



Child's Play

How often have you heard that phrase used to describe something that's simple, easy? But for thousands of children in the District of Columbia, finding a safe place to play is *far* from easy. That's why the Recreation Wish List Committee (RWLC) was created by Cora Masters Barry, former first lady of Washington, DC.



Since 1995, the RWLC has raised and provided more than \$3.6 million to help improve and create safe places for children to play, grow and learn in the District of Columbia. The RWLC has helped build, refurbish or improve recreation centers and neighborhood parks; donated playground and

boxing equipment; and purchased three passenger vans so that the city's children could explore new horizons.

If our youth are to succeed, we must offer new challenges beyond the competition of the television and the street corner. Our youth need a combination of academic and cultural enrichment programs to give them a chance to thrive and excel.

Cora Masters Barry
*CEO & Founder,
Recreation Wish List Committee, and
Founder,
Southeast Tennis and Learning Center*

Our greatest, ongoing contribution began in 1999, when Cora Masters Barry launched efforts to build a state-of-the-art tennis and educational facility in the heart of Ward 8. Two years later, the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center (SETLC) opened its doors. Since then, **in partnership with DC's Department of Parks &**

Recreation, the RWLC has enabled more than 2,000 children and teens to build social and life skills, strengthen academic abilities, and gain the confidence they need to succeed both on and off the tennis courts.

Hooked on Learning

While tennis is the hook that often attracts young people to the SETLC, the Center's academic programs quickly captivate them. Largely funded by grants and contributions secured by the RWLC, the Center's year-round educational programs enable children to improve their math and reading skills. They do so through a combination of proven curricula, after-school tutoring, homework assistance, and innovative activities that make learning fun. For example, in 2009 the Center's tennis scholars visited NASA's Goddard Space Center to see how astronauts' suits are made, then used space-age fabrics (and math skills) to create their own fashions. Tennis scholars also challenged their minds—and opponents—by learning the game of chess.

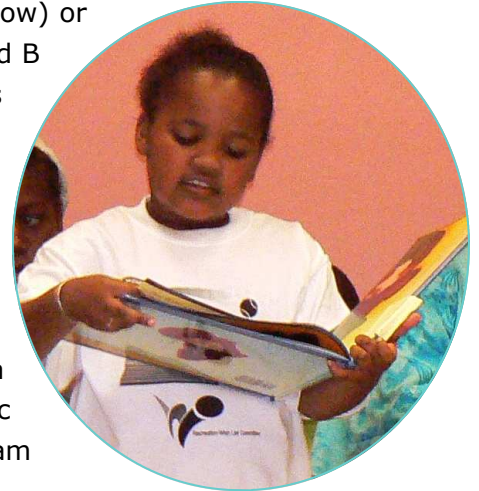
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Getting Results

Many tennis scholars in the Center's 2009-10 after-school programs saw significant improvements in their grades. Eighty three percent of the students achieved target academic outcomes, either raising their grades in reading and math (up from C or below) or maintaining A and B averages even as the work grew more challenging.

During the summer, the RWLC supports SETUP, a six-week academic enrichment program that aims to

prevent learning loss. Many children lose weeks or months of knowledge over the summer. But, on average, summer 2010 SETUP participants *increased* their reading comprehension by 23 percent and their math proficiency by 26 percent. As a result, they will begin the new school year better-equipped and ready to learn.



SETLC's "Blacks in Wax Museum" Chronicling African-American History

With support from the RWLC, SETLC's annual "Blacks in Wax Museum"—an innovative living-history program—engages children and teens in reading and research to portray current and historic African Americans. During Black History Month, the "museum" features more than 70 students as statues that come to life at the press of a button or perform in a stage production highlighting the achievements of African Americans. Past programs included "From Chains to Change" (chronicling African American history from slavery to today) and "Lift Every Voice...and Stand" (highlighting the contributions of African American artists). In 2011, "From Surviving to Thriving," celebrates the economic achievements and generosity of African Americans. The annual event is the culmination of months of preparation, as students learn about history-makers of the past and present—from Civil War spy Mary Elizabeth Bowser to NASA Astronaut Mae Jemison and from Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. to President Barack Obama. Presented at SETLC for area school groups, parents and friends of RWLC and—for the first time in 2011—at the Kennedy Center, SETLC's Blacks in Wax gives scholars and audiences a renewed appreciation for African American history—and new dreams for the future.



Promoting Fitness

Besides helping young people improve their minds, the RWLC also promotes better health and fitness among the city's youth. Lack of exercise and safe places to play, poor nutrition, and many hours spent in front of television and computer screens all contribute to a sharp rise in obesity and associated health problems among the city's children—including type II diabetes, a disease that once afflicted only adults.



During SETUP 2009, the RWLC provided software to create *TechnoFit Kids*, a program that encourages children to eat health foods and exercise to get and stay fit. More recently, in 2010-11, the RWLC has partnered with Kids' Kitchen, Inc., and Jordan Enterprises to pilot an after-school nutrition and fitness program for children, that involves SETLC scholars and parents alike.

For more information about the RWLC and SETLC, visit www.recreationwishlist.org.

RWLC & SETLC: Helping Youth Succeed

Our parents always stressed education. At the SETLC, not only are students working hard at their tennis—which they love—but they're also focusing on things even more important in life, such as education and learning values. The Center not only helps you become an athlete, it helps you become a better person. We're proud to be a part of this.

Serena and Venus Williams
Women's Tennis Champions

Education is the most important component of the programs at the SETLC. We want young people to learn and have fun but—most importantly—to learn.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux
*President, Bennett College for Women
Treasurer, RWLC Board of Directors*

I'm honored to serve as a member of the RWLC's Board, because I realize what an amazing model the SETLC can be for the rest of the nation. I wish I had a place like this when I was a child.

Zina Garrison
*Former Women's Tennis Champion and
USTA Fed Cup Olympic Coach
Member, RWLC Board of Directors*

Learning was my favorite thing at Camp SETUP. I learned about tennis. I learned about Greece. I learned about math. I love to learn.

Koraun B.
SETLC Tennis Scholar, Age 9



Recreation Wish List Committee

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Creating Safe Places for Children to



**What Educators, Parents and Kids Say About the
Recreation Wish List Committee and Southeast Tennis & Learning Center**

We know that when our scholars leave us at the end of the day and head to the Center, they'll find an environment where they will learn to make good choices, to be respectful of others, and to care about their community.

Shantelle Wright

*Founder and Head of School,
Achievement Preparatory Academy*

My daughter has been coming to the Center since she was six years old. RWLC and Center staff genuinely care about the children—and not just one part of their development. The Center isn't just about tennis, it's about educating the whole child. I love that.

Cassandra Henderson

SETLC Parent

The teachers at the Center taught me that I can do whatever I want, if I put my mind to it. They helped me to believe in myself and motivated me, because they really care. And they taught me how to be a lot better at reading, especially out loud.

Ta'One W.

SETLC Tennis Scholar

