



15 LOVE
Giving Kids The Advantage
 785 Washington Avenue | Albany, NY 12206
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15-LOVE PARTNERS WITH SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE ON NEW STEM PROGRAM



STEM participants show off their lava lamps.

15-LOVE is always striving to adapt to the wants and needs of the community, which is why we are so excited to announce our new partnership with SUNY Polytechnic Institute. The need for workers in the technical, science, and mathematics force is growing, and we want to be sure that the inner-city population is not left out of the opportunity to be a part of the next tech boom. With the help of our volunteers from SUNY Poly, we believe that we can help foster passion and curiosity for STEM fields within our participants.

In 2016, 15-LOVE was chosen as one of 5 United States Tennis Association (USTA) National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) chapters to pilot a national STEM Program. We ran this program as a week long workshop in our office, and as part of our off-court sessions with middle school and high school students. To complement these efforts, our Siena Summer Service Scholar developed a weekly program for elementary school students. Reactions to the STEM activities were so positive, we knew that we had to continue with this momentum. (cont. on page 3.)

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15-LOVE INSTRUCTOR WINNER OF NJTL ESSAY CONTEST

Each year, the USTA Foundation, the national charitable organization of the United States Tennis Association (USTA), chooses 10 winners of the National Junior Tennis League (NJTL) National Essay Contest. One of this year's winners was our own, Gail Cabahug for her essay that answered the question: "In addition to tennis, education and life skills are extremely important to the development of our youth.



Gail Cabahug

Which one of the three components above is most important to you, and how will it help you throughout your life?"

"It's an honor to be chosen as a national winner for the Arthur Ashe essay contest," said Gail Cabahug. "It means so much that tennis, education and family values are being recognized through this."

"Congratulations to Gail Cabahug and all the NJTL National Essay Contest winners for their hard work and receiving this prestigious award," said Amber Marino, 15-LOVE Executive Director. "We are proud to be part of the USTA Foundation family that works tirelessly to support and help mold the lives of our participants."

The winners, ranging in ages from 10 to 18, were selected out of more than 2,600 entries submitted this summer. Each winner received a New York City travel package from Aug. 25 to Aug. 27 as part of 2017 Arthur Ashe Kids' Day powered by Net Generation, the annual youth celebration that precedes the US Open.

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15-LOVE kids participate in a STEM demonstration.

(cont. from page 1.)

Partnering with SUNY Poly helped us to continue that momentum. The program was so popular, we found ourselves pleading to our new partner to take on more and more students as our program waiting list grew. We cannot thank our SUNY Poly volunteers, Melissa Renzi and Elaine Garrett, enough for being so obliging as our attendance grew to a whopping 30 participants! We hope that the smiles on our program graduates faces was payment enough for all of their efforts.

The best part about the summer STEM program with SUNY Poly was the hands-on nature of every lesson. Participants got the chance to learn about polymers by making their own bouncy balls and instant snow, and saw the inner workings of the human lungs by creating models with Dr. Dan White. Another day, we took the class outside to see the power of the sun in action with solar powered robots and UV bead bracelets. Each session brought science to life with fun new activities, and (as if the activities themselves weren't fun enough) the kids also got to take home something that they created in the program, serving as a reminder for that week's lesson. When the kids got to make their own lava lamps they were all excited to bring them in to our gardening and reading programs to show off their cool scientific creations to their 15-LOVE friends. SUNY Poly has surely helped us to make an impression on our participants, and spread a love for science and technology.

So a huge thanks to SUNY Poly, and especially to Melissa Renzi and Elaine Garrett, for working with us this summer. We are pleased to announce that they will be returning in early 2018 to bring the STEM program to the children in our Healthy Futures Club. We hope to continue this incredible partnership for years to come!



15-LOVE Participants learn about circuits during their STEM programming.

FORE LOVE & MONEY CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Fore Love & Money attendees were treated to a lovely fall day this past October due to it being rescheduled in June. The sun was shining and temperature just about 70 degrees for our 25th Annual event - a perfect day for some golf and tennis.



15-LOVE participants pose for a group photo at the FLM reception.

This year's event raised more than \$110,000, making it our most successful event to date! We are so grateful to all of our attendees, donors, sponsors and volunteers who help make this event a great success for the 15-LOVE program. Funds received from this event go toward the numerous free tennis

and educational programs we offer to 4,500 inner-city youth in Albany, Schenectady, Troy and Rensselaer. **Mark your calendar for our 26th Annual event on Monday, June 4, 2018.**

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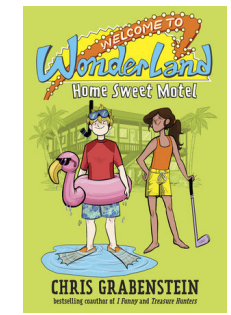
HELP US GO GREEN!

In effort to keep you up-to-date on all of 15-LOVE's new happenings, while keeping printing and postage costs low, we will be communicating more through email.

We want to make sure you receive our e-newsletter, so please email miaertas@15love.org, or you can call our office to have your name added to our electronic mailing list. We promise not to flood your inbox and we appreciate your support!



