



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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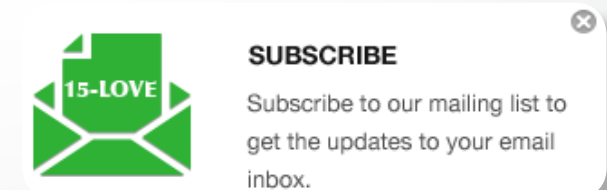
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Cyndi Lyons, Director of Community Relations
Mia Ertas, Director of Marketing
Maxine Brisport, Education Director

YEAR IN PICTURES



GOING GREEN - 15-LOVE'S NEW E-NEWSLETTER

Help us save a stamp and paper! In an effort to keep you up-to-date on new happenings at 15-LOVE, while reducing printing and postage costs, we will be communicating more through email. **Please email info@15love.org**, or call our office to have your name added to our electronic mailing list.



24TH ANNUAL FORE LOVE & MONEY

Our 24th Annual Fore Love & Money held on June 6 at Schuyler Meadows Club was very successful with probably the best weather we have ever had. All of the golfers and tennis players enjoyed the beautiful day on the green and tennis courts, followed by a lovely dinner program emceed by WNYT Channel 13's anchorman Dan Bazile. We are pleased to announce this year's event raised over \$xxx,xxx.

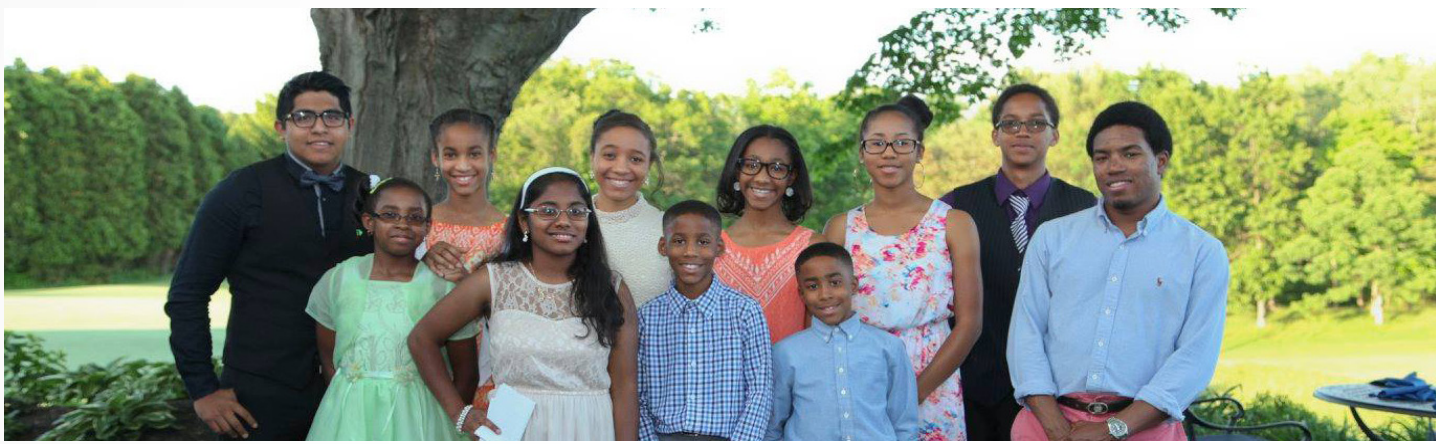
Two of our graduates spoke to the attendees about their experience at 15-LOVE and what it meant to them to participate in the program. We have included their moving speeches on the next page.

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Hello ladies and gentlemen. My name is Swetha Thiagarajan. I would like to thank Domingo and the 15-LOVE organization for giving me this generous opportunity to speak to you today. I'm currently a senior at Troy High School and I will be attending Cornell University to study chemical engineering this fall.

