



## SquashScholars News Letter

Volume 1, Number 6

August 6, 2008

### First Annual Midwest Urban Squash Challenge

Same headline from the previous newsletter, but a different result than we had hoped for. The METROsquash team from Chicago came, they saw, and they conquered our valiant SquashScholars team in the first annual Midwest Urban Squash Challenge. The team score was 7 – 3. Aside from facing a couple of top guns, our players were very competitive down the line, with Mohamed Jama, Yahya Hassan, and Abdullahi Salim being victorious in their respective matches.



### SquashScholars Grade Point Averages Up

To compute the progress our students made academically this past year, we compared their grades from the first quarter they began in the program to the end-of-year grades. For half of our team, that period covered the full year. The rest of our team was with us from January to May. We used their grade point average (GPA) for the core academic subjects (math, language arts, science, and social studies) that every student takes at Sullivan. **The overall GPA average for the group improved from “C” to “C+”.** Highlights for the year include two students making the honor role, Shakinah Hickbottom and Farah Hassan, and two other students improving their math grade to “A” by year –end, Mohammed Abde and Omar Haji.

### Website Revisited

After several attempts to develop our website with various well-meaning but inexperienced volunteers, we hit the jackpot this summer when Joseph Erickson, professor of education at Augsburg College, took on the site development task. Joe volunteered a wealth of talent and experience to the effort and in a few short weeks has transformed our website into a highly functional and artistically pleasing tool. Perhaps most important, our current and upcoming events will be readily displayed, allowing the program to easily communicate with everyone

involved. Please take a look, <http://squashscholars.net>. Then come back in a couple weeks as there are a few more functions to complete.

## **Summer Camp**



SquashScholars held a seven-week series of squash practice sessions this summer, running from mid June through the end of July. The players in attendance had the opportunity to work on skill development, getting a head start on the upcoming season. And since any camp has to include a little pool time, we traded in racquets for swimming suits on the last day and trekked to the NE Water Park for the afternoon.

## **Strategic Plan Developed**

Having successfully completed its first year of operations at Minneapolis's Sullivan School and the University of Minnesota, the SquashScholars Board of Directors turned its attention to the future. While we accomplished several operational goals, we recognized that development of the organization and its capacity to generate revenue remained in need of attention and effort. The board set to work creating a strategic plan document focused on the next two years. With the able assistance of consultant Linda Myers, the plan is complete and will be posted on the website shortly.



**Why what we do is so important**

Today, August 6, 2008, the Minneapolis StarTribune newspaper published the latest standardized testing results by which public schools are measured and compared to the goals set by the No Child Left Behind federal program. Sullivan School, our school, is listed as failing to meet the required threshold for phase 5 and thus will be restructured. This is not good news for anybody associated with the school and we have great empathy for those directly impacted by this situation. However, the news underscores the importance of maintaining and growing programs like SquashScholars to add help and hope for the school and its community.

This year we served 12 students. Next year it will be 18 – 20. With generous support from individuals and foundations, we will grow to serve over 100 students per year. You can help by printing this page, completing the information below, and returning it with your contribution to:

SquashScholars  
209 – 5<sup>th</sup> St. SE, Apt. 307  
Minneapolis, MN 55414-1136

I would like to help SquashScholars students reach their potential with my gift of:

\_\_\_ \$1000    \_\_\_ \$500    \_\_\_ \$250    \_\_\_ \$100    \_\_\_ \$50    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Your name \_\_\_\_\_  
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City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (h/w/c) \_\_\_\_\_

Please consider applying for a matching grant through your employer.

SquashScholars is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your gift is fully deductible.

**Thank you for your generosity!**