



2020-21  
**IMPACT REPORT**



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and the character-building  
experience of sleepaway  
camp, **Life Serve Youth  
Foundation** empowers  
achievement and unlocks  
the full potential of  
underserved youth.

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# LIFE SERVE YOUTH FOUNDATION 2020-21 IMPACT REPORT



Dear Life Serve Family,

Sometimes we all need to be reminded of what is most important. When **Life Serve Youth Foundation** was founded in 2015, it was with a personal mission to use my love of tennis, the sport that changed my life, to change the lives of others. And so, our two-week summer tennis sleepaway camp began.

By 2019, we hosted a record high 70 returning campers all representing possibility and promise, hailing from many underserved communities, having forged friendships through shared experiences, and creating lasting memories of their time together.

The pandemic brought all that to a halt, necessitating the cancellation of two consecutive camp seasons (2020-21), disrupting the continuity of our programming, and robbing senior campers of their rites of passage that otherwise would have been among the highlights of their stay with us.

We are readying ourselves for 2022 and through our **Love to Give** campaign featured on pages 14 -17 your donation will help us to begin again engaging in the critical work of rebuilding the Life Serve camp community. We have a fundraising goal that will allow us to host 33 campers and your support will make it possible for our returning teens to find their way back and for new campers to discover the life-changing experience of sleepaway camp. Your donation to our **Love to Give** campaign will also signal your continued commitment to our Mission Statement.

***Through the love of tennis and the character-building experience of sleepaway camp, Life Serve Youth Foundation empowers achievement and unlocks the full potential of underserved youth***

Our outcomes show that working hard on the tennis court leads to increased self-confidence, develops problem-solving skills, and reinforces one very important life lesson – it is not always about winning, but growing into the best version of oneself. But the real transformation is seen off court as the experience of camp continues to shape and influence lives beyond the two-week gathering.

That is why I am writing to remind you of the impact of Life Serve and to share with you the stories of Zuri Walters and Andrew Cheng. Now college students, these archetype campers exemplify the reason why your support is so important. Through their stories, you will see the impact Life Serve camp had on them and the role this experience played in their development.

Know that your support, belief, and investment will help the next generation of campers reach their potential like Zuri and Andrew.

On behalf of all the teens we serve, thank you for your generosity and belief in Life Serve Youth Foundation.

Sincerely,

Adam Slone



# IMPACT





# THE BENEFITS OF CAMP ARE CRUCIAL TO OUR TEENS WELL BEING

## **EXPLORING NEW INTERESTS**

LSYF encourages teens to choose the activities they'd like to participate in, allowing them to learn something new or learn more about something they are already passionate about.

## **DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES**

Summer programs improve social skills through continued contact with other children and adults, providing a positive outlet for energy and emotions.

## **FITNESS AND WELLNESS**

Without the structure and resources that the school year has to offer, teens are at greater risk for weight gain and unhealthy eating habits during the summer.

## **BUILDING CHARACTER**

Camp enables teens from different backgrounds, schools, and ages to learn from each other and form long-lasting friendships.

## **KEEPING MINDS ACTIVE**

Summer programs keep minds active – with a general enrichment summer program, youth return to school in the fall ready to continue learning.

## **BUILDING CONFIDENCE**

According to the American Camp Association, summer programs build confidence and a positive attitude. When teens are part of a team, they grow individually and together.

## **SERVING FAMILIES**

Camp is not just a great place for teens to spend their summer – it is a viable option for parents who need some relief too.

## **OUR IMPACT**

Life Serve Youth Foundation gives underserved teens the opportunity to explore their passion for tennis in a safe and nurturing environment that helps them thrive both on and off the court.



**63%** of the teens we serve have not previously attended any type of summer camp.



# WHY CAMP LIFE SERVE?

For thousands of teens with limited financial means, summer can be a time of struggling to find a safe place to play, learn and grow. Life Serve Youth Foundation provides this safe place for teens.

