until the economy strengthened again; however, we had an opportunity to own a facility that had all the qualities we were looking for in a new space: a convenient location, great visibility, close proximity to Albany High School, ample parking, an ideal floor plan layout, plenty of storage for our equipment, lower occupancy costs (by \$15,000 annually), and at a bargain price. This was an opportunity that comes along only rarely. We unanimously and enthusiastically decided to go for it.....and we haven’t looked back!

This move has given us a new burst of energy, purpose, and enthusiasm. By taking a bold step (and going for the winner), we feel confident that 15-LOVE has secured its future for the long haul. The 15-LOVE Program will be here to continue producing, from our pool of participants, future leaders in our Capital Region community.

I am convinced that our decision to purchase this property will prove to be analogous to the tennis player having made a successful winning shot. In a relatively short time, we have raised over \$160,000 toward our \$300,000 funding goal for the purchase and improvements to our property. We are cautiously optimistic that the remaining funds will be spoken for by year end 2009. We welcome visitors to stop by and see why we are so excited and enthused about our new home. We already know that our participants are experiencing the benefits of having a new “home away from home.” As the Hall of Fame sportscaster Jack Buck used to say “It’s a winner!”

With kind regards,

Herb Shultz



## *It's an Honor...*

- Board President Herbert L. Shultz received the Tech Valley Non-Profit Business Council Award
- Board Vice President Bob Schmitz was inducted into the Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame
- Participant Kevin Sullivan received the Making a Difference Award from Capital Communications Federal Credit Union

# KidsVantage

Stories Written by 15-LOVE Participants



## Kids Enjoy Tennis Tournament at Yale University

By Curtis, Age 10, Schenectady, NY

**O**n July 3, 2009 the 15-LOVE Program took a lot of my friends and I to Connecticut. We drove for about three hours and finally arrived at Yale University. During the trip we talked about how much fun we were going to have, what the summer has been like (rain), and about all the things we were looking forward to for the rest of the summer. This was a great trip that I was able to spend time playing tennis, having fun with friends and meeting new people.



At Yale they play a professional tennis tournament called The Pilot Penn. It's before the week of the U.S. Open, the biggest tennis tournament in America. I saw the stadium the players play on and I played on some of the courts they play on too. The weather tried to mess things up for the tournament, but it didn't.

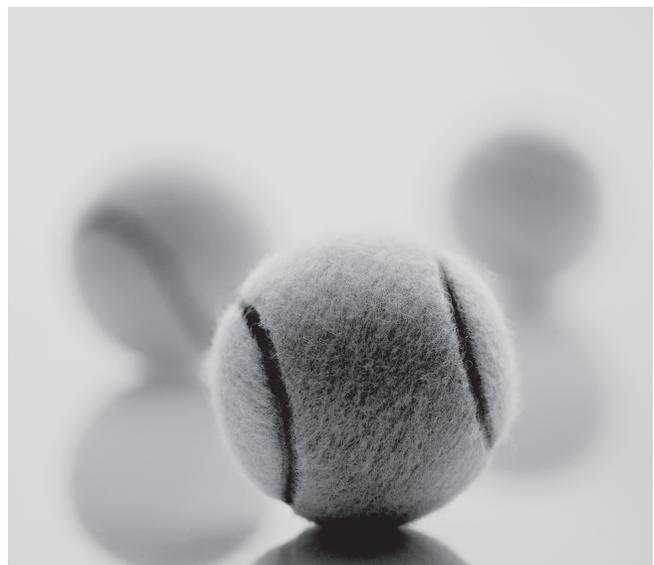
They just moved it indoors. Yale has great indoor courts with six courts. I also saw a lot of my friends play matches. We all tried very hard and we all supported each other the whole time. That's what friends are for.

During, and after, the tournament we were able to have a lot of fun. We would play capture the flag, played card games or just sat around and talked with each other about things that were going on this

summer. We tried to avoid talking about the rain. I found out a lot about my friends that I did not know like the colleges they want to go to and the type of jobs they want when they grow up. I even found out how a lot of them got started with 15-LOVE. I also found out a lot about the coaches. They were there with us trying to give back to the program that helped them so much when they were my age.

**N**ever really being outside the state of New York, traveling to Connecticut was a lot of fun. We saw a lot of the city and some of the country area. New York and Connecticut are really not that different. The people I meet in Connecticut were very nice people. There was another program there from Connecticut that was a lot like 15-LOVE. We played a lot together and talked about life and tennis. Even though some of them beat us in tennis we all shook hands and remind friends outside the court.

I already cannot wait until we go back to Connecticut. Everyone tells me that the second time around will be even more fun then the first. I know I cant wait to find out for myself.



# 15-LOVE Alumni Q&A



## Rohan Raikar

Rohan Raikar is currently a Pharmacist in Alexandria, Virginia.

*How many years have you been involved in the 15-LOVE program?*

**ROHAN:** I have been involved with 15-LOVE since 1995 both as a participant and coach after graduating from the program.

*How did you first get involved?*

**ROHAN:** I got involved in the program after seeing a flyer in the library offering free tennis lessons. As a result me and my older brother, Nithin, wanted to give it a shot and looking back it was one of the best decisions ever made.

