



as I am today. Even in times of separation my team still motivates me to be the best version of myself."



# DRIVE AND OPPORTUNITY SOUASHWISE IN 2019-2020

If you play squash, you know what these moments are like. Instead of hitting a drop shot just in front of the tin, your opponent smashes a crosscourt that sends the ball sailing. In a split second, you have to pivot: keeping your eyes up, your feet under you, and throwing all your momentum in a new direction.

The year 2020 hasn't been what any of us expected. We have endured distance, disappointments, and unconscionable disparities as COVID-19 has ripped through our world. We've battled anxiety, uncertainty, and anger. We're confronting the hidden infrastructure and compounding impact of systemic racism. At this intersection of crisis, we have a responsibility and an opportunity. Just like in those moments on court: we reevaluate, and we recover.

Looking back on the past 12 months, there is so much that gives us pride, strength, and hope. The SquashWise Class of 2023 is the largest cohort in our history. Our second alumna graduated with her Bachelor's Degree from UMBC. We welcomed more community voice and choice in decision-making at every level of SquashWise, from our Student Leadership Council to our first Board member who is an alumnus of a Squash and Education Alliance program (CitySquash, NYC). We are in the process of revising our mission, vision, and values to articulate our commitment to equity and anti-racism. And importantly, we didn't miss a beat when it came to transitioning to virtual programming for the spring and summer, and to a hybrid model this fall.

The challenges we will face in the coming months are certain to be formidable. The effects of COVID-19 on the educational and economic landscape will hit hardest for our community members already dealing with difficult circumstances. At no time has SquashWise's support, our connection, and our commitment been more important to ensuring that this next generation of scholars, athletes, and leaders have the chance to achieve their highest potential.

Thank you for being a valuable part of the SquashWise family. With you on our team, we know we'll make the shot.

Sage Platt
President & Board Chair

Abby Markoe
Executive Director

ally Mrhz



Within 24 hours of Baltimore City Public Schools' cancellation of in-person classes in March, SquashWise launched new virtual programming that has continued to keep students connected, active and focused toward their academic and personal goals.

#### **Consistent Connection**

Weekly individualized check-ins helped SquashWise respond to each student's specific needs as they emerged, from loaning out laptops for distance learning to resource referrals for families. Our academic team arranged 1:1 tutoring sessions, helped students stay on target with virtual learning assignments, and created opportunities for social and emotional enrichment: film screenings, family bingo nights, and team hangouts.

#### Skills & Self-Development

Navigating these changed times has required all of us to learn new skills and practice resiliency. SquashWise staff taught tips for distance learning through a video series and parent event, and we partnered with the Institute for HEALing, through the Pro Bono Counseling Project, to hold a special session on mental and emotional coping skills for youth and families.

#### Fitness & Athletic Development

Our student-athletes know the importance of physical activity for health and wellness. Throughout the Spring, SquashWise coaches led virtual group fitness and yoga sessions each week, plus bonus sessions with local fitness instructors. Students also attended inspiring events through the Squash + Education Alliance, like workouts with champion squash player Amanda Sobhy.

#### **Summer Successes**

Even with tournaments and travel cancelled. SquashWise students were still able to explore new interests and expand their social/professional networks. Our four-week virtual Middle School Summer Camp helped students expand their creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking skills through literacy and art projects, STEM experiments, squash strategy analysis, and fitness challenges. Older students bolstered their resumes through YouthWorks placements at local organizations, and the Class of 2020 got a boost before their first semester of college through our 'Transition to College' program.

Subscribe to our e-newsletter at baltimoresquashwise.org and follow us on social media for updates and field reports!







This Fall, we are back together with a hybrid model that blends dynamic virtual sessions with in-person outdoor activities – with masks and physical distancing, of course!

#### Pickleball in the Park

Utilizing the courts, fields, and trails of Druid Hill Park, our small-group outdoor clubs include racquet sports like pickleball and Speedminton, strength and agility training, hiking, and running club.

