



# CHANGING THE GAME



Bike-A-Thon 2009

## Entering The 9th Year

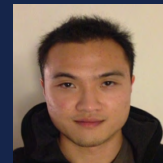
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[WWW.HUSKYSPORT.UCONN.EDU](http://WWW.HUSKYSPORT.UCONN.EDU)

## Nine Years of Relationships & Community Building

Since 2003, UConn professor Dr. Jennifer Bruening began driving her students to the North End of Hartford to engage with the youth in nutrition education, sport/physical activity, life skills lessons, and academic enrichment. Husky Sport began at the Green House on Saturdays, then partnerships started to grow with different stakeholders, including the City of Hartford and Clark School, and now a dedicated group of students and staff work to positively engage with members of the Hartford, CT and UConn communities through the development of right relationships with youth, their adult family members, college students, and community organization collaborators. Through efforts in schools, after school and weekend programs, and this year is no exception as Husky Sport aims to be a continuous part of the lives of children and families in Hartford’s North End.

## WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to Husky Sport’s 9<sup>th</sup> year! The summer was a busy time as Husky Sport and the Sport Management program moved from the Department of Kinesiology to the Department of Educational Leadership. This is an exciting change and one that serves to benefit Husky Sport tremendously with all of the work we do in Hartford’s schools. And, all of our offices are now in the Gentry Building. Still unpacking the boxes, but very excited about the move.

Other changes have taken place since the last newsletter as well. Assistant Director Leah Ward and her husband, Jason, welcomed their second child, Jaxon, in May. Leah has not missed a beat and we are all so happy to have her back in the office this fall. Congratulations also go out to



*Boston Marathon 2007*

Melanie Jackson, a three year veteran nutrition coordinator, is in Nursing School in New York. The four Coach Across America alumni are all doing well. Mike Evanovich is a graduate assistant with the Providence College men’s basketball program. Laura Harris is a patient care specialist at Lawrence and Memorial Hospital in New London, CT. And, Alicia Waring is finishing her master’s in Sport Management at UConn and interning with Central Connecticut’s Athletic Academic Advising Office.

We are also excited about our continuing staff who have transitioned into new roles. Erinn Arbelaez has entered her second year with Public Allies, thanks to a wonderful partnership with the City of Hartford’s Department for Child, Youth, Families, and Recreation, and will be leading

Husky Sport graduates. Devon Wilson-Hill, Emmanuel Omokaro, and Tiffanie Russell all finished their master’s programs and have moved on from UConn. Tiffanie is working with Community Residences, Inc. in Hartford putting her MSW to work as a mentor for youth in the foster care system. Derek Santiago completed his Public Allies AmeriCorps year with Husky Sport and has continued into a second year with Public Allies still working at Clark School with the community school agency, The Village for Children and Families.



Read & Raise efforts. Alex Piñeres (Ortega) and Evan Timme completed their AmeriCorps VISTA years and have now both entered graduate programs at UConn and are serving as graduate assistants with Husky Sport. Alex is in the Adult Learning certificate program and Evan is in the Master’s in Public Health program. Floyd Grier has also continued in a second year as a Coach Across America member as well as working to coordinate after school programming at the Hartford Catholic Worker as a part of their staff.

Nicole Squadrito is completing her teacher certification through Southern Connecticut and interning this semester in Torrington, CT and still involved as a Read & Raise point person, this year at Clark School.

And, we have a new crew of staff to welcome this fall as well. Coming from the doctoral program in Education at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Lauren Silverstein, joined Husky Sport in late June as an Assistant Director. She is teaching the Introduction to Sport Based Youth Development class (formerly Service Learning) and working with our staff to better develop their skills and knowledge base in order to have Husky Sport’s programs be as strong as possible. We also welcomed PhD student Cassie Coble who transferred from the University of Florida to complete her degree in Sport Management. She is leading the Afterschool Program for Clark and Wish School students at the Parker Memorial Family Center. New to Public Allies, but not to Husky Sport, Graham DeAngelis, a 2012 UConn graduate in Coaching and Administration, will be working both with the In School and Afterschool programs. New Coach Across America staff include Levar Mitchell, a 2012 graduate of Eastern Connecticut State, Shay Ingersoll, a 2012 graduate of Central Connecticut State, and Jenn Myatt, a UConn senior Sport Management major.