15-LOVE has had a tremendous impact on me and my family. I joined 15-LOVE when I was 6 years old. Although I wasn't naturally inclined at tennis, I loved the sport from the beginning because of the wonderful coaches. From playing tennis, which sometimes meant swinging at air, to partaking in the off-courts sessions, I adored every minute of it, because it was fun. So, it wasn't a surprise when 15-LOVE eventually became a second family to me. Joining the Excellence Program was one of the most defining moments of my life. The Excellence Program helped to shape me into the person I am today. The Leadership opportunities, mentoring sessions, and extra tennis lessons that came with the excellence program transformed me for the better. I was able to join my high school tennis team, and eventually became the captain because of all of the help I had from 15-LOVE. Volunteering and coaching in the summer has provided me with invaluable experiences. I learned to teach kids, and it made me realize that my passion lied within interacting with people. The innumerable opportunities I have been provided by 15-LOVE have helped me gain confidence to pursue things I otherwise wouldn't have thought of. 15-LOVE gave me many things, opened many doors for me, and in the process ensured that I would also give back to my community. The opportunities provided by 15-LOVE are huge stepping stones, and I believe they can and will lead youth in urban communities to achieve great things. I am an example of that. I'd like to reiterate that 15-LOVE gives kids the advantage. Thank you all for your continued support of the 15-LOVE organization.



Hello, my name is Manuel Guerrero, I've been in the 15-LOVE family for about 10 years now. I started 15-LOVE at the Lincoln Park open classes in the summer along with my two siblings. We were later then invited to the excellence program, where from that time they change my life completely. 15-LOVE introduced me to many

friends, mentors, and coaches, it allowed me a great opportunity to learn. If it wasn't for the program, I probably wouldn't have had the enthusiasm and passion to go to college. Tennis has never been the priority nor the objective in my opinion. Tennis is only the sport we play but without the coaches and friends, I don't believe I could have made it through high school as easily as I did. I loved every minute I volunteered and played for the program. Each moment was a learning experience that I will never forget especially the coaches and my. Nathan Zack wasn't only my coach, but my friend. He taught me how to play chess in his free time and to this day I still play and have competed in tournaments. Another influential person from 15-LOVE is role model since I started the program at 8 years old. Whether he was busy with school, the lab or even with his personal life, he took time to tutor me. Domingo Montes also spends his time with the program and us. He's been there for me through all my troubles and has always made sure I wasn't missing anything. If it wasn't for Domingo's support I wouldn't be here speaking to you right now. 15-LOVE is a family, a home, and of course a program I could never give enough thanks for. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE!

15-LOVE WELCOMES TWO NEW STAFF

15-LOVE is excited to welcome two of its newest staff members to the 15-LOVE family. Cindy Lyons joined 15-LOVE in April as the Director of Community Relations. She will be developing Community relations. . . . Cindy has a back ground in business, marketing, and event planning. She is married with two boys and a fur baby.

Mia Ertas has also joined 15-LOVE as its Director of Marketing. She has a background in marketing and communications with an emphasis on digital media. As Director of Marketing Mia will be responsible for the planning, development and implementation of all of the 15-LOVE's marketing and communications strategies. In her off time, Mia continues to hone her passion of photography and visual arts.

SUMMER PROGRAM - 15-LOVE GARDEN



Brie LaMountain

This time last year I was patting myself on the back for a summer's worth of hard work and meaningful experiences. My time as a VISTA for 15-LOVE was coming to an end and it really forced me to look back on the relationship that I had built with this organization. I kept thinking about the myriad of moments that, together, symbolized my time with 15-LOVE, from the smiles seen on kid's faces after they really grasped that day's lesson, to the time spent bonding with other employees. Thinking back on all this not only filled me with feelings of joy and satisfaction, but it showed me how working here has allowed me to grow as an individual and a professional. Through this process of self-reflection I came to the conclusion that there is nowhere I would rather be than here at 15-LOVE. I consider myself fortunate that Amber made a place here for me and that I have been able to take on new responsibilities as the Director of Healthy Living.

My two main initiatives during the school year were to start the Healthy Futures Program and the 15-LOVE Cares Club, a community service club that was founded by and is directed by members of our Leadership Program. The Healthy Futures Program caters towards children ages 6-11 and takes a comprehensive approach to child development. The program features lessons and activities ranging in topics like team work and self-awareness, to math, science, and healthy living. We have received great support from local community members and organizations like Eat Smart NY, making me very hopeful for the future of the program!

