



FROM THE executive director

25 Years!!! I have a hard time believing 15-LOVE has been going strong for 25 years. It's hard to believe that the pre-teens I used to pick up at 6:00 on Saturday mornings in my little red car (thanks, Mom and Dad) when I was a student at St. Rose are now our graduates, staff members, board members, lawyers, doctors, CPAs and more. We're at the point where we need to start making 15-LOVE onesies for children of our alumni. (I haven't gotten around to that yet, but it's time!) As a parent, I go through this at home. I just asked my eight-year old how he suddenly came up to my chest; I thought he was on his toes, but no...I've come to accept that feeling of pride mixed with anguish – but it usually catches me off guard, sneaking up and grabbing at my heartstrings...

The week before Fore, Love & Money was supposed to happen, Herb, Katie and I were in the office working feverishly to finish up the details for the event. The phone rang and I was a little distracted, focused on my work and not



in the mood for games, when the male voice asked if I knew who it was. I stammered; he pushed on. I finally said, "I'm sorry, I'm really busy right now, and I just don't know who this is or have the focus to even guess."

"It's Richard Moffatt!" My response was immediate. "RICHIE!!!" I hadn't heard from Richie in years. Richie grew up in North Albany, finished at Albany High and went on The College of St. Rose. He went through our excellence program and took many rides in my little red car. I have this vivid memory of Richie riding his bike around his neighborhood with Kenny Williams sitting on the front, both happy and carefree. Richie has a wife and four kids now and a great job in Atlanta. Although we

don't hear from him much, he told me that he's been keeping up with us and to celebrate our 25th Anniversary, he was making a personal donation and had also convinced his company to donate.

I stepped away from the table where we were all working to have a half-hour conversation with Richie in the midst of our craziness. He made my day – made my week, really. He told me that 15-LOVE made all the difference for him. What he probably doesn't realize is that he has made all the difference for us. Richie and our other graduates have formed a culture of success. The graduates of our Excellence Program have gone on to do amazing things. They are a supportive group, always looking out for one another and keeping in touch.

Just this past week, I came in with a to-do list a mile long. I had only one thing on my calendar and was hoping to add a few check marks to that list. This summer has been a little crazy, and I had gotten a little behind (a place I don't like to be). I was on the phone, when Djuan walked in — another one of our

graduates who was in town for the day and came in to say hello. He hadn't eaten yet, and we had had the Healthy Grilling event the night before. We had a little leftover chicken and salad, so I fed him and we chatted.

Djuan had just taken a new job, in a position he had been working towards for years. He had graduated from college just this year while working full-time, and it was a struggle. He had been in here before and we had given him a few "pep talks" about the fact that he really could make it through college, maybe at a different school, but he's a hard worker and could do it. And he did. And here he was, saying the words "graduate school!" I almost fell over. I know he can do it if he puts his mind



to it.

Two hours later, Shalini, another graduate, walked in. She was just in town for a few days. Shalini is starting medical school in a few weeks and is nervous about the workload. I have no questions about her ability to do the work and work hard in medical school – it's not even a remote concern, but I understand that she might be nervous about it. It was so great to catch up with her and with Djuan. There weren't many check marks added to my list that day, but there was no better way I could've spent my time.

I made a commitment a long time ago that I would always make time for our "kids" stopping in. It might mean I'm pulling out my laptop to finish my work after I get my own children in bed, but it's worth it. This is what gives me the energy to get to work every day and work as hard as I can to make our program as strong as it can be for the families we serve now, our graduates and for the kids who are yet to come. So, my work didn't get done, but it made it easier to get it done the next day.

Thank you for your support. I can tell you for certain that lives have been transformed because of 15-LOVE. Someone recently asked me what sets 15-LOVE apart from other organizations. Clearly, it's the people, the passion and the "little" things. I tell the instructors that their goal in every class is to have a positive impact on every child. If they miss every ball, then compliment their shoes and make sure they have a great experience in the off-court. Make it great for every kid at every class.

Amber Marino



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15-LOVE IN ACTION



vantage point

SUMMER 2015



25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

We are very excited to be celebrating the 25th anniversary of 15-LOVE this year!

As most of you know, Arthur Ashe was instrumental in helping to found 15-LOVE, along with community leaders in June of 1990.

We are planning a series of fun and meaningful events throughout the fall to commemorate this special time in the history of our organization.



SAVE THE DATE

Play Day and 15-LOVE Open House

Wednesday, September 23 from 3:00 p.m. to 7 p.m.

25th Anniversary Celebration Dinner

Monday, November 9 at 6:00 p.m. at the Desmond Hotel

For more information, please continue to follow us on Facebook and visit our website: www.15love.org.