We are all excited for the coming year and hope you enjoy the newsletter!

Dr. Bruening

## SUMMER 2012

### UConn MENTOR CONNECTION

For the third consecutive summer, Husky Sport was once again a host site for the UConn Mentor Connection Program hosting two delightful interns, Taziah Kenney and Honesty Nealy.

UConn Mentor Connection is an annual, three-week, summer program at the University of Connecticut for academically talented secondary students. It is designed to provide youth with opportunities to participate in creative projects and research investigations under the supervision of university mentors. The mentors work directly with high school students from across the state and the country on projects in their common areas of interest.

*Evan discusses one of the readings on SBYD with Honesty and Taziah.*



For three weeks, Honesty a senior at New Haven CT’s Hillside High School, with plans to enter the communications and entertainment field, along with Taziah of Newington, CT, a senior at Hartford’s Sports and Sciences Academy, with plans to work in the medical and/or Kinesiology fields, worked alongside Husky Sport staff. Alex Piñeres (Ortega) and Evan Timme engaged Taziah and

Honesty daily in a curriculum reflective of the content of both Introduction to Sport-Based Youth Development (SBYD) and Health & Education in Urban Communities classes offered at UConn. Apart from the academic enrichment portion, the students worked on developing a new Husky Sport display board with graphics and charts as well as other promotional materials. Part of their experience included service learning hours. During their time at UConn, Honesty and Taziah visited Clark School and the Hartford Catholic Worker House, a.k.a. the Green House, twice each week. As they learned about SBYD and the research behind it, Honesty and Taziah developed an idea for an after-school program. Their programs served as examples to explain SBYD to other Mentor Connection students during their presentations the last day of the program.

## THREE UNIQUE WEEKS



*Honesty working on her SBYD program project. Can you tell what her favorite color is?*

The three weeks I spent at UConn Mentor Connection (Site Husky Sport) was a combination of excitement, fear, and joy. I was simply ecstatic to be on a college campus, and experience freedom away from home. I pictured myself socializing, indulging in food and having fun. All of these perceptions came true with an unexpected twist! My past encounters with summer programs have been bland or provided repetitive material.

I initially thought UConn Mentor Connection would be the same. The program proved me wrong! I learned many things from important life skills to making bracelets out of string. The skills taught included how to adapt to all situations, socialize with all types of people, and how to positively give back to the community. I now apply those in every area of my life.

My two most favorite aspects of the program were the friendships I built with peers, and the kids I met at the Green House in Hartford, CT. They both taught me more than I could imagine, or hope for.

I am very thankful to my mentors, new friends, and every person I interacted with while at UConn Mentor Connection. They expanded my horizons, and allowed me to experience something new. THANK-YOU!

- **Honesty Nealy**

## AWESOME & CREATIVE



*Taziah discussing SBYD programs with Evan*

Over this summer I had the honor of attending UConn Mentor Connection. This was a program that involved a three-week stay at the Storrs campus living like a college student. During this time I chose to work with the program UConn Husky Sport for my main site. While working with Husky Sport I learned that students may need other tactics to learn rather than just sitting in a classroom. This is something that I could understand and it made me appreciate the idea of UConn Husky Sport. UConn Husky Sport is a program that uses sports and recreational activities to teach youth about nutrition, life and school skills.

It was amazing to be a part of this program just even for a few weeks. There were many great experiences that I had encountered while being a part of this program. I got to use my creativity to work with my partner to create the UConn Husky Sport bulletin board display, and also I got to create my own Sport Based Youth Development program in which I presented to my peers and a few UConn faculty. Although the office work was fun and entertaining my favorite part of working with Husky Sport was working with the children. I got to know and work with children in the Hartford green house. This was a very special experience for me because I love children and being able to help them with summer work or even just give them advice was amazing. UConn Husky Sport is an awesome and creative program that is doing great work in Hartford schools. This is a great program to get involved in, because even after my three weeks of working with Husky Sport I felt like I had made a difference in some children’s lives. That is not something that every program offers. I would be happy to have the chance to work with Husky Sport again.