This summer I am proud to say, that with the help of our talented Summer Service Scholar, Max Jahns, we have been able to further develop our summer program curriculum. We have continued to work with community partners, like Parson's, St. Catherine's, Israel AME, and Trinity Alliance as part of our Gardening and Literacy Programs. In addition, we have initiated a new Science Program for 15-LOVE tennis participants. A lot of planning and hard work must go in to successfully carrying out these programs, but it is rejuvenating to see the activities play out with all of the different groups involved.

Here I am, one year later, and still in awe at the profound work taking place here at 15-LOVE. So three cheers for all of the employees, interns, and participants putting in their all to our programs and endless thanks to everyone that sees the positive impact of 15-LOVE and continues to supports us!



SUMMER SERVICE SCHOLAR

I'm from a small, suburban town an hour or so outside Chicago. I have two younger siblings, my brother, Ben, and my sister, Angela. My mom is an insurance saleswoman and my dad is a computer programmer. I attend Vassar College in Poughkeepsie pursuing a major in biochemistry, and I stumbled into this position through a few search words on a college internship site. I had typed "meaningful", "educational", and "community" into an internship search and (luckily for me) the algorithm spat out Siena College's Summer Service Scholar program.



Max Jahns

I have always been interested in the idea of community, and the role it plays in our society. I find that often, the strongest communities are the ones who can identify with a shared struggle. In Albany, as with many places around the country and the world, I have found such a great community, even where many people have struggled under the broken power structure of our larger American society. I am incredibly humbled to be able to call myself a small part of 15-LOVE. Amber, Domingo, Mia, Cindy, Brie and everyone involved in this organization have not only been incredibly welcoming, but have given me a goal of passion and selflessness that I will aspire to emulate for years to come.

As 15-LOVE's Summer Service Scholar I assist Brie with the in-office summer programming, including our Reading, Gardening and STEM programs. Summer Service Scholars is a program through Siena and Americorps, where I am stationed at a local non-profit and I take a class on non-profit development. I am currently living on Siena's campus and I am loving getting to know the Capitol Region. So far, I've really loved walking through Washington Park and grabbing a bite at Sliddin' Dirty in Troy.

While I will only get to serve with 15-LOVE for a total of ten weeks, I can honestly say I've learned so much, especially what it means to care deeply about improving your community. I am incredibly honored by this experience, and I am humbled to say I was able to help even in a small capacity.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2016!

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



15-LOVE ROLLS OUT STEM PROGRAM

According to the National Math + Science Initiative kids who graduate in college are much less ready for college subjects like English and History than they are Math and Science. Additionally, 15-LOVE's Summer STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) Program is rooted in the idea if you trust kids with their own education they will rise to the occasion.

Every Friday morning from ten to eleven we've met with our small group of kids ages 7-12 to talk about a topic generally considered too advanced for their age. In our five week program we will cover DNA, electromagnetism, water, temperature and pressure, and sound waves. Science is a subject not often well covered in schools, especially at young ages like the kids in our program, often because teachers do not believe young children have the knowledge or skills to fully grasp the intricacies of many scientific concepts.

When we introduce a new scientific concept we do not shy away from any details. Our kids do not get oversimplified explanations of the world around them, rather we present them if reality as we understand it and trust them to rise to occasion. They emphasis is placed on process and conceptual information as opposed to jargon. A majority of our activities are self-guided experiments that focus on exploration; we rarely explain a concept to them before they have time to test it, and then we discuss what we've observed. Our kids can reliably tell you what types of molecules will dissolve in water, they know what base pairs encode genetic information in our DNA, and can tell you why a statically charged balloon can bend the flow of water. Is it some sort of fluke? Are 15-LOVE's kids just that much better than the rest of the country? (Maybe.)

But I chose to believe it's because kids want and work to understand the world around them. Experts say our country just doesn't want science and math, but (ask any parent) kids religiously seek out the answer to the question: "why?" Kids want to learn, and sometimes it just takes someone to believe they can do it.

