

AYTEF

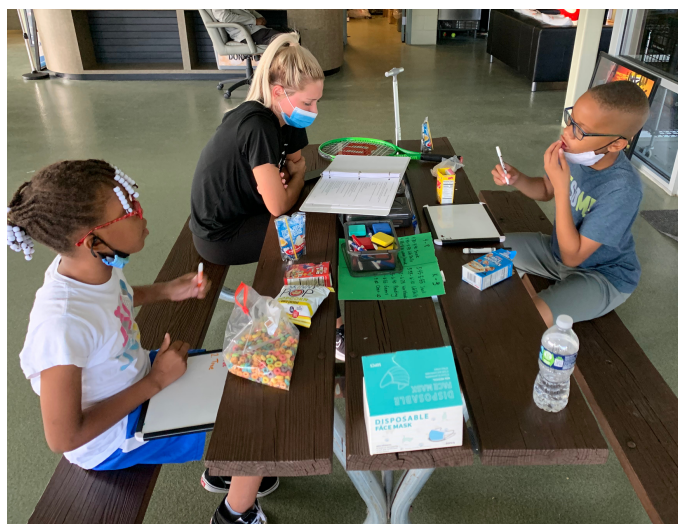
serve | achieve | enrich

ATLANTA YOUTH TENNIS & EDUCATION FOUNDATION

AYTEF's Powerful Combination of Tennis and Education Can Change Lives!

AYTEF's *GameSetMatch* (GSM) tennis and education program runs on Mondays and Tuesdays from 4:30 - 7:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 5-6:30 p.m. On Mondays and Tuesdays, participants have the option to participate in tennis programming for 1 hr 15 min as well as indoor academic enrichment for the other 1 hr 15 min. Coach Mikenzie Vaughn is in charge of the indoor portion of our enrichment program, and she starts every session with a 15-20 minute life-skills or character development lesson. The youth spend the remainder of the indoor class time working on homework, reading, or completing academic enrichment and games with the oversight and help of Coach Mikenzie and volunteer tutors.

The time that Coach Mikenzie has spent teaching and tutoring our GSM youth each Monday and



Coach Mikenzie teaching GSM life-skills

LISTEN TO MR. & MRS. UKOHA EXPRESS THEIR GRATITUDE FOR AYTEF:

<https://youtu.be/THhxUEQIYoA>



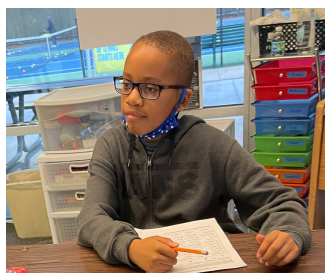
Ukoha family at the AYTEF Block Party

Tuesday afternoon has allowed her to form strong relationships with not only the kids, but also their families. Mikenzie addresses problems the kids are having at school, both academically and behaviorally, through constant reinforcement of our life-skills curriculum. On an as needed and requested basis, Mikenzie spends additional hours throughout the week tutoring the GSM youth via our virtual Homework Help program. Through this extension of the GSM program, families can schedule Zoom meetings with Mikenzie during which she will provide direct homework assistance free of charge.

The Ukoha family has three children- Dozie (7 yrs), Akudo (9 yrs), and Emeka (11 yrs). The family identifies as Black/African American with an annual income of \$30,000-\$40,000. The children enrolled in AYTEF GSM in the fall of 2021 and have been consistent participants of both the

tennis and academic components. While each of the Ukoha children are very bright, they have struggled in various social and emotional ways while in our GSM program. Mikenzie has been addressing issues such as building friendships, coping with disappointment, and setting and achieving goals, both on and off the court. Mrs. Ukoha is an enormous advocate for her children, but self-admittedly struggles, partly due to language barriers and technology limitations, with being able to help the children with their increasingly difficult school assignments.

In December/January, the Ukoha family decided to start the application process to enroll in a school more suitable for the children's unique needs. Because Coach Mikenzie had already been overseeing several of the kids' school projects and on-going homework assignments, Mrs. Ukoha asked her to help the children prepare for the new school admission interviews. The interview process also required the children to create and present projects specific to their grade level entry. Not only did Mikenzie spend time working with the kids on mock interviews and public speaking, but she also oversaw the entire creation process of each child's project - from research, to content, to final publishing - with the required technology requirements requested by the school.



Clockwise from top left: Emeka (11), Akudo (9), Dozie (7)



From left: Mikenzie Vaughn, Life-Skills Coordinator & Kirsten Lewis, Director of Tennis

At this time, we have not yet heard if the Ukoha children will be admitted into the new school. However, the success of this story does not rely solely on that outcome. When Mrs. Ukoha first called to enroll her kids in the AYTEF program, she explained how difficult it is for her kids to have the same academic and enrichment opportunities that other families with greater financial means can provide. She had been trying to secure a better school situation for her children, but she did not have the money to pay for chess club, coding, art, language, elite sports programs - all the items on a child's resume that were setting other applicants apart from her kids. AYTEF programs could provide the enrichment and support Mrs. Ukoha desired at significantly reduced pricing that she could afford.

The Ukoha children's confidence, emotional skill set, academic foundation, and community of friendships have all increased since being in the AYTEF GSM program. At the onset of the new year, the Ukoha kids also started participating in AYTEF's weekly virtual STEM Learning Labs to learn coding and receive hands-on science instruction. And, the three kids who had never before picked up a tennis racquet have made massive gains on the court under the instruction of AYTEF Director of Tennis, Kirsten Lewis. Grant funding and generous donations have allowed dedicated and caring AYTEF staff to provide the Ukoha family with essential academic, character development, and athletic enrichment opportunities that are equipping these kids to reach their true potential.