

# SQUASHWISE '22 - '23 REPORT CARD



SquashWise®

# SQUASHWISE : A SOCIAL CHANGE MISSION



## **Letter from the Executive Director and Board Chair**

As we round out 15 years as a youth development program, SquashWise is reflecting on the impact we've made and the changes we've encountered in our work, in our city, and in our sport. We started in 2008 with just 14 students. Now, we have upwards of 120 participants – a number that will continue to grow each year – and we just graduated our largest high school class yet. We have weathered a pandemic, the closure of our long-time facility partner, and the establishment of a temporary facility. We have a tremendous building project in the works – the transformation of the iconic Greyhound building on Howard Street into a youth and community center.

Through all of this, SquashWise has continued to grow and change as an organization, reflecting on who we are and what impact we can make. Here, we'd like to share that with you, and as you read the following pages about our work and our impact, we hope you'll see these values and actions come through loud and clear.

**SquashWise is a change agent for Baltimore youth. We are a change agent for squash. We are a change agent for Baltimore.**

**We are committed to social change.** We partner with Baltimore’s youth and families to advance equity in squash, education and personal development opportunities. We provide a safe and dynamic environment where the squash community becomes more accessible and welcoming for all.

**We are committed to Baltimore.** Our city has tremendous promise, yet it has a persistence of vastly different life experiences in athletics, education and opportunity. Our vision is to develop a new kind of inclusive community that comes together across historic divisions through a shared love of squash and educational opportunity.

**We are committed to young people.** We don’t “serve,” we don’t “save;” we partner with Baltimore City youth on their personal journeys to become the future leaders and change-agents of our city and our world. Our students demonstrate tremendous educational and athletic achievements – out-pacing their peers in grades, matriculating to college at double the rate of the city average, and winning squash tournaments around the region.

**We are committed to educational equity.** We are far more than a sports team. In a city with vastly different resources between private and public schools, SquashWise provides an extra layer of support in addition to families, teachers, schools and neighborhood networks through tutoring, mentoring and college and career planning.

**We are committed to making the sport of squash a place of belonging for all.** Squash in the United States has a history of exclusivity. Through our youth programs, community squash events and accessible memberships, we are taking squash out of its traditional settings and increasing access to a terrific sport that should be enjoyed by greater numbers of people in many communities.

**We are committed to squash as a personal development tool.** Squash is a sport with tremendous potential for the development of friendships, professional networks, social capital and opportunities. At SquashWise, many more people can take advantage of the relationship-building and connections inherent in the sport.

**We are committed to growth and building community.** By establishing our permanent home at the historic Greyhound building, to open in 2025, we aim to bring communities together through the power of squash.

As you read through these pages, you might wonder how you can get further involved. There are so many ways! Try out for the team if you’re a Baltimore City Public Schools 6th-10th grader; volunteer as a tutor or coach; donate or increase your donation; field a team in the SquashWise Rally fundraiser; host a career day; bring your colleagues for our ‘Squash with Your Squad’ team-building experience; contribute to our capital campaign. We need you to be a part of our team and community so we can continue to be a change agent in Baltimore.



Abby Markoe  
Executive Director and Co-Founder



Sage Platt  
President and Chairman



# WHO WE ARE



## FACTS AND FIGURES

Nearly 90% of our students live in Baltimore City, and 70% reside in West Baltimore.



Participants attend 20 different middle and high schools.



100% of our students identify as youth of color; 98% identify as Black or African American.



The majority of our students are first generation degree-seeking youth.



88% average SquashWise attendance rate and year-to-year retention rates of 92% (MS program) and 81% (HS program).



### Our Team in 2022 – 2023

66

middle and high school students

62

alumni

18

board members

10

staff

40

volunteers

and You!

Subscribe to our e-newsletter at [baltimoresquashwise.org](https://baltimoresquashwise.org) and follow us on social media for updates about the program and opportunities to get involved!