“Through my training at camp, I became more skilled and confident as a tennis player. This year, I became even more active on my tennis team. I want to continue to improve as an athlete and it is important to me that I continue to play tennis throughout high school.”

## OUR REACH

**70 CAMPERS SERVED**

**58%** from New York City

**32%** from Boston and New England

**10%** from other areas

**91%** of campers' families are within \$50,000 of USDA guidelines for free or reduced lunch.

## TENNIS, HEALTH AND FITNESS

**90%** of teens agreed that the tennis lessons improved their skills.

**92%** agreed that camp motivated them to work harder at their tennis game.

**74%** felt more physically fit after attending camp.

**71%** of campers perceive mental and physical health as more important than they did before camp.

**74%** believe that they are more knowledgeable about proper nutrition than prior to camp.





137

Unique teens have joined us for a transformative summer camp experience since 2016

100%

Of campers reported feeling welcome and included at camp

# WHY TENNIS?

Young people who participate in tennis get better grades, devote more hours to studying, think more about their future, and aspire to attend and graduate from college.

*Source: USTA Serves Special Report – “More Than a Sport: Tennis Education and Health”*



**Ample research indicates how tennis catalyzes academic achievement, health, and social involvement among U.S. adolescents.**

**At Life Serve Youth Foundation, tennis is the pathway for personal growth and development, providing significant benefits for teens:**

**Learned Work Ethic:** Improvement through lessons or practice reinforces the value of hard work.

**Unique Learning Experience:** Tennis teaches discipline, patience, confidence, and concentration in a unique format.

**Building Resiliency:** The teens learn how to recover after a lost point, calm themselves down, and get ready for the next point. The stress of a point and the recovery period between points is similar to stress and recovery cycles in life.

**Strategy Planning and Implementation:** Campers learn how to anticipate an opponent’s moves and plan their counter moves.







# A DAY AT CAMP

## MORNING MEDITATION AND VALUE OF THE DAY

The teens meditate to set themselves up for a successful day. We also discuss values that are important to us at camp such as honesty, integrity, and responsibility. The teens share how they can carry these values out every day.

## TENNIS AND A GROWTH MINDSET

On the tennis courts, we teach a growth mindset. Campers learn that with hard work and dedication, they will improve their tennis skills. They learn that they are not in a fixed state – that they can achieve whatever they set their minds to.

A student's growth mindset has a significant impact on how they experience school and respond to setbacks or adversity.

## TENNIS SKILLS AND DRILLS

The adults at camp have a significant impact on the teens we serve. This is why we carefully select coaches who are not only highly skilled but have many years of relevant experience working with teens. They encourage them when they face adversity and offer individualized support to each camper.

**Campers are able to improve their tennis skills in a variety of ways:**

- ✓ Three hours of training daily
- ✓ Drills focusing on footwork, shot depth, volleys, serves, and more
- ✓ Cardio and fitness training
- ✓ Match play teaches sportsmanship and humility

## CAMP ACTIVITIES

One of the greatest advantages of a sleepaway camp is that campers are able to leave urban

environments and explore nature. The fresh air, green grass, and peaceful environment are the perfect ingredients to transform their realities.

On a typical day, they may go rock climbing, zip lining, or mountain biking. They can also ride in go-karts or play soccer, softball, or basketball. Some campers may try archery for the first time or dabble in arts and crafts. Many teens will learn how to bake while others will learn to play a musical instrument.

## GOAL SETTING

We work with teens on a regular basis to formulate and set goals using a research-based framework. The campers set a goal they wish to achieve either in camp, or in the bigger picture of their lives. By the end of camp, each child has identified three goals they would like to achieve and has created a plan to reach them.





# SPECIAL WORKSHOPS

WE CUSTOMIZE OUR WORKSHOPS FOR EVERY SUMMER CAMP.  
HERE IS A LIST OF PAST WORKSHOPS.

## **Volley Against Violence:**

Thought-provoking discussion about interacting safely with the police. We create a safe environment for the campers to ask police officers anything that's on their minds.

