

The Chirls Scholarship: Continued Commitment to Community and to the Memory of Catherine Chirls

By Sarah Barenbaum

When Catherine Chirls passed away September 11, 2001, her family created the *Catherine E. Chirls Scholarship Fund* in her memory. The fund was established through the generosity of family and friends of Catherine E. Chirls with the intention of promoting squash among New York City's urban youth. The fund is a three-way partnership of *StreetSquash*, the Harlem-based urban youth enrichment program, Bryan Patterson's Universal Squash Camps and US Squash. Since 2002, two outstanding students have been selected each year by *StreetSquash* on the basis of merit. The selected students attend a week of Bryan Patterson's *Universal Squash Camps* in Lee-On-Solent, England, where they train intensively to improve their game, and to broaden their life perspective. Patterson generously donates the two places in his camp as part of the partnership, while the scholarship fund, which is managed by the US Squash Investment Committee, provides all travel and living expenses.

The selection process for the Chirls Scholarship is rigorous, but collaborative.

According to Pat Cosquer, Director of

Squash Programs, choosing the students is "a joint effort of everyone at *StreetSquash*. While squash ability is factored in, motivation, dedication, and commitment to the program are much more important."

In the summer of 2006, Samantha Matos and Sheena Sucko were selected for the Chirls Scholarship. Reflecting on her trip, Sucko remarked, "I was filled with verve because I was going to Europe, which I'd never been to before, and so I was nervous [but], overall, I had a great time at camp getting to know the other kids, coaches, and England. I'm glad I was chosen to go to this camp!" Both participants were elated when discussing the trip and emphasized how much they enjoyed the rigor of the program combined with cultural outings which allowed them to explore England.

Nicholas Chirls, son of Catherine Chirls said the family chose to found the Chirls Scholarship in his mother's memory because "she loved squash and she loved



StreetSquash members Samantha Matos (L, second row) and Sheena Sucko (next to Samantha) on one of the outings arranged by Universal Squash Camps director, Bryan Patterson (far left), in 2006.

to support the game." Nicholas and other members of his family had been longtime volunteers at the *StreetSquash* program, and they are very pleased with the outcome of the scholarship fund. Although it is a relatively small program, the family believes the scholarship has an enormous impact on the lives of those selected and looks forward to the future of the program. Raheem Logan and Elizabeth Gatling, both rising sophomores in high school, have been selected as Chirls Scholars for the summer of 2007.



Vanessa Atkinson

Laurens Jan Anjema

Amsterdam or Bust

The last time the Netherlands played host to a major women's professional squash tournament was the 1989 Women's World Open in Warmond. The Forexx Dutch Open aims to fix that in August when the WISPA tour blows into Amsterdam to play for \$43,500. But the men won't be left out in the cold as \$20K will be up for grabs for them too. NEXT events—a joint venture between Topsquash Nederland, SquashLife and Stolwijk & Eichorn—is promoting the event.

Vanessa Atkinson—10-time defending Dutch National champion and former World No. 1—and current men's Dutch National Champ, World No. 23 Laurens Jan Anjema, are elated with the prospect of winning a title at home. "I am very happy that we have a Dutch Open again," Anjema said. "It's good for the promotion of squash in the Netherlands, great for the Dutch players, and it gives me the chance to win in front of an enthusiastic home crowd instead of on the other side of the world!"