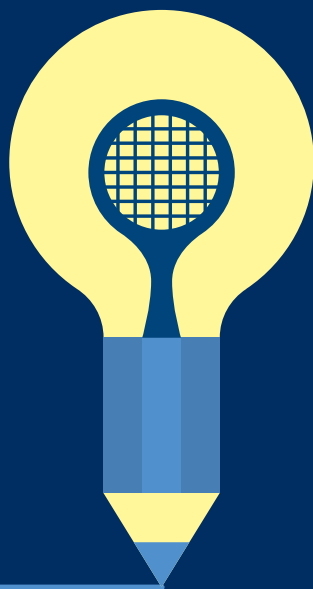


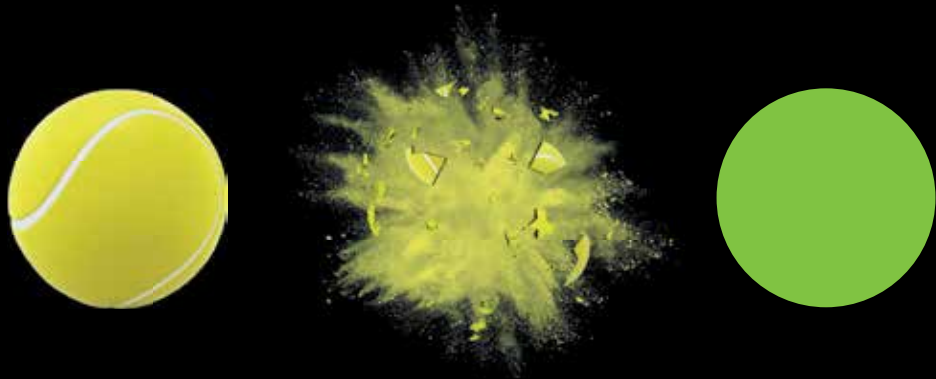


# 2020 NJTL ESSAY GRANT

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*“Everyone measures success differently.  
How do you strive for success in terms  
of your character development,  
education, or tennis?”*

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**Hope Gempel**  
**9 years old**  
**Missouri Valley**  
**First Serve OKC**

Hope is 9 years old. She is from Oklahoma City, Okla.. She loves writing stories, playing tennis and spending time with her dogs. Hope's favorite colors are purple and blue. A fun fact about Hope is that her favorite clothes to wear are her tennis outfits and pajamas. Her favorite subject in school is science. She hopes to one day be able to work with animals as a veterinarian, marine biologist or zoologist. One of Hope's greatest ambitions is to become a professional tennis player, traveling the world, seeing new places, meeting new people and sharing her love of tennis.

## Hope's Story

How Do You Strive for Success?

By Doing the Best I Can

I strive for success by doing my best in academics, tennis and using my free time wisely. Some ways I can check my success is by my accomplishments of learning and developing new skills and enjoying the challenges.

In academics, I feel most successful when I am on pace and able to understand my subjects with a passing grade. As a result, I have been allowed to study at my own pace, completing two grade levels in one year. Successfully testing out of 2nd grade into 3rd grade. This year in 4th grade I had an amazing experience being recognized as a gifted and talented student by being placed in my school's program for exceptionally gifted students.

As for tennis I strive for success by having fun, enjoying the game and sharing the love of tennis. It is the best feeling when a group of kids are playing together laughing and smiling with each other. Another thing I love about tennis is the challenge. To learn and develop new skills that I can use in competitive play. I know I have been successful when people comment "how they love watching me play because I am so happy and upbeat, just enjoying the game with a smile."

When I am not working hard on academics or tennis, I feel successful when I choose my free time activities wisely. Foremost, I love all animals and enjoy caring for them. I have three dogs of my own and foster dogs from a local rescue. I like to volunteer at adoption events and help the dogs find their new forever homes. Additionally, one of my most favorite things to do is share my love of tennis with others. I love to volunteer at community events introducing tennis or sharing my tennis journey on social media.

I am hopeful that my motivation and successes will continue to follow me as I grow and develop by doing the best I can. Especially in these areas that are so important to me.



**Malachi Wroten**  
**10 years old**  
**Southern California**  
**First Break Academy**

Malachi Wroten is 11 years old. He lives in the Hub City of Compton, Calif. He enjoys playing video games, improving his tennis skills and solving math problems. Malachi's favorite color is blue and favorite foods are spinach ravioli with extra pesto sauce, Chipotle and frozen yogurt. His hobbies include advancing his information technology skills, riding his skateboard and taking his dog on walks. A fun fact about Malachi is that he wants to become a mechanical engineer and own his own business someday.