## **Yoga:**

In coordination with local Yoga centers, we offer a special experience for our campers to learn a basic understanding of yoga as well as how to listen to and take care of their bodies.

## **Future Leaders:**

Life Serve Camp alumni return to teach our teens confidence as well as responsibility-building skills that they can use in their daily lives.

## **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL):**

Through Social and Emotional Learning, the teens learn social awareness, self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. *(See pages 8-9)*

## **College Prep:**

College prep coaches join us at camp for an engaging college prep session with our teens. The campers asked questions about college applications, choosing schools, and scholarship opportunities.

## **Financial Literacy:**

With the assistance of professional financial advisors, this workshop teaches our teens about financial literacy. They learn about opening a bank account, saving for college, creating a budget and more.

**62%** of campers agree or strongly agree that by the end of camp, their aspirations to go to college increased.

**64%** of campers felt that the financial literacy workshop helped them understand how to budget and manage college expenses.





**84%** of campers reported that they are more confident in their ability to take care of themselves after camp.

**68%** of campers said that it was easier or much easier to recognize how they were feeling after camp.

**50%** increase since the beginning of camp, in the number of campers who reported that they can remain calm when they disagree with someone.

**50%** increase since the beginning of camp, in the number of campers who feel stronger in their ability to consider multiple sides before they make decisions.

**68%** of campers felt more confident in their ability to succeed in life and achieve their goals.

# ABOUT SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

At our camp, young people expand their horizons and develop to become better, well-rounded people.

While we operate a sleepaway tennis camp, all of our programs and activities are rooted in increasing social and emotional learning (SEL).

Social emotional learning enhances teens' capacity to integrate skills, attitudes and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges. For our teens, these skills are crucial.

We reinforce SEL principles and practices into every aspect of our program. One advantage we have

of being a sleepaway camp, is that we are able to integrate SEL into their entire day, beginning with breakfast and ending when they go to sleep.

Directly after breakfast, they engage in a short meditation to practice self-awareness. We use meditation so the teens also learn ways to calm their mind during stressful situations and can bounce back from whatever comes their way.

After meditation, the teens go back to their bunks to reflect in their journal. They write about goals they would like to achieve that day and reflect about how they are feeling. At the end of the day, they reflect

on why they did or did not achieve their goal, and self-assess the way they acted on the court. This helps with self-management and self-awareness.

The teens do additional goal setting and achievement activities using a research-based framework and practice responsible and ethical decision making by discussing how to handle different difficult situations they may face.

We use games that focus on relationship skills. By making it a game, the teens learn and have fun. After the game we debrief and the teens discuss what they learned from playing.



# THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) MODEL



## Self-Management

The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations.

## Self-Awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions and thoughts and how these influence behavior.

## Social Awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

## Relationship Skills

The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups.

## Responsible Decision-Making

The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms.

Both on and off the court, campers learned the importance of teamwork, sportsmanship, perseverance, generosity, and respect for others (social awareness, relationship skills). The campers also learned how to win and lose with dignity.



### Self-Awareness

68% of campers find it easier or much easier to recognize how they are feeling after camp.

84% of our campers felt more confident in their ability to take care of themselves compared to before attending our camp.



### Relationship Skills

85% of teens felt that it was important or extremely important to "try to make others feel welcome."

100% of campers reported feeling welcome and included at camp.



### Self-Management

50% increase in the number of campers who reported since the beginning of camp, they can remain calm when they disagree with someone.