BaltimoreSquashWise



squashwise



*I am really motivated to improve my squash skills and stay physically active. Plus, traveling for squash has been cool to see life outside of Baltimore.*

**Akil '24**

*SquashWise has helped me to become more open to coaching and constructive feedback from others.*

**Justin '24**

## SQUASH DEPARTMENT

As the only public school squash program in Baltimore, SquashWise is committed to making the sport a place of belonging for all. Students play squash at the recreational, JV or varsity level and compete in local matches against area private schools and regional teams in the Squash and Education Alliance. This past year, our newly-formed varsity team along with our JV and middle school squads played a robust winter and spring match schedule and traveled to five regional and national tournaments along the east coast.

We are so proud of our student-athletes! One of our teams made up of middle and high school girls (Nancy, Marisa, Lindsay, Abisola, Zaria and Cayla pictured above) won the B-draw of the Squash and Education Alliance's national tournament in Philadelphia. Another one of our student-athletes, Obed, won the 4.5 Skill Level Draw in the Maryland State Squash Tournament last fall.

Over the past year, SquashWise expanded its squash offerings to more Baltimore City schools and community members. More than 200 elementary and middle school students participated in PE clinics and multi-week squash exposure programs – learning the fundamentals of the sport and building confidence and curiosity through fun racquet games and drills. We also welcomed over 100 people to our quarterly Community Squash Nights, opening up our two courts to new and experienced squash players alike.



**610**

**hours of squash instruction**



**14**

**team matches**



**13**

**SEA and US Squash tournaments**

# WHAT WE DID



## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

SquashWise is far more than a sports team. Students in our youth development program work with tutors, prepare for college and careers, and stay on top of their education as well-rounded student-athletes. Each year, 100% of our high school seniors graduate on-time. Of the Class of '23, 85% are attending two- or four-year colleges and 15% are enrolled in career training programs or have entered the workforce.

Students also grow in their social emotional learning (SEL). Last year, nearly 95% of 7th-10th grade students and 100% of 11th and 12th grade students demonstrated gains in at least one SEL capacity (self-management, contribution, positive identity, academic self-efficacy, and social skills) as measured by the Hello Insight tool.

*SquashWise has helped me to manage my time better and pace myself when it comes to getting things done. I also feel comfortable to speak my mind and speak up for myself.*

Markell '24

*Staff and peer support have been really important for me. It helped me feel more confident and comfortable when I moved into high school.*

Nancy '27



**309**

tutoring hours



**15**

career speakers



**5**

college application  
& financial aid  
workshops



**8**

college visits



# WHAT WE DID



## DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE SUCCESS

SquashWise alumni are doing big things, and the Department of Graduate Success is here to partner with them on their college and career journeys should they need support. We offer 1:1 advising, mentorship and a variety of scholarship programs to a growing number of alumni each year.



# 38

alumni accessed support during 2022-2023

**More than 85% of alumni have matriculated to two- or four-year colleges, as compared to 41% of graduates from Baltimore City Public Schools.**

**Nearly 65% of alumni are currently enrolled in or have graduated from a postsecondary program (college, career training, military).**

**Of those alumni not currently enrolled in a postsecondary program, 95% have stable employment.**

# ALUMNI SNAPSHOTS



## Ka'Shya '23

A graduate of Baltimore City College High School and a first-year student at McDaniel College.

*Think about the first day that you walked into SquashWise.*

*How have you changed or grown as a person?*

When I first heard about SquashWise, I was very skeptical and decided not to join in sixth grade. SquashWise visited my school again the following year and I finally said, "Why not?!" SquashWise never gave up on me and taught me to work hard, be positive, and stay committed; **they helped me to become the student, leader, and self-advocate I am today.**



## Obed '23

A graduate of Pikesville High School and a first-year student at Chatham University.

*How do you see growth in yourself from your participation in SquashWise?*

SquashWise has helped me **to grow into an adult who wants to make the world a better place.** I've matured and become a better person because of the game of squash.



## Sean '21

A graduate of the NPower IT Training Program and an aspiring cybersecurity professional.