#### **Vibrant Virtual Support**

Students have selected academic enrichment electives from a course catalogue that includes tutoring, creative writing and storytelling, advisory groups, and fun social sessions. Juniors and Seniors meet regularly with SquashWise staff and volunteers for individualized college readiness and post-secondary planning.

#### **Online Fitness Offerings**

Weekly online fitness classes like beginner racquet sports, yoga, and moderate intensity interval training help students stay active and healthy, especially after hours of screen time spent in distance learning.





# MIDDLE SCHOOL SPOTLIGHTS

#### Middle School Rookies

Since 2014, we have partnered with KIPP Baltimore, a Title I public charter school in West Baltimore, for middle school recruitment. In Fall 2019, we introduced all 7th and 8th Grade KIPP students to squash by leading clinics in PE classes. A total of 42 students completed our tryout series, with 22 players earning a spot on our middle school team. While our Spring 2020 tryouts were cut short by COVID closures, more than a dozen of these interested students opted to join our virtual Middle School Summer Camp!



#### London

New to SquashWise this year, London jumped right in to being part of the team: assisting her coaches with handing out equipment and materials, and encouraging her peers as they worked through challenging school assignments. Her outstanding dedication to SquashWise shows in not only having one of the highest attendance rates for our afterschool program before COVID, but also being one of the most active participants in virtual programming through the entire spring and summer! Now in her 8th grade year at KIPP, London exudes calm self-confidence, and always shines a light on her classmates' growth and achievements.



#### Brayden

In a few short months, Brayden went from his first day of squash to facing off against players from other local schools at the Middle School Championships at Meadow Mill Athletic Club. A leader by example, he was awarded Middle School Rookie of the Year and is one of the founding members of the SquashWise Players Association, an advocacy group independently developed by a group of passionate students eager to plan a safe re-entry to squash play. Equally motivated in the classroom, he worked with volunteer tutors at SquashWise throughout 8th Grade to boost his study habits in preparation for his freshman year at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute.



# HIGH SCHOOL SPOTLIGHTS



#### **High School Rookies**

In Fall 2019, we launched a brand new recruitment pathway for older students (Grades 9-10) in Baltimore City Public Schools to join SquashWise, and welcomed 11 new students from Bard High School Early College and Baltimore City College onto the team. Our High School Rookies have raised the bar for everyone at SquashWise when it comes to practicing a growth mindset! Jumping into a new sport as a rookie when other teammates have years of experience is daunting, but they have been a source of inspiration to the whole team.



#### Adia

A straight-A student with a smile that lights up a room, Adia is a role model for student-athletes who value the collaboration of teamwork as much as competition. Her SquashWise career includes ten squash tournaments, summers spent in academic camps at Taft, Hotchkiss, and Phillips Exeter Academy, SAT Prep with Yleana, and three years on the SquashWise Student Leadership Council. Having transitioned from the now-closed Institute of Notre Dame to Mount de Sales Academy for her senior year, Adia is eager to apply to colleges with the ultimate goal of becoming a lawyer.



#### Obed

Hard-working doesn't even begin to describe Obed, who pushed through two rounds of tryouts to claim his spot at SquashWise. Since joining three years ago, he's developed into one of our top squash players, through 22 tournament entries, clinics with star coaches like Omar Sobhy and Richard Millman, and hours on the courts at Meadow Mill Athletic Club. Whether powering through a high-intensity summer program like hiking through the Maine wilderness with Overland, leading drills with our High Performance Team, working on his writing skills in a tutoring session, or being there for a friend in need, Obed always puts in his best effort and his whole heart.

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FY 2020 Impact Report

# **FOCUS AND IMPACT**

#### **Education & Enrichment**

**94% of our 8th Graders** (Class of '24) qualified for high schools with selective entry requirements. This is the highest acceptance rate in our history!

# **100% of our High School Seniors (Class of 2020)** graduated on time, and have continued into college or military service.

#### 83% of our graduates to date

have matriculated to college, compared to just 45% of all Baltimore City Public Schools graduates (BERC, 2020).