# Zuri Walters

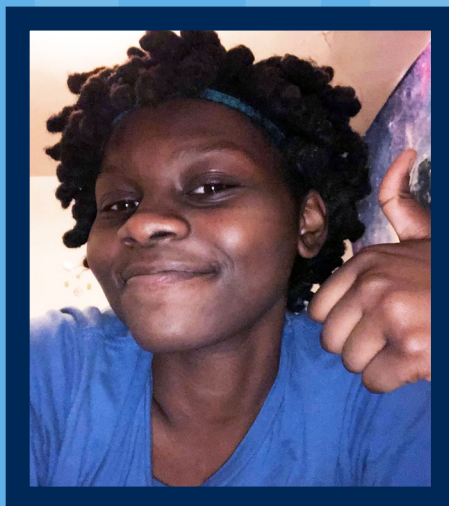
Life Serve Youth Foundation Camper 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

Class of 2024: University of Massachusetts Dartmouth  
Major: Computer Science

When Zuri attended Life Serve Camp for the first time in 2015, by her own admission she was a shy kid. "I never spoke to anyone and was really introverted," Zuri said. Encouraged by her dad to explore tennis for its health benefits, Zuri made the junior varsity team at the Boston Latin Academy. "I was shy, but I was competitive too. I would get really upset if I didn't get picked to play because I knew my potential."

Hailing from Boston and enrolled at Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center, Zuri and her tennis cohort were encouraged by their coach to apply to camp. Having attended sleepaway camp in the past, Zuri thought she had an idea of what to expect, but this camp experience was different from the start. "Two weeks was a lot longer than I had ever been away and I never attended a camp that had a sport as the focus." Zuri recalls the first bus ride up to camp. "From the beginning, the environment was inviting, and we were encouraged to interact with each other. There was a group for everyone to belong to," she said.

The mindset that rattled Zuri whenever a teammate was chosen over her changed quickly. "After the first few days at camp, I began to understand the importance of building my own skill level. It was not about competing against others, but about each of us helping and pushing each other to be our best." Zuri really started to enjoy the work that was necessary to develop her



tennis skills "The on-court drills were still competitive, but less stressful and more fun." The daily activities and special workshops designed to encourage the campers to explore new interest, build character, and deal with adversity helped shaped Zuri off the court.

When the two weeks ended, Zuri felt transformed. "When camp was over and I got back to school, I had a better attitude, my social skills improved, and I could communicate better with my teammates. I was just way more outgoing and even able to speak with people that I didn't know." She found a program where she could play tennis year-round, and her game improved tremendously by the spring when her tennis team started their season.

Her second year at camp saw things changing for the better. The friendships formed in the first year had been renewed and everyone was excited to be back at camp again.

"There were more coaches, and the on-court drills integrated beginners with the intermediate players. We were able to play with more advanced players and improve our game even more." Zuri became physically fit, and her elevated tennis game added to her confidence.

Due to her improved social skills, when it was time for camp again, Zuri invited a friend she played tennis with to attend. "Each year, there were so many new faces on the bus going to camp. We started out with just a few the first year and by my last year, there were a lot of kids from all over." To this day, Zuri has friends who live in New York and Connecticut, and they maintain a group chat that keeps them connected year-round. All these years later, they laugh remembering the talent show battles between cabins, the dance contest, various Hip-Hop and R&B battles, and her own attempt at rapping. "We thought we were so cool."

Zuri credits the people she met at Life Serve Camp for the person she is today. "They help you evolve your character and really get to know yourself." This once shy young lady received several awards during the summer, including Camper of the Year. Her time at camp also had a big influence on her decision to attend college. "I have all my awards here with me in my college dorm. My time at camp really helped me figure out what I loved and that I wanted to attend college. It changed my life."



# Andrew Cheng

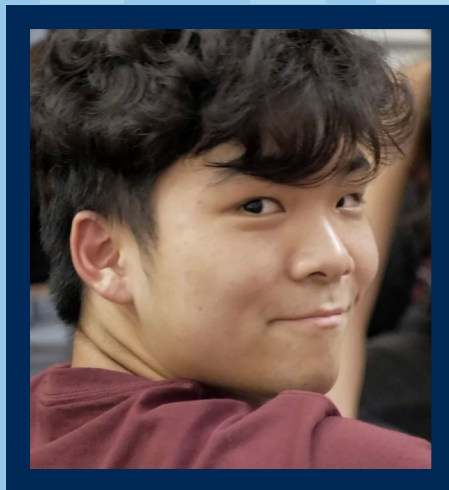
Life Serve Youth Foundation Camper 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