## Malachi's Story

My definition of success means spending the rest of my life accomplishing goals.

These past four months during the coronavirus pandemic, I have been doing everything virtual and it has been very hard for me, but I continue to strive.

I am striving to be the best version of myself. I want to set a good example for my community through my character by being a leader. As a big brother, I am already a leader and role model because every move I make, they are watching me. I know the importance of integrity and doing the right thing. I strive to be a good example for other African American boys by treating others fairly and being kind no matter what their race, gender or religion is.

I am also striving for success in my education by practicing math, improving in English language arts and science. As a student, I am learning to be more responsible, respectful and kind to others. Education is really important to me and needed for me to become a successful mechanical engineer. Not only do I want to be educated, I also want to be an educator. I want to show other kids the importance of reading and to teach other children how to invest their money.

Lastly, I am striving to also become a professional tennis player, who would also be an engineer. How cool would that be? When I practice tennis, it allows me to improve my backhand and forehand skills. I want to master all of the techniques that will help me to become a great player.

In conclusion, I will continue to strive for success by working towards my goals of being a respectful young man, staying focused on my school work and improving my athletic skills in tennis. However, I must be honest, virtual tennis is not working out so well for me. I love Mario Tennis, but it does not take the place of actually being on the court. I pray that we'll be back to interacting very soon to continue striving for the best.



**Sophie Ma**  
**11 years old**  
**Northern**  
InnerCity Tennis Foundation

My name is Sophie Ma. I am 11 years old and I am from Minneapolis, Minnesota. My interests include tennis, swimming, music and drawing. A fun fact about me is that I speak Mandarin. I go to a Chinese immersion school and my school bus goes by InnerCity Tennis every day. School is important to me, but I also like to get out and have fun playing sports with my brother and friends. Someday, I might like to go to college at the University of Minnesota, or somewhere else like California, New York or even overseas. I do not know what I would like to study yet, but I have a lot of time to think about it. My city has been through a lot recently, but I look forward to getting back to InnerCity Tennis soon. It is so much fun there, the coaches are awesome and this award means a lot to me and my family.

## Sophie's Story

### Success at School, Tennis and Life

Everybody defines success in different ways. Some people do not feel successful unless they have a lot of money, power or fame. To me, that is not real success because many people with these things might be bored, unhappy and unfulfilled. I try to be successful as a student, as a tennis player and as a person in different ways so that I can make changes for the better.

I try to be successful as a student by doing homework, staying organized, being punctual, paying attention, requesting help, thinking positive and setting goals, as well as by sleeping, eating and exercising well. I try to eat healthy foods and sleep well every night. For exercise, I do swimming, soccer and tennis during the school year and biking, swimming and tennis during the summer.

I try to be successful as a tennis player in many ways. I go each day on time for practice. I pay attention to the coaches, I try my best and I keep a positive attitude. I really like tennis at the tennis center. My coaches are helpful and nice. I also listen to what the tennis pros have to say. US Open winner Roger Federer says that success at tennis comes down to three things: conditioning, mental toughness or mental strength and tennis skill. The Williams sisters drink plenty of water and avoid junk food. The pros have good advice for tennis players like me.

I try to be successful as a person by always trying to be the best person I can be. I listen to adults. I follow directions. I help others. I volunteer by tutoring younger students and younger tennis players. Volunteering makes me feel happy. Helping others makes me feel like a better person and makes a positive difference around me.

In conclusion, these are the ways I try to be successful as a student, as a tennis player and as a person. I always try my best at everything. By doing so, I hope to achieve success in the future and to make changes for the better in the world.



**Tyler DeLon**  
**11 years old**  
**Mid-Atlantic**

**Metropolitan Tennis & Education Group**

My name is Tyler DeLon and I am 11 years old, born in Palo Alto, Calif. I started playing tennis at 4 years old and am proud to be on Team DMV. When I am not playing tennis, I like wrestling with my enormous dog named Griffin and playing video games with my friends, especially Fortnite. I have big goals such as keeping good grades, a college scholarship and one day becoming at least top 3 in the Mid-Atlantic and maybe even pro. I can also ride my bike while bouncing a tennis ball with my racquet.