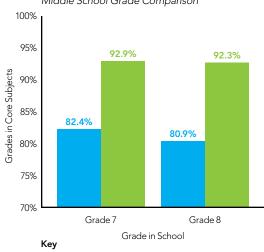
#### 81% of SquashWise middle schoolers

achieved a cumulative grade average above 80%, and they outperformed non-SquashWise students at KIPP Baltimore by more than a full letter grade.

# SquashWise middle schoolers earned 20-30 more participation points

than their peers in the last quarter of the school year, thanks to their drive and SquashWise's support during virtual learning.

#### Middle School Grade Comparison



Non-SquashWise students at KIPP SquashWise students at KIPP



## College & Career Exposure

#### 9 College Visits

including to Community College of Baltimore County, Franklin & Marshall College, The George Washington University, Loyola University Maryland, Morgan State University, and Yale University (pictured).

#### **4 Career Speakers**

including BGE COO Stephen J. Woerner, PNC VP/Community Consultant Frank McNeil Jr., and Innovation Works President A. Jay Nwachu.

#### **8 Field Trips and Service Activities**

including to Rodgers' Farm, Maryland Book Bank, Art with a Heart, and Brilliant Baltimore.

#### Squash & Fitness

#### 94% of all students

participated in at least one competitive squash event, and 39% participated in 5+ events!

#### 6 skill-building events

including clinics with the squash teams of The George Washington University and Chatham University, 'Skills, Drills, & Thrills' and Fall League at Meadow Mill Athletic Club, and a Dread Sports' clinic with the Botswana National Junior Boys team.

#### 7 weeks of summer fitness sessions

including High Intensity Interval Training, kickboxing, and yoga.

# **EOUITY AND OPPORTUNITY**



#### **Squash & Educational Equity**

SquashWise creates greater opportunity through squash. We are looking both inward and outward to develop as an equitable and anti-racist organization, including a revision of our mission, vision, and values with a diverse group of students, parents, staff, and Board (New mission to be released in 2021).

#### **Access to Opportunity**

SquashWise celebrates and develops the distinctive talents of Baltimore City youth by providing greater access to athletic, educational, and experiential life opportunities. The majority of our students reside in west Baltimore neighborhoods experiencing the continuous effects of historic disinvestment and racist housing policies. Less than half of Baltimore City Public School graduates go on to college, only 28% complete a degree, and median income in early adulthood is only \$15,000 (BERC, 2020, 2018). We partner with students to address these harmful effects of structural inequality and to achieve post-secondary success in college, advanced professional training or the military.

#### Student Leadership Council

The SLC stepped into a larger role in program improvement this year, actively facilitating a feedback process that brought student voice to the table in decisions about summer programming, tournament eligibility, uniform design and service learning.

#### Girls Excellence Initiative

Formed to encourage and celebrate the young women of SquashWise, two GEI events offered fun and fellowship this year. A Women's Squash Week hit-around at Meadow Mill Athletic Club brought together players of all ages, and a Women in Sports night event sparked rich dialogue about the power of media representation and selfesteem, especially for Black women athletes.

## Our Team in 2019 - 2020

117
participants

37
middle school

22

alumni in college

38
volunteers

58

high school

8

full-time staff

and You!



# **A YEAR OF CONNECTION**



Ice Skating at the Inner Harbor.



Creating art at the Brilliant Baltimore festival (formerly Light City).



Service Learning at Art with a Heart.



Meeting SquashBusters graduate Guillermo Moronta.



Squash with Chatham University's squash team.

# A YEAR OF EXPLORATION

"What SquashWise means to me is family. They try to keep you safe, in the right path, and help you academically. It's like a second home to me. There are coaches that I can talk to, friends who I have fun with. They have always been there for me, helped me with anything I needed. They want to see you improve, and push you to your best... not just to be a better player, but to also be a better person, to chase my dreams, if that would be a professional sports player, to be an entrepreneur, to start my own company, to be the first to go to college in my family. SquashWise has made me who I am today." Obed, Class of 2023



8th Grade Team at Meadow Mill Athletic Club.



