

First Lady Michelle Obama Helps SquashSmarts Give Kids Their Very Best Shot!

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – Wednesday, July 18, 2012, 3:00pm



SquashSmarts and the Lenfest Center hosted First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama this afternoon to promote her *Let's Move!* health and fitness youth initiative.

350 VIP's, including Mayor Michael Nutter (Philadelphia, PA), Mayor Cory Booker (Newark, NJ), Mayor Joe Riley (Charleston, SC) and nine of their peers gathered at Philadelphia's premier Hunting Park youth center to focus a spotlight on childhood obesity.

Let's Move provides urban youth with innovative, low cost, and space-efficient ways to get active and stay fit. The First Lady's message echoes SquashSmarts mission to keep kids in shape in school and on track for a healthy life.

"SquashSmarts was honored to be chosen by the First Lady and Mayor's office to host this special event," says Executive Director Stephen Gregg.

Gregg spent a few moments briefing Mrs. Obama and Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius and Mayor Nutter on the benefits of squash as well as the national urban squash and education movement.

Mrs. Obama fondly recounted her first squash experience as a Princeton undergraduate. Later in the ceremony, she made a point of recognizing SquashSmarts' graduate Sakora Miller among the crowd of spectators.

SquashSmarts team members Belkis Garcia, Jesus Caseres, Kayla Oadams, Makeedah Bowden, Najee Melton, Ibrahim Pate and Ishmael Pate were stars of the show as they demonstrated the *KaBOOM!* Imagination Playground under the supervision of SquashSmarts Program Director Katie Bicknese.

"This was the most exciting event SquashSmarts has ever had!" exclaimed 6th grader Belkis Garcia.

SquashSmarts is an innovative afterschool program combining the sport of squash with academic tutoring for under-served, urban youth in order to develop academic and athletic achievement.

Founded in 2001, SquashSmarts is the third of twelve programs nationwide to utilize squash as a vehicle for changing young people's lives.

Event Coverage

[NBC10 Philadelphia](#)

Special thanks to SquashSmarts and Lenfest Center guests, staff and volunteers – including 40 SquashSmarts Embrace Camp staff and students – who made this event possible, including:

Chase Lenfest, Thomas Pasch, Amos Huron, Stephen Gregg, Andrew Nehrbas, Lisa Stokes, Molly Pierce, James Domenick Raymond Johnston, Jr., Connie Buckley, Marcia Pasch, Stuart Pasch, Lisa Vaccarelli, Shapley Gregg, Regina Shanahan, Jeanie Shanahan, Dana Sanders, Katherine Bicknese, Jessica Kaszycki, Brittany Hebden, Richard Gifford, Alicia Rodriguez Acosta, Christopher Wert, Julie Harris, Quinetta Bowden, Tempest Bowden, Casey Brown, Todd Brown, Johnathan Cooper, Mithun Das, Monisha Das, Rachel Edmonds, Jonathan Edwards, Dewon Flythe, Jacob Greenbaum, Kate Greenbaum, Katherine Hamill, Demonte Harris, Devonte Harris, Justin Howell, Justin Hunter, Adam Hymans, Sakora Miller, Gail Nelson, Meredith Nelson, Kareem Price, Susan Prinsen, Chase Smith, Lucy Rowe, Shenae Walters, Tayon Whiting, Julie Williams, Kalefe Wright, Arjun Dravid, Dillon Halloran, Lauren Johnston, Margaux Losty, Katherine Pisani, Maximilian Reiff, Jonathan Soslow, Nicholas Weinert, Samuel York, Katherine Bicknese, Makeedah Bowden, Najee Melton, Ibrahim Pate, Ishmael Pate, Jalen Rose, Belkis Garcia, Jesus Caseres, Kayla Oadams, Mark Hudson, Gary Smith, Michael Spaziano, Brian Cann.

For More Information, Please Contact:

SquashSmarts
Dana Sanders & Gray Gifford
Development Directors
3890 N. 10th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19140
info@squashsmarts.org
215-221-6860
www.SquashSmarts.org

Lenfest Center
Amos Huron
Facility Director
3890 N. 10th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19140
215-221-6681

Let's Move! Campaign
www.letsmove.gov