## Tyler's Story

Success is not about winning or losing or being perfect. It's about trying your hardest and not quitting. I matter and I prove this in tennis and everyday life. The skills I learn in tennis I use off the court, both in learning and who I am as a person.

I strive to become the greatest tennis player I can be. On the court, I make sure I arrive on time, tie my shoes tight, get some water, run 1 or 2 laps and do a dynamic warmup so I can perform to the best of my abilities. No ball is too far away for me to try to run down. I will not stop running until the ball bounces three times. When I play a match, I am confident and know my opponent will not win without a fight. In the words of Frances Tiafoe, "It's time to get busy." As long as I try my hardest, if I lose it does not matter, because I am still a success.

In school, I am focused and not worried about anything else, just the pencil and paper in front of my head. I tell myself, I will get good grades, I will go to college, I will be the best I can because I work hard to succeed.

In life, with everything going on in the world, it is important for me to value who I am as a person, stay positive and never give up, even if things don't go my way. I am a Black boy who will grow into a Black man and I am proud of who I am and who I will become which is success within itself. Life is not always fair but the way I measure success will help me deal with any problems.

"I can't," "I quit," "It's too hard," these are phrases I do not use. Failure is not an option. I am convinced and confident I will succeed in life. I believe in myself and to me that is success. Black Lives Matter, I Matter, We Matter!



**Julian Williams**  
**14 years old**  
**Texas**  
**Dallas Tennis & Education Academy**

I am Julian Williams. I'm 13 years old. I live in Dallas, Texas with my parents and two brothers. I started playing tennis about seven years ago with Dallas Tennis & Education academy, my local NJTL chapter. I participate in Classical Conversations homeschool program. My favorite subject is math. Outside of tennis, I enjoy baking and cooking. I aspire to attend Howard University or Stanford University to play tennis and study law. In the future, I would like to be a professional tennis player and a civil rights attorney.

## Julian's Story

"Striving success without hard work is like trying to harvest where you haven't planted." - (David Bly)

I strive for success in tennis by practicing hard and giving 100% effort every time I step on the court. "Great thing comes from hard work and perseverance. No Excuses." - (Kobe Bryant). I push myself to always do better than yesterday. I stay hungry and motivated, because I have high goals that I want to achieve. My tennis goals are to attend Stanford on a full academic and athletic scholarship and play for their women's tennis team. Afterwards, my desire is to play professional tennis. Through working hard, never being satisfied, driving myself and staying motivated, I believe I can achieve my goals.

I strive for success by taking ownership of my education. "Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today" - (Malcolm X). I prepare for my future today by seizing every opportunity to learn. I don't settle for average grades. I practice the information until know it to the best of my abilities. One of my goals for my education is to attend Stanford and study Law. I can achieve this goal by taking my education seriously and striving for excellence.

I strive for success in developing my character by making an intentional choice to have a positive attitude. "A negative attitude is nine times more powerful than positive attitude. - (Bikram Choudhury). I choose to have a positive attitude in good times and bad, because my attitude determines my altitude. Having a good attitude influences and rubs off on others around me. My desire is to be a good example to everyone I come in contact with.

Striving for success is difficult and there are times when I lack in each of these areas, but I am working hard to improve in these areas because by practicing hard, taking ownership of my education and choosing to have a positive attitude I am striving for success.



**Mason Edmond**

**14 years old**

**Mid-Atlantic**

**Washington Tennis & Education Foundation**

My name is Mason Edmond. I am 14 years old and I live in Washington, D.C. All my life I played baseball and soccer before I discovered my love of tennis 7 years ago. My hobbies include bike riding, playing fetch with my dog, cooking with my family, playing video games with friends, and, of course, playing tennis. I focus on the balance of my academics and athletics, which is very important, to not only me, but my family as well. I am not yet sure where I would like to attend college, but it will most likely be a Historically Black College or University or an Ivy League school.

## Mason's Story

"Everyone measures success differently. How do you strive for success in terms of your character development, education, or tennis?"

When I read "Everyone Measures Success Differently", my first thought was "how do I measure success on and off the tennis court." I truly believe that the effort that I put into something will reflect on how well I perform.

Success on the tennis court is getting results out of the amount of practice that I use improve my game. On the court, I work hard to play every point in every game, in every set and in every match. When I play doubles, I encourage my teammate with positive words and racket taps between points. On days when I do not have the energy to practice, I tell myself that I have been given a great opportunity to practice so I need to make the most of it.