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15-LOVE COLLEGE PREP & LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

The College Prep and Leadership Training Programs had a productive year, and we wish our three graduates (Skylar, Jon and Allen) a successful freshman year in college!

During the 2014-2015 College Prep Program, the Excellence students enjoyed the sessions that featured guest speakers from local colleges. We welcomed the members of the University at Albany Chapter of Phi Alpha Delta (pre-law fraternity), who hosted a workshop on the importance of a well-written resume. The students practiced writing resumes by using effective strategies that appeal to a potential employer or to a college admissions officer. Additionally, the members of the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) women's tennis team provided an informative workshop with the focus on playing tennis on a college team. Each team member spoke about her unique path to becoming a member of the RPI Tennis Team. The 15-LOVE Excellence participants were encouraged to explore colleges that will fit their academic and social life, with and without tennis.



15-LOVE's annual Leadership Weekend was held this past winter at Camp Chingachgook. The weekend included team and leadership building activities through formal and informal tasks, along with whole group discussions. A structured activity required the students to work in teams to build the tallest and most stable tower using newspaper, straws and masking tape. This activity involved creativity, planning and teamwork.

Another session during the retreat focused on dining etiquette. The students learned that dining etiquette plays a role in everyday life, and will do so in their professional lives. Also discussed were etiquette rules in preparation for an employer who may enjoy conducting interviews, networking or having meetings over lunch or dinner. Finally, there is no doubt that all participants will always remember the impromptu ice fishing lesson as they strolled across the very frozen Lake George. They

watched in awe as an experienced fisherman skillfully directed a novice to carefully remove a trout from below the ice.

The 2015-2016 College Prep session will have a unique collaboration with Capital Communications Federal Credit Union, which will share resources from its College Bound Workshop Program. A Certified College Planning Specialist will provide workshops to students and their parents on Tuition Comparison, the Financial Aid (FAFSA) Process and the Federal Lending Programs.

A unique financial planning module will be created as part of the Leadership Curriculum. Each student will be given a personal financial simulator. This simulation will be a useful tool for teaching personal finance management. It will provide realistic information such as salaries and household expenses. The simulation will provide an opportunity for students to appreciate the economic impact of a post-secondary education and to practice financial management skills such as budgeting. In addition, the simulations will be fun and interactive and will develop the participants' interpersonal and teamwork skills.

15-LOVE RECEIVES 4-STAR RATING

This year, the USTA Foundation rolled out a star rating system for NJTL (National Junior Tennis & Learning) Programs. Based on many factors, including size and programs offered, chapters were ranked from 1 – 4 stars after completing an extensive survey and having a national staff member confirm the data. Nationwide, there are approximately 600 NJTL chapters that provide free or low-cost tennis and educational programming to underserved youth.



Although we just squeaked by in the budget category, 15-LOVE was ranked one of only 19 chapters to achieve a 4-Star Rating! We believe that we have a unique opportunity as part of the USTA /NJTL network. We are able to attend trainings and hear research on the latest tennis and healthy living offerings and share ideas and best practices with other chapters around the country. Yet we are still individual enough to be able to create programming to respond to the needs of our community.

BRIE LAMOUNTAIN - 15-LOVE VISTA

Career is a concept that has been on my mind since long before I was capable of grasping the full weight of what that word entails. My dream job has changed at least a dozen times in my 23 years; however, my passion to make a positive impact on the world has always remained my driving force. Joining the VISTA program after college was the best decision I have made so far in pursuit of my passions, because it gave me the opportunity to work at 15-LOVE and has propelled me down a path that consistently fulfills me.

Working at 15-LOVE has been an incredibly enriching experience. Every day I look forward to coming in to the office, and every day I continue to be inspired by the dedication of Amber, Katie and Domingo. The more time that I have spent with this organization, the greater sense of pride I have developed in being a part of it. Every board member, employee and participant has actively created this 15-LOVE environment, an environment which is as equally fun and welcoming as it is challenging and impactful.

I suspect that my love of cooking (and eating) healthy foods played a big role in securing my place at 15-LOVE, so it has been a joy to put that to use during my time here. Aside from really getting to know the families during the Healthy Cooking Classes that I have led, some of this year's highlights have been working with the Excellence kids to build a strawberry planter for the garden and advancing our Summer Garden and Literacy Programs.