Class of 2025: Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Major: Applied Mathematics & Economics

Life Serve Youth Foundation has been a part of Andrew's life since middle school, and while reminiscing about the 2015 inaugural camp, he is amazed at how much time has passed. "I started going to camp in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and it is crazy because it feels like it was just yesterday, but I am freshmen in college now." A big fan of ATP players Dominic Thiem and Nick Kyrgios, growing up in New York City, Andrew played tennis with his father and was enrolled in the New York City Parks Foundation National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) program, where his love of the sport was born.

The lessons he learned from his years at Life Serve camp still guide him today as he acclimates to college life at Harvard University. "The biggest thing I learned at camp which helped me in this new environment at college is to always be accepting and understanding of new people and get to know their stories," Andrew said.

Looking back on the early years, he remembers meeting coaches, counselors, and other kids from New York and Boston who he didn't know. Understanding this is not just a new experience for him but for everyone else arriving at college for the first time, Andrew credits Life Serve for helping him understand the importance of community. "Getting to be part of a new community is something I value and apply to my everyday life. Whether it is sitting in the dining hall or meeting someone



at the library to study, it has been an integral part of my life."

For Andrew, Life Serve Camp proved to be a great source of fun that included rock-climbing, zip lining, and go-karting in addition to improving his tennis game. However, all the activities were designed to help campers and coaches get to know each other better and as Andrew describes it, "It really becomes like playing with your family."

Attending Bronx High School of Science, some of the most informative experiences for Andrew were the Life Serve camp workshops where he learned about the college application process, identifying resources for financial aid, completing the FASFA application, and applying for loans and grants. "I really remember the Financial Literacy classes and how much I learned from those." Although he valued the workshops,

his real praise is for the older counselors and their wisdom. "Every day we would get such good advice on so many things like managing social situations and they would share their experiences and I would take their life lessons and apply it to myself."

Andrew describes his years at camp as transformative. "If I didn't go to camp Life Serve, I would not be the same person I am today because of all the people that had an impact on me. Adam, Coach Bubla, and the other coaches helped me not only be a better tennis player, but a better person in general. They taught me to be more compassionate and carefree, but to also focus on what I really needed to do, to improve as a person."

While he has many fond memories of camp, one specific on-court lesson translated to an off-court realization. "We were taught how to serve the ball using a different and strange grip. Coach Bubla held the racket in a way that caused the ball to spin back toward the server. I never saw anyone do that. It taught me that you don't have to do everything the way other people expect you to, you can do it your own way, put a different spin on it. It showed me that in life I don't have to follow the rest of the pack and conform. I can have my own originality and contribute to the overall community just by being me."



# IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE, IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER

## -AFRICAN PROVERB

The important work we do starts with our valued partner organizations that provide tennis programming annually to teens across New York, Boston, and surrounding cities. The program directors, coaches, and staff see firsthand the impact that Life Serve's summer camp has had on their teens. The feedback we receive year after year about returning campers is that they are changed for the better – more mature, more engaged, and more committed to doing the work necessary to improve their tennis game.



For many of our partner organizations, tennis programming was canceled beginning in the spring of 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Patience, creativity, and perseverance were on full display as many offered virtual tennis programming over the summer months and during the fall school year. We missed collaborating with them on preparation and the selection process but more so, we missed sharing the many success stories and positive outcomes from the camp experience.



Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center, which has partnered with Life Serve since 2015, was featured in a *Boston Business Journal* article spotlighting their powerhouse CEO, Toni Wiley and her efforts to build a tennis program that positively impacts the lives of hundreds of underserved kids in the Boston area.

Please click on the link below to read the story.