In education, getting good grades demonstrates the quality and quantity of the work that I apply to learning the material in each class. I ask questions if I do not understand something and I pride myself on persevering through challenging content and topics. My family has worked hard to make sure that I receive a good education in order to succeed later in life, so I take in every moment to not waste the chance that I have been given.

Character development, in my opinion, can help you go further in life than money and fame. It can help you achieve more because people can evaluate you are as a person as opposed to what you do when you are around them. I strive for success in terms of being a person of good character by showing empathy and treating people how I want to be treated. I know this sounds familiar, but it plays a huge role in my success as a person.



**Cydney Brown**

**16 years old**

**Middle States**

**Legacy Youth Tennis & Education Foundation**

My name is Cydney Brown, I am 16 years old and live in Philadelphia, Pa. I began playing tennis with my sisters then I took it more seriously in 8th grade. I've been teaching children tennis for two years. My hobbies include writing poetry, playing board games, baking, reading and of course, tennis. I've written poetry my whole life and am now Philadelphia's Youth Poet Laureate. I want to help others through mentorship and inspire them to stand up for what they believe in. Aside from tennis, I'm a part of clubs such as Literary Magazine, Poetry Club, BSU, Girl Scouts and my mentoring program, Project G.O.O.D. My dream colleges to attend would be Princeton, Howard or UPenn and I would major in either creative writing or business.

## Cydney's Story

Success can be measured in a multitude of ways. I measure it through the growth I achieve. I strive for success in my character development by prioritizing my mental health, practicing gratitude and helping others grow. By focusing on self-love, I can better care for myself and for those around me.

Taking the time to focus on my mental health is a key factor on my journey to success. I came to a realization that I valued other people's opinions of my character rather than my own. I gave them the power to dictate how I saw myself and my self-esteem plummeted down. Now, I acknowledge the fact that I control my own happiness and I express myself through poetry. With that awareness, I can grow, allow myself to breathe and listen to what I'm feeling internally.

I strive for success through gratitude. When I look at how far I've come I am able to realize success is not so far away. It's important for me to recognize that even when situations arise, I am still in a good position. Showing gratitude for the small things in my life helps me move forward and realize that I am fortunate to come this far.

When I help others grow, I'm closer to success. By starting my mentoring program project G.O.O.D (Girls Overcome Obstacles Daily), I am able to help middle school girls overcome daily life challenges and understand that those moments will pass. I am grateful to be a part of the Legacy YTE program so that I can inspire kids to never give up on their goals and continue to strengthen their tennis skills.

By helping others succeed I believe I am closer to the person I want to become and the success I want to achieve. Although, there is no set goal to self-love, an ongoing journey of self-reflection and acceptance, I know that by taking the time to help myself and others, I am growing into the person I want to be.



**Tory Bailey, Jr.**  
**16 years old**  
**Southern California**  
**Pete Brown Junior Tennis Program**

My name is Tory Bailey, Jr. I am a 16 year old, African American male. My height is 6'3", weight 150lbs. I was introduced to tennis at a very early age. I live in an underserved community of south Los Angeles, Calif. and play through Pete Brown Junior Tennis Program at Harvard Park, Jackie Tatum Tennis Center. Tennis was the only sport that I really liked. I liked to chase the ball, swing the racquet and I learned to play the game. I learned competitive skills and play in tennis tournaments. I love video games and tennis, the two main ways I spend my time. I am beginning my senior year in high school, home schooled through Connections Academy in the fall of 2020. I expect to graduate June 2021 and attend college fall 2021. College of choice is undetermined, however computer engineering with a possible major in video game design is of high interest. I would like to be recruited as a tennis student-athlete.

## Tory's Story

I am Tory E. Bailey, a 16 year old, African American, male. I live in an underserved community of South Los Angeles, CA. I am from a family of five siblings and the only one active in a sport. Tennis has been my sport of choice from a very early age. I have enjoyed learning to play and become competitive in the game. I am to begin my senior high school year, home schooled, Connections Academy, in the fall, 2020. I expect to graduate June, 2021 and attend college in fall 2021.

I am a working to represent my family and community positively, when in public settings, on the tennis court during a practice session, or tournaments. My home court is Jackie Tatum Tennis Courts, Harvard Park Recreational Center.

The tennis courts have become my second home. The moral codes of honesty, kindness and helpfulness guides my daily experiences. I am re-enforced with standards of these moral codes honesty, kindness and helpfulness to others through tennis.

