



Dimitri Mezidor is Going to College!

A story of striking generosity despite difficult times

NORWALK GRASSROOTS TENNIS'S best player, Dimitri Mezidor, is going to college thanks to his hard work and the remarkable generosity of Grassroots supporters. While Dimitri is an outstanding player and student, negotiating the maze of college admissions and financial aid has been a challenge for him, his family, and the staff at Grassroots.



Dimitri Mezidor

Dimitri, a senior on scholarship at Fairfield Prep, was accepted at St. Lawrence, Fairfield University, the University of Tampa, and Manhattan College and he chose Manhattan. While Manhattan College has long focused on educating disadvantaged, first-generation college students, attending is still an expensive proposition; next year, a student's total cost will be over \$36,000!

David Kimani, the Mezidors, and I gathered to review the available financial aid offer from Manhattan. With grants, work-study, and student loans, Dimitri was still

almost \$11,000 short. Fortunately, Leslie Wolf and Diana Weller, friends of Grassroots, have established a \$5,000 Grassroots Tennis Scholarship fund, and they selected Dimitri as this year's recipient.

We then telephoned Manhattan College on Dimitri's behalf saying that Manhattan was Dimitri's first choice, but he needed more help.

The College found an additional \$1,500 for his aid package.

With the increased aid and schol-

arship, the Mezidors were still more than \$4,000 shy of the \$36,000 needed. While seemingly so close to their goals, Dimitri's parents were already struggling to pay off Mrs. Mezidor's own educational loans, and simply could not close that gap.

Dimitri's friends at Grassroots were not yet finished, however. The wonderful Wolf-Weller Scholarship fund contributed another \$1,500 for Dimitri, leaving just over \$2,500 to go.

At this year's Play in May benefit, Harlan Stone described the Mezidor's situation to the guests at the party. The whole shortfall was closed in less than twenty minutes.

Even in these most challenging times, the dedicated friends of Grassroots had rallied around Dimitri and his family with advice and financial support and allowed this outstanding young man to achieve his dream.

Play In May, 2009

The good news, the less good news... and the results

NEVER BEFORE HAS OUR PLAY IN MAY benefit been as big, as smoothly run, and as delightful as this year's event. Eighty-two teams participated in six events. An overcast morning turned into a blue-sky afternoon, perfect for tennis, and the level of play was outstanding.

These are the results of the exciting final rounds of each event. The full results are on our website(www.norwalkgrassrootstennis.com).

Men's A Division, J. Cramer and P. Ivanov d. J. Hare and C. Jones 6-3, 6-1.

Men's B Division, T. Scolaro and R. Wright d. Dunkin and S. Bass 7-5, 6-2.

Men's 55+ Division, J. Gocke and R. Swift d. C. Bailey and O. Robertson 6-4, 7-5.

Women's A Division, M. Brossy and C. Danforth d. M. Stichter and A. Mahoney 6-1, 6-2.

Women's B division, V. Frost and R. Ulyett d. A. Cambell and B.Hutchins (8-5).

Women's C Division, M. dasNeves and L. Hattenbach d. C. Baldwin and S. Farrington 6-1, 6-3.

David Kimani told the guests at the party how proud he was to see the improvement in the behavior and attitude of many of his players. He also spoke of his hopes for the educational programs that are being developed for the children.

But the fundraising side of the benefit was disappointing. In the past, the event raised \$40,000 for NGT. In this recession year the raffle fell short by about \$17,000. Consequently, we may need to reduce our teen hiring and educational programs. We trust that our support will soon recover along with the economy.

We thank all of those who participated in the raffle, tournament and party for their expression of confidence in our program.

The Director's Column

A quick start for QUICK START



David Kimani

I HAVE BEEN SO IMPRESSED by the new USTA initiative, Quick Start tennis, which uses foam and low compression balls, small rackets and low nets to introduce tennis to young children. We have been using Quick Start at The Norwalk YMCA, NEON, ACHIEVE in Norwalk, the Roodner Court Neighborhood center, Chester Addison Center in Stamford and Trumbull Gardens in Bridgeport with great results.

Using the downsized equipment, the children can start playing competitive tennis games after a few minutes of instruction. It is particularly advantageous for our program because from one tennis court we can make six small tennis courts, thus serving more kids at any one time in a fun, more interactive way. We are also able to play in gyms by marking down the tennis lines. Last year using Quick Start, NGT held a "jamboree" which attracted nine teams totaling 50 kids from programs throughout our area including Bridgeport, Stamford and Danbury.

This year we have been very lucky to have on our staff Starr Foster, formerly a first doubles and third singles team player at Lehigh University. She has become the Coordinator of the first Quick Start League in Southern New England. Six teams from the YMCA, ACHIEVE, NEON, Chester Addison and Trumbull Racket Club are represented. We have volunteers helping keep score, and it is impressive to see how enthusiastic and motivated the kids are when playing and representing their teams.

I know this will grow our base and expose tennis to more young stars who would not otherwise have an opportunity to play the game.

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