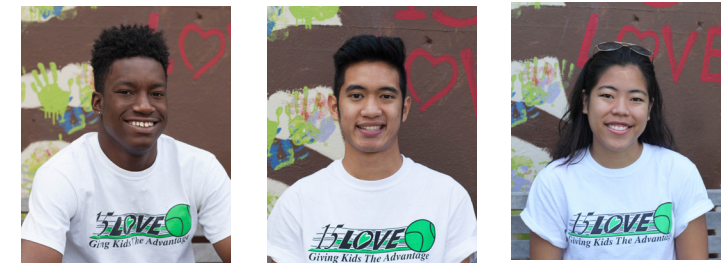
DENISE MCCOY LEGACY AWARD



The Denise McCoy Legacy Award, formerly know as the Little d award, honors the author of the previous year's most humorous children's book as recommended by the Albany Public Library Youth Librarians and selected by the award committee. Funds raised through this event are used to expand 15-LOVE's children's literacy programs and the Denise McCoy Scholarship Fund.

This is the 12th year the award was presented and it went to Chris Grabenstein, author of *Welcome to Wonderland: Home Sweet Motel* at a cocktail reception at the Fort Orange Club. Grabenstein spent the afternoon with students from Arbor Hill Elementary where we purchased each student a free signed copy of the award-winning book.

Because of this annual event, we are able to provide 4-year scholarships to 15-LOVE participants, this year's new recipients included Curtis Farmer, Rafael Cabahug and Nina Cabahug.



Curtis Farmer, Rafael Cabahug, Nina Cabahug



Chris Grabenstein talks with Arbor Hill students about his new book.



Denise McCoy's brother Tom O'Brien presents Chris Grabenstein with the award.

FALL BOOK GIVEAWAY

15-LOVE held it's Fall book giveaway in October for underserved youth across the Capital Region. Over two hundred people attended the book giveaway, children received two new books and an unlimited number of gently used books in a reusable bag. Attendees made a spider ring and had a clementine for a healthy snack. We are always in need of additional picture and early chapter books. Donations of books are tax deductible. Please call our office at (518) 438-2039 if you have gently used or new books you would like donate.



A book giveaway attendee was all smiles after receiving her two new books.



Book giveaway attendees participate in a hands-on arts and crafts activity.

Want to get involved?

We are always looking for members of the community to help with our programs while sharing their skills and interests with our kids.

15love.org/get-involved



FROM THE executive director

When I was in my early 20s, I remember being asked by a mentor about how I was affecting social or systemic change. I barely knew what that meant and replied that I didn't think that I could affect change in that way. I didn't think that I had the means or the ability. I was in my first year of teaching and certainly didn't feel like I was changing much other than my sleep schedule. But, I was also still involved with 15-LOVE and she believed that through 15-LOVE, I was affecting social change. Back then, I never dreamed that I would one day come back as the Executive Director.

After looking back on my years here at 15-LOVE, through my many roles – from volunteer to instructor to Executive Director, I can now begin to understand what she was talking about. Social change doesn't have to come from our government or from huge corporations or Hollywood. It can come from small start-ups (think Facebook) and small not-for-profits. It can come from a group of local people who just want to make a difference.

15-LOVE is just that. A group of local people who just want to make a difference. Who want to cause positive social change in our inner-cities. Have we completely changed the community? No. Have we improved the lives of many? Yes. Our Excellence Program has changed lives. It has changed the culture of whole families, just from impacting one child. Once the first child graduates high school and then college, everyone else in the family starts to see it as a possibility. We are now seeing the second generation of families come through our program, and we can see that difference. Social change.

It doesn't come easily. Every one of our volunteers, staff and Board members is committed to making sure each kid in our program has an amazing experience. Our Excellence Program is a group of nearly 50 students who are committed to 15-LOVE, and we commit to them. The goal of that program is for each participant to go to college. And, 99% of them have gone over the last 22 years since the Excellence Program started. The Excellence participants become our instructors, become our ambassadors, come back and volunteer after they graduate, and will always be family. In February, *Les Miserable* is coming to Proctors. A couple of our Board members decided they would like to send the Excellence participants to see the show – because they should have that experience, and probably won't get it otherwise. We can get the tickets in the corner at the back of the balcony, but the board members said "Let's move them up." Let's make sure they see it all. Let's give them our best. And, expect the same back from them. This is Excellence. This is how it starts. This is one of the many "little" things that those involved in 15-LOVE do that goes way above and beyond what is necessary. This is what makes the biggest difference. This is social change at the grassroots level. And, I am humbled to be able to see it every day. I appreciate all you do to help us make it happen – whether it is just educating yourself about the program, talking about it with friends, volunteering, donating, and bringing in your used children's books – it is all important. It all makes what we do possible. Thank you.

Amber Marino

TENNIS SUMMER PROGRAM

The summer tennis program wrapped in August. We served just over 2,000 participants this summer. Our staff worked very hard, and although there was a lot of rain, it didn't actually cancel classes too often. During training, we instill in our instructors that our goal in every class is to have a positive impact on every kid. That's not always easy, but it does make a difference.



Tennis instructor Curtis helps a Jamboree participant adjust his racquet.



Jamboree attendees show off their new pedometers from MVP Health Care.