In addition to offering our summer programs to the awesome 15-LOVE tennis participants, we welcomed children from Parsons Child and Family Center, St. Catherine's Center for Children, and



Brie LaMountain

Israel AME Church to our Garden Program. We also worked with several groups of children from Sheridan Prep and Trinity Alliance as part of our Literacy Program. Each group was so unique and fun, they gave me the constant spark I needed to power through the organized chaos that is summertime at 15-LOVE. My greatest motivation as I carry out my daily tasks has been the tremendous amount of respect that I have for everyone who sustains the efforts of 15-LOVE. In doing my part I have worked hard to create effective and organized resources for all of the projects that I work on. I want to ensure that none of the efforts of the Healthy Living and Education Programs will be lost in translation.

Though I feel like I could stay here forever, I know that I must take everything I have learned from this experience and continue to grow as I pursue higher education. After my term comes to an end, I will leave my home state for North Carolina, where I hope to enter a PhD program in Psychology with a focus in Public Interest. I will never forget all that I have reaped from 15-LOVE and hope to continue working with nonprofit organizations throughout my life, using the research skills I will gain in school for the benefit of society.



Brie LaMountain reads at 15-LOVE.

FORE LOVE & MONEY

We are beyond thrilled to report that the 23rd Annual Fore Love & Money event went off with only one rainout this year! A wonderful day was had by all who enjoyed golf, tennis and dinner at Schuyler Meadows Club on Monday, July 13. This year's event raised more than \$85,000, making it a tremendous success!

We are so incredibly grateful to all of our attendees, donors, sponsors and volunteers who help make this event a great success for the 15-LOVE Program. Monies received from this event continue to go towards the numerous free tennis and educational programs that we offer to 4,000 inner-city youth in Albany, Schenectady, Troy and Rensselaer.

A special thank you to all of our sponsors who are listed below for their continuous support of this event and the 15-LOVE Program.

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TENNIS SPONSOR – HEIDIANN CAR WASH & JEFF LEBRE



15-LOVE families enjoy Fore Love & Money night.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2015!

15-LOVE GRADUATES

Schenectady High School

Jon Fields will be attending Union College, pursuing a degree in Managerial Economics.

Allen Long will be attending the University at Buffalo, pursuing a degree in Computer Science.

Shaker High School

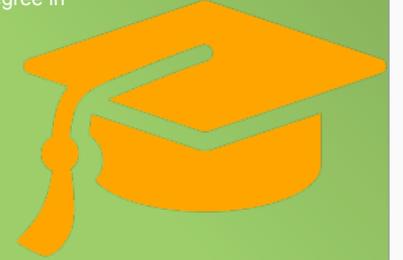
Skylar Luu will be attending Johns Hopkins, pursuing a degree in Public Health.

Union College

Josh Fields earned his degree in Mechanical Engineering and is currently pursuing a job in engineering.

SUNY Binghamton

Shalini Nagara earned her degree in Biological Science and Economics. She will be attending Upstate Medical University in Syracuse this fall.



INSTRUCTOR TO INTERN

Five years ago, I was looking for a summer job to fill my time and stumbled across 15-LOVE through a few of my high school friends at the Albany Academy for Girls. With help from Mr. John Nigro I was able to secure an interview, and the rest is history. I started as a timid tennis instructor hoping to find her voice and make a difference in a handful of children's lives, but I really had no idea how much this organization would impact me as a person. As the summers passed, I could not wait to get back to my family at 15-LOVE, and soon enough many would say I found my voice—and then some.

I started out teaching tennis in Arbor Hill five years ago and quickly found my self-confidence when I had no other choice but to find ways to grab the attention of more than 70 participants. In a matter of time, my mindset changed from feeling nervous to feeling excited to get back out there. I like to think that Arbor Hill is where it all started for me. Though I have bounced around to sites in Troy and Rensselaer as well, those tennis courts and the children that I met there will always remind me of why I came back.

With one more year of college lingering in front of me, it is time to start thinking about what will come next. My time at 15-LOVE has already helped point me in the right direction, and every summer I discover even more what it is that I am passionate about. This summer in particular,

interning at the office has really solidified all of it. I am intrigued by the behind-the-scenes work of a nonprofit and how much time and effort must go into each project so all of the pieces fall into place. Researching grants, helping with fundraisers, working with the board and alumni and everything in between has been such a valuable learning experience. I look forward to finishing out the summer by working on an event to celebrate 25 years of our program, but I am never really excited when August comes to a close.

As a 21-year-old, I cannot say where I will ultimately end up in life, but I can say with confidence that 15-LOVE will, in some way, always be a part of it. So yes, five years ago I found a summer job and put some money in my savings account as I looked forward to college, but this journey has been so much more than that. Now I am here, about to finish college with life lessons in my back pocket, communication skills at hand and goals that I am excited about on my mind. The people that I have met and worked with here at 15-LOVE have made it all possible.



Eliza Meigher