The Pete Brown Junior Tennis Program has been the steady stream of encouragement throughout my tennis experiences. The PBJTP has provided strong role models of positive support and stability. I want to be dependable like the people, who influence me on the tennis court. The tennis program provided me with an opportunity to learn and safely participate in a fun sport that can last till one's senior years. The game of tennis has influenced my personality, encouraging me to build relationships with peers and adults. Tennis taught me to be committed to self-improvement. Tennis pushes me to be the best that I can be, every time I step on the court for practice, or a tournament.

Tennis develops a strong individual with life values, if you stay committed to learning the game. Tennis has opened up a new world for me through personal development, competition, meeting new people, travel and hope for a promising adult lifestyle.



**Nylee Alston**

**17 years old**

**Florida**

**Aces In Motion – Gainesville Area CTA**

Hi my name is Nylee Alston, I am 17 years old and I was born and raised in Gainesville, Fla. I have done gymnastics and cheerleading. I started playing tennis when I was in 8th grade through my NJTL, Aces In Motion or AIM. All my hobbies include listening to music and watching Netflix. This past summer, I had the opportunity to train with Aces In Motion and participate in the Coaches In Training Program, a six-week program designed for upperclassmen to earn paid training on basics of tennis coaching. Throughout my high school career, I was a varsity cheerleader, a former intern for I AM STEM Camp, a junior member of Minorities in Agriculture and Natural Resources and Related Sciences and a participant of the University of Florida College of Medicine Healthcare Summer Institute. My dream college to attend would be Florida Agricultural and Mechanical College to major in nursing.

## Nylee's Story

You can strive for success in many ways, the two main ways that I strive for success are education and tennis. Success is more than being famous or having money, because you can lose it at any time, but education is something that you will always have and you could take that and be something better with it.

Having an education is very important to me because I want what's best for me and I want to be someone in life. Pushing myself and being confident is another way I strive for success. Setting goals helps me focus on what I should do. Doing internships and volunteering makes me realize that even the little things are important when you put in the work. You just have to want it and believe you can do it. Doing things and getting involved with multiple sports or clubs helps focus on the future and teaches me life skills.

To me, having a tennis mindset for success is learning how to work with people, being patient and learning how to be a leader. Playing tennis teaches me how to do things even when I'm feeling lazy and don't want to do anything and pushing myself to do something when I don't want to. Also, being a leader for the younger kids who play tennis is another way I strive for success. I want to be the leader where people look at me as their role model. So younger kids can follow me and I can show them the right way to go in life.

We're constantly striving for success to help our family and ourselves. I believe that there is no better way than striving and pushing yourself to be the best person you can be, because when it all comes down you will be proud of yourself for the things you accomplished.



**Joshua Mann**

**18 years old**

**Eastern**

**15-Love – Capital Region Youth Tennis & Education**

Hi my name is Joshua Mann. I am 18 years old and have been playing tennis since I was 11 years old. I began playing after joining the 15-Love tennis program and quickly grew to love tennis. I currently attend SUNY Oneonta as a biology major and am on their tennis team. I was awarded a Donald Lawson Tisdell College Scholarship from the USTA Foundation to help with my college tuition. I hope to maintain good grades and want to become an environmental biologist. My hobbies include running, hiking, kayaking and just being outside.

## Joshua's Story

Success can be attained and measured in a variety of ways. It's often hard to determine true success in today's society when one constantly feels compelled to compare themselves to others. I measure my success in tennis not only by my personal skill level, but by how my mindset and attitude has changed as well.

When I began playing tennis I often had a terrible mindset and thought poorly of my skill sets. I would play match after match after match and perform poorly. I felt worse and worse about myself and my abilities. Slowly however, I gained confidence in myself and my abilities. I became more successful and began winning my matches. I realized if I focused too much on my opponents skill rather than mine I would never succeed. So I began to focus on only my game and what I did well. I used these strengths to grow as a player and become more successful on the court. After seeing my matchplay skills improve greatly I began to measure my success not by comparing myself to others but by comparing myself to my past self. The only beneficial way I have found to measure my success in tennis is by seeing how much I have improved and by realizing there will always be better people but that shouldn't stop me from improving. By having this mindset my character has changed and developed on and off the court. These developments have helped me achieve more than I would have thought possible and become an overall more confident student and athlete. At the end of the day, the lessons I learned about success through tennis can apply everywhere in my life and I hope I stay true to these lessons and never lose sight of where I started and doubt where I will end up.



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