<https://www.bizjournals.com/boston/news/2021/08/10/how-toni-wiley-lead-sportsmens-to-60-years.html>

### **PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:**

City Parks Foundation  
15 Love  
Franklin Park Tennis Association  
Highland Park Tennis Association  
Junior Tennis Clinic  
Kings County Tennis League  
Lee Community Tennis Association  
Lincoln Terrace Tennis Association  
Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center  
Tenacity

### **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022**

We remain committed to supporting all campers in the Life Serve Youth Foundation family and to joining forces with our partners to continue the work of changing lives and creating future leaders on and off the court.





D.R.E.A.M.  
(Developing  
Responsibly  
Economically  
Advanced Model-  
Citizens) host a  
financial literacy  
workshop for  
our teens.

# MIND







**HELP US EMPOWER  
ACHIEVEMENT AND UNLOCK  
THE FULL POTENTIAL OF  
UNDERSERVED YOUTH.**





2021-22  
FUNDRAISING  
OUTREACH



# LOVE TO GIVE

Campaign







 **2021-22  
FUNDRAISING  
OUTREACH**

# **LOVE TO GIVE** CAMPAIGN

PLEASE  
SUPPORT  
LIFE SERVE  
YOUTH  
FOUNDATION

“Camp Life Serve has helped me develop as a person. I think that by attending for a fourth time, I can fully enjoy myself, and be surrounded by the people who have changed my life for the better.”

We all know that good feeling that comes from giving with love and purpose — there is nothing like it!

As we plan for summer 2022 sleepaway camp, we want our teens to feel the love when they return to camp. As we are making up for lost ground of consecutive camp cancellations in 2020 and 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we appreciate your understanding and support of our need to get back on track.

As Camp Life Serve grows in popularity, we are committed to supporting at least 33 returning campers, by making their camp homecoming spectacular, memorable, and transformational. This is made possible by your generosity and your belief in the potential of all the teens we serve.

The cost and logistics associated with hosting a two-week summer camp are considerable, and our desire is to provide a full experience for each teen fortunate enough to become part of the Life Serve Youth Foundation camper family. There are many ways to get involved, and many ways to give as we partner to help kids reach their full potential.





Please consider donating in the categorized amounts to help us meet our fundraising goal of \$165,000 for our LOVE TO GIVE campaign!

☐ **\$5,000**

Sponsorship for camp registration for one teen to experience the joy of sleepaway tennis camp, plus transportation to/from camp, equipment, field trips, additional camp amenities, etc.

☐ **\$3,500**

Sponsorship for camp registration for one teen to experience the joy of sleepaway tennis camp

☐ **\$2,000**

Supports three program instructors for the summer

☐ **\$1,000**

Helps provide transportation to and from camp for 20 campers

☐ **\$500**

Provides camp supplies for 15 campers

☐ **\$250**

Helps provide tennis equipment for 10 campers

☐ **\$100**

Provides 10 meals for a camper

**TO DONATE** Please visit our website at [www.lifeservetennis.org/donate](http://www.lifeservetennis.org/donate)

**If you prefer to make your gift by check**, please make it payable to “Life Serve Youth Foundation” and mail it to 140 West End Avenue, Apt. 4A, New York, NY 10023.



**NONPROFIT STATUS:**

Life Serve Youth Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to drawing out the maximum potential of underserved youth through the unique game of tennis. We strengthen muscles, open minds, and shift limiting beliefs through demanding yet compassionate training and support. Please support America’s first free overnight tennis camp for youth with limited financial resources by making a generous gift today.

**Help us continue to provide this life-changing camp experience to teens from underserved communities. All donations make a difference – no amount is too small!**

Every donor, large and small, has a part to play in making Life Serve a success. Your support is important, and we thank you.

Note: It is advisable to contact an independent adviser, as charitable deductions and other tax and estate impacts vary widely according to personal circumstances.





**EMPOWER ACHIEVEMENT  
AND UNLOCK THE  
FULL POTENTIAL OF  
UNDERSERVED YOUTH.**



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