Planting at Great Kids Farm.



Testing new technology at Yale University.

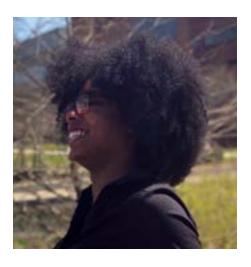


Alumni Homecoming Hit-Around.



Leading drills and demonstrating skills at rookie tryouts.

# **ALUMNI SNAPSHOTS**



#### Tayler '15

Congratulations to our second college graduate! An alumna of Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, Tayler completed her Bachelor's Degree in Biology from UMBC this year. Persevering through difficult coursework, Tayler often thought about her time on the SquashWise team, especially "winning my very last tournament. Not because winning is important, but because I never thought I would win. I didn't believe in myself, and through that win I was able to prove myself wrong." Tayler is already planning for her next big goal: applying to the doctoral program in Physical Therapy at University of Maryland Eastern Shore in 2022, with the ultimate goal of working in canine rehabilitation.



#### James '16

In the decade since James stepped onto a squash court for the first time as a 7th Grade Rookie, he's journeyed to Denver to play in a national doubles tournament, to the University of Rochester for a college preparatory summer camp, and to New York City for SEA's Career Connections program. A graduate of Baltimore School for the Arts, James is pursuing a degree in Theater at CCBC while performing with local troupes (pictured in Man of LaMancha). What role has SquashWise played in his life? "Whether it was a camp, on the court with teams, in the classroom... it's all about [developing] your character as an individual, and I think that's something that Squashwise has done really well with me."

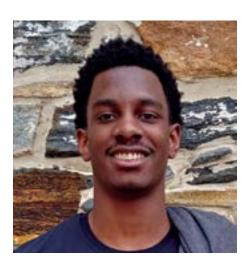
## Alumni Achievements

Including the Class of 2020, our 29 Alumni continue their personal development in college and careers.



#### DaLahn '16

One step at a time – that's how you cross the finish line. DaLahn set big goals for her life after high school, and chose to be part of the SquashWise team while at the Academy for College and Career Exploration (ACCE). DaLahn completed her Associates degree at CCBC in May 2020, and has just started her first semester at Towson University, where she will complete her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. At times working two jobs in addition to her studies, DaLahn is an inspiration for everyone who knows that every challenge has a solution. "I've learned that it is important to network with various people and companies because you never know who you're going to meet, and how helpful they can be towards your future."



#### Maleik '17

A soft-spoken leader with an inquisitive mind, Maleik always seeks the best in others and in himself. His favorite SquashWise memory? "The SEA Teams Nationals tournament at Drexel. I was still in middle school at the time, but playing with my older peers was really fun, and I learned to be more of a team player." After graduating with both his High School Diploma and Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts from Bard High School Early College, he enrolled at McDaniel College. Throughout his time at McDaniel, Maleik has participated in the CollegeBound Foundation's College Completion Program and has earned a CollegeBound Last Dollar Grant, as well as a generous financial aid package from McDaniel. Double-majoring in Philosophy and Social Work, Maleik's compassion and collaboration skills are a perfect fit for his current internship, working with the unhoused population in Westminster, MD.

13
Enrolled in College

14
Pursuing Careers

Serving in the Military



#### **Revenues**

\$804,648

Foundations \$ 350,327

Individuals \$ 171,272

Board Members \$ 103,352

Government Grants

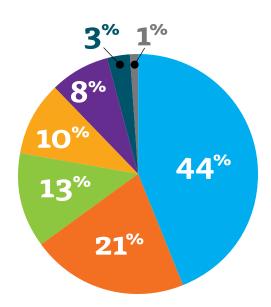
\$ 83,000

Corporations \$ 61,431

In-Kind Donation

\$ 25,254

Investment Income \$ 10,012



## **Expenses**

\$ 790,377

#### **Program Expenses**

\$ 654,246 (83%)

#### Administrative Expenses

\$ 136,131 (17%)

Note: Revenues and expenses include in-kind contributions. These figures above represent unaudited financials. SquashWise's FY 20 audit and Form 990 will be available in December 2020. Contact accounts@baltimoresquashwise.org or call 443.682.7126.