*What have you found to be most beneficial about the SquashWise program?*

**I love that SquashWise takes the time to know who you are, what you want, and ways to help you get it.** I remember when I was in the 10th grade and SquashWise asked me what I wanted to do when I graduated. I told them I wanted to do something in computer science, and the next thing I knew, I had my own tutor who was letting me know about his computer science classes and helping me learn more about the field!



**SQUASH +  
EDUCATION  
ALLIANCE**  
PROUD MEMBER

**We celebrate our alumni who were honored by the Squash and Education Alliance this past year.**

**Obed '23** was selected as one of two Ty Griffin Students of the Year for his efforts on the courts and in the classroom and his embodiment of integrity, character and leadership.





**Keon '20**

A fourth-year student at Morehouse College majoring in Political Science with a minor in Public History and Historic Preservation.

*How do you see growth in yourself from your participation in SquashWise?*

As I look back over my years at SquashWise, I remember that younger Keon yearning to find himself and what makes him happy. I can recall how shy and timid he was. I can honestly say that throughout my years, **I have gained the skill of self-advocacy and a true sense of self.**



**Maleik '17**

A second-year master's level student at the University of Maryland, School of Social Work.

*What have you found to be most beneficial about the SquashWise program?*

Squashwise has given me opportunities to travel the country, experience new things and meet interesting people through squash and academics. Each of these experiences influenced me as I grew into an adult. **They inspired me to do big things with my life and make my community a better place for everyone.**



**Eryn '15**

A graduate of McDaniel College and an administrative professional at SOURCE, the community engagement and service-learning center for JHU Schools of Public Health, Nursing and Medicine.

*Think about the first day that you walked into SquashWise.*

*How have you changed or grown as a person?*

When I first joined the program, I was very shy and reserved with staff members and other teammates. Now, I feel very comfortable with everyone – we're like a big family! Even as an adult and an alumna of the program, I still feel that I receive a great deal of support both personally and professionally. **I'm very confident in the decisions I make, and I've learned to advocate for myself and stand up to a challenge.**

**Savoy '19** received the William E. Simon Jr. Service & Leadership Award and participated in a cultural immersion with SEA's international affiliate program, Khelshala, in Chandigarh, India.

**Maleik '17** was awarded the SEA Alumni Achievement Award for his year of service with AmeriCorps, his early career in social work and his dedication to current and future SquashWise students as a coach for our team.

**Darian '15** won the A-draw of SEA's Alumni Nationals Championship held in Providence, RI.

# WHERE WE'RE GOING

Our future is bright – SquashWise is transforming the former Greyhound bus terminal in downtown Baltimore into a youth and community center!



## THE SQUASHWISE CENTER

Located at 601 North Howard Street, the SquashWise Center will be a space for both our youth programs and the Baltimore community. Building features will include:

- 6 squash courts,
- 3 classrooms,
- Fitness area,
- Meeting and administrative space,
- Accessibility to public transit, and
- Convenient on-site parking.

Anticipated to open in summer 2025, the facility will allow us to nearly quadruple the size of our youth programs, and will provide meaningful opportunities for community-building through memberships, clinics and community squash events. It also will help us to build community across a historically divided city by bringing people together through a shared love of sport and recreation. And it will do so in a historic space that holds significant meaning for many Marylanders and the City of Baltimore.





## A NEW APPROACH TO FUNDRAISING

Join SquashWise to create a new model of giving. Our mission has always been about partnership, but traditional fundraising often takes a top-down approach. We are, instead, incorporating SquashWise values into how we raise money for our permanent home. Our campaign values teamwork, participation, effort and dollars equally. It honors key groups in our mission, including students, volunteers, donors, parents, staff and alumni, all of whom will be represented in the building. We engage our donors as part of a community and embrace the diverse individuals within it.

Everyone has a role to play! Here's how you can get involved:

- Make a gift – contributions of all sizes are meaningful!
- Select SquashWise in your workplace giving guide.
- Tour the Greyhound building, and bring a friend!
- Sign up to become a Founding Member.

Connect with Abby Markoe at [abbym@baltimoresquashwise.org](mailto:abbym@baltimoresquashwise.org) to learn more about these opportunities.





**SquashWise**<sup>®</sup>

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