*What are you doing now?*

**ROHAN:** Currently I am working as a Pharmacist for CVS Pharmacy in Alexandria, Virginia. I have been with the company for a couple of years now, serving as the pharmacist in charge.

*Take us back to your days in the 15-LOVE program... give us your most memorable moment.*

**ROHAN:** My most memorable moments was probably my first tournament as I was very nervous and anxious to participate in and show what I had learned from all those long practice sessions.

*Did you have a favorite coach?*

**ROHAN:** Yes, Nate Simms. He did an incredible job in teaching me how to play the game and motivating me to get better and better.

*Is there something that you learned in your years with 15-LOVE that you still use today?*

**ROHAN:** I learned the importance of sportsmanship and that there's more than just winning and losing.

*What advice would you give to younger kids currently participating in 15-LOVE?*

**ROHAN:** Continue to work hard both on and off the tennis court as 15-LOVE opens numerous doors for success.

*“From what we get, we can make a living; what we give, however, makes a life.*

— Arthur Ashe

## Open House Held to Celebrate New Building



*Board Member Anne Trimble cuts a cake which replicated 15-LOVE's new building as participants look on.*

Over 50 staff, board members, supporters and friends attended an Open House on Wednesday, September 16 in celebration of 15-LOVE's new purchased building at 785 Washington Ave in Albany.

## Grants Awarded for Purchase of New Mini Van



*15-LOVE participants and their latest mode of transportation.*

Funds awarded from the Bender Family Foundation and the Wright Family Foundation were applied toward the purchase of a new 10 passenger mini van and its associated costs for one year.

"We are so grateful for the support of both the Bender Family Foundation and the Wright Family foundation for this purchase," said Executive Director Amber Marino. "One of the greatest needs of the 15-LOVE Program is transportation. Well over 500 participants are transported in our vans throughout the year, and the vans are also used to transport the equipment needed to teach the tennis portion of the lessons, such as portable nets (for use on gym floors), large bags filled with 30+ rackets, metal hoppers filled with 60+ tennis balls. The vans are used every day that programming takes place (Monday – Saturday) and are thus critical to operations. This van replaces a 2001 van with over 120,000 miles.

## Hello and Goodbye Staff Changes at 15-LOVE

Katie Genovese has been named 15-LOVE's new Director of Development. Katie will be responsible for the Capital Campaign, the Annual Campaign and the newsletters among others duties. Please extend Katie a warm welcome to 15-LOVE. Katie takes over for Eileen McCarthy who will become in-house counsel at NYSID (New York State Industries for the Disabled.)

Domingo Montes, a former participant, volunteer, coach, site director and Program Director, has returned to 15-LOVE to again serve as Program Director while working on his Masters Degree. Montes replaces Nathan Zach who will be joining the Prayer and Healing Center in Albany.

## Lois Lowry wins the 5th Annual Little d Award for *The Willoughbys*

The 5th Annual Little d Award is being held this year at The Opalka Gallery of the Sage Colleges on New Scotland Avenue in Albany on November 12th from 6:00-8:00 PM. Two-time Newbery Medal winner, Lois Lowry, will be accepting the Little d Award for her book *The Willoughbys*, an extremely funny and clever parody that pays homage to classic works of children's literature. We are very honored to have Ms. Lowry pay us a visit and we hope that you can take advantage of this opportunity to meet her.

The venue is in a very interesting space and a photographic exhibit will also be on display in the gallery. The small theater will be open to the gallery as well and there will be a retrospective video on the screen celebrating all the Little d Award winning authors from the past five years and their interactions with children from several of our Albany Schools. The evening will be rounded out by music provided by the Andy Morse Group and a great selection of hors d'oeuvres and refreshments. Proceeds from the Little d will be directed to the Denise McCoy Scholarship Fund and to procuring books for the citywide Kids Read event.

Ms. Lowry will be visiting Giffen Elementary on the following morning, November 13th, to visit a class of 5th graders in the school's library. Mayor Jennings will be announcing *The Willoughbys* as this year's selection for the 2009 Kids Read project either at the award event or at Giffen Elementary, depending on his schedule. Invitations have been mailed and tickets will also be available at the door. Please come and help celebrate our Fifth Anniversary!



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## Despite Economic Downturn 17th Annual Fore Love & Money Support Remained Strong



Our heartfelt thanks to our FLM golf and tennis outing supporters who, despite a sluggish economy, remained loyal to the cause. The event, held at the Schuyler Meadows Country Club on June 8, 2009, raised a net \$77,000, the second highest total to date.

We extend our gratitude to all of those who participated, most particularly our corporate sponsors: Champions: Nigro Companies Winners: Citizens Bank, Fenimore Asset Management, Stuyvesant Plaza and the Times Union Aces: Albany Valve & Fitting, Berkshire Bank, CDPHP, First Columbia, First Niagara, Kasselman Electric, Key Bank, M&T Bank, Krackeler Scientific, Inc., and Picotte Companies.

***We are truly grateful for your support***

*Pictured left to right at the FLM golf and tennis outing at SMC on June 8: Board Member Dan Sleasman, Bill Krackeler, Rance McKenna and FLM Golf Chair Bill Cromie.*

### Capital Region Youth Tennis Foundation

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