# **OUR SUPPORTERS**

#### The Jack Laporte SquashWise Rally

Named in memory of founding board member, Jack Laporte, our annual tournament-fundraiser unfortunately could not take place in person in May 2020 as scheduled, due to COVID-related restrictions on public gatherings. Instead, our dedicated community rallied through a virtual campaign to raise over \$360,000 in operating support! We are especially grateful to our sponsors for the planned Rally Weekend 2020 events:

#### **Presenting Sponsor**

T. Rowe Price Associates

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#### **Tribute Gifts**

SquashWise is touched when friends and family choose to make a donation in memory of or in honor of a loved one.

#### Jack Laporte Memorial Fund

Donations made in memory of Jack Laporte and gifts toward the Jack Laporte SquashWise Rally are noted throughout the 2019-2020 Supporters with the designation "JL."

#### Jervis Finney Memorial Fund

Donations made in memory of Jervis Finney are noted throughout the "2019–2020 Supporters" list with the designation "JF."

#### Dr. Kathirkamanathan Shanmuganathan Memorial Fund

Donations made in memory of Dr. Shan are noted throughout the "2019–2020 Supporters" list with the designation "KS."

#### Memorial Gifts

**In Memory of Andy Bartoletti** Mary Clare Coghlan

## **In Memory of Kristen Dickmann**Mary Clare Coghlan

In Memory of Sally Frazier Matthew & Stacy Frazier

In Memory of James Hense, Jr. Carlisle & John Hashim

#### In Memory of Natalie & Albert Lerner, Marc Marcus and Hyacinth Markoe

Andrew & Ruth Markoe

## **In Memory of Michael Sestrich** Michael Hutton

#### **In Memory of Flo Tilles** Anonymous

In Memory of Oliver S. Travers, Jr. John & Susan Riehl

#### **Honorary Gifts**

#### Councilman Pinkett Challenge Match

As part of the Woodberry Hangout event at Meadow Mill Athletic Club in September 2019, Baltimore City Councilman Leon F. Pinkett III (District 7) played a 'challenge match' against SquashWise student Tavonte to raise awareness of SquashWise. Thank you to everyone who supported their match with a donation to SquashWise:

John Blair, Maryland
Capital Management
Ralph Bradley & Kathleen Hermann
The Grosman Family
Paul & Melinda Hendricks
Douglas Hoffberger
Susan & Richard Jones
Hugh & Amy McGuirk
Dara & Andy Murray
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## In Honor of The Mitchell Family Ingrid Murray

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William Sweet & Gerry Wui

# **In Honor of Platt Development Group**Josh Ridgely

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#### In Honor of Cotten Seiler Ellen Claire Newcomer

#### In Honor of Vaughan Schmidt Thomas & Olive Waxter

#### In Honor of Matt Skarzynski's 10th Anniversary at SquashWise Nancy Cushman

#### In Honor of all the wonderful Meadow Mill squash coaches! Tom Inglesby & Lynn Heller

#### In honor of the people who work to make this a better world. Martin Markoe & Leah Augenbraun

FY 2020 Impact Report

## **OUR SUPPORTERS** CONTINUED

This list includes donors during our fiscal year, July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Our generous FY21 donors will be recognized in the next Impact Report.

#### \$15,000 and Above

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#### Key

JL Jack Laporte Memorial Fund and the Jack Laporte SquashWise Rally JF Jervis Finney Memorial Fund

T. Rowe Price Foundation J

Mary Jean & Oliver Travers

Foundation <sup>JL</sup>

T. Rowe Price Matching Gift Program JL

#### \$2,500 - \$4,999

BB&T JI

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FY 2020 Impact Report

Shawn McMahon

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# SUPPORT OUR WORK

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