- Taziah Kenney

## MEET THE STAFF

### NEW FACES



#### **Cassie Coble – After School Coordinator**

I was born and raised in Florida, where sport participation and community involvement were focal points of my childhood. I attended the University of Florida, graduating with a degree in Psychology. After graduation, I worked as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the northern Volta Region in Ghana, West Africa, where I founded and ran a youth soccer league and worked with the Carter Center in their effort to eradicate Guinea Worm. Upon returning from Ghana, I enrolled at Michigan State University where I pursued a Master's Degree in Sport Psychology while working with life skills youth sport programs. These experiences have led me to the University of Connecticut Sport Management PhD program and the Husky Sport After School Program. My focus for the After School program is to develop life skills of the participants through their involvement in physical activity and other activities. I am excited for the opportunity to interact with and work with the program participants and look forward to expanding my relationships with parents and other members in the community.



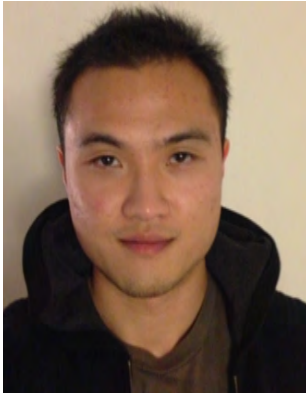
#### **Lauren Silverstein – Assistant Director**

My name is Lauren Silverstein. I am excited to join the Husky Sport team as well as teach in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Connecticut. My prior work experiences include directing college & career readiness programs, developing afterschool leaders, and teaching future educators at the undergraduate and graduate levels. As an Assistant Director at Husky Sport, my focus is on organization development. In this role, I look forward to building capacity in our programs and staff.

I received my Ph.D. in Education from the University of Pittsburgh, my M.Ed. from Harvard University and my BA from Vassar College. My academic interests include prevention strategies that enhance student college enrollment/success, mentor development and K-16 partnerships.

Outside of work, I love playing sports, traveling, reading, the beach and hanging out with family and friends.

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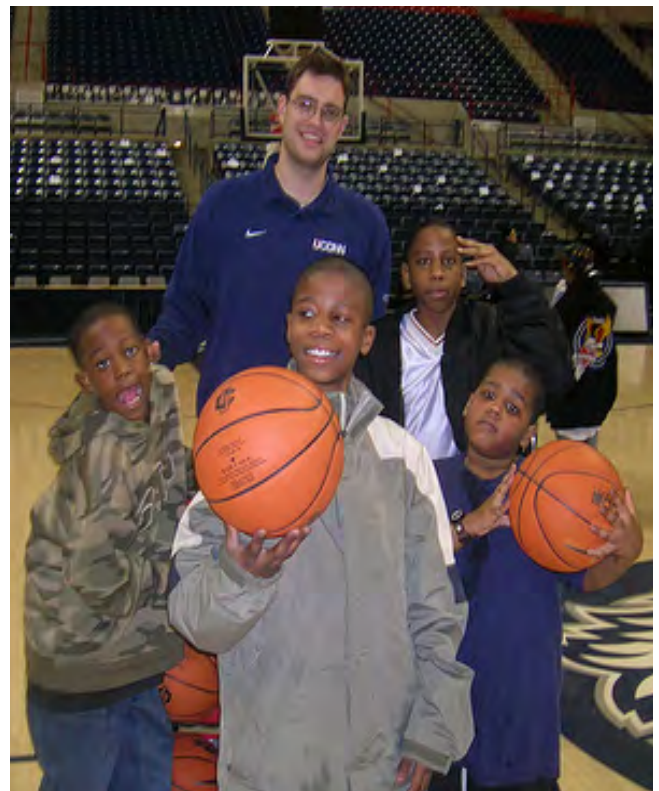


### Mike Chung – AmeriCorp VISTA Member

I am from Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. I graduated in 2011 from Trinity College in Hartford CT, majoring in Biology and minoring in Rhetoric. Previously, I invested my time in basic neurobiological and clinical research to contribute to public health. This year I hope to contribute to public health directly by engaging Hartford community members in physical activity and raising nutrition awareness. Furthermore, as an AmeriCorps VISTA, I hope to use my research background to outline prospective projects and secure grants for the continuation and expansion of Husky Sport. Personally, I hope to better understand other societies and cultures by building relationships with members of communities that are different from the one I grew up in. In my free time, I strive to achieve personal weightlifting and fitness goals, enjoy the experimentation inherent in cooking tasteful meals using only healthful ingredients, and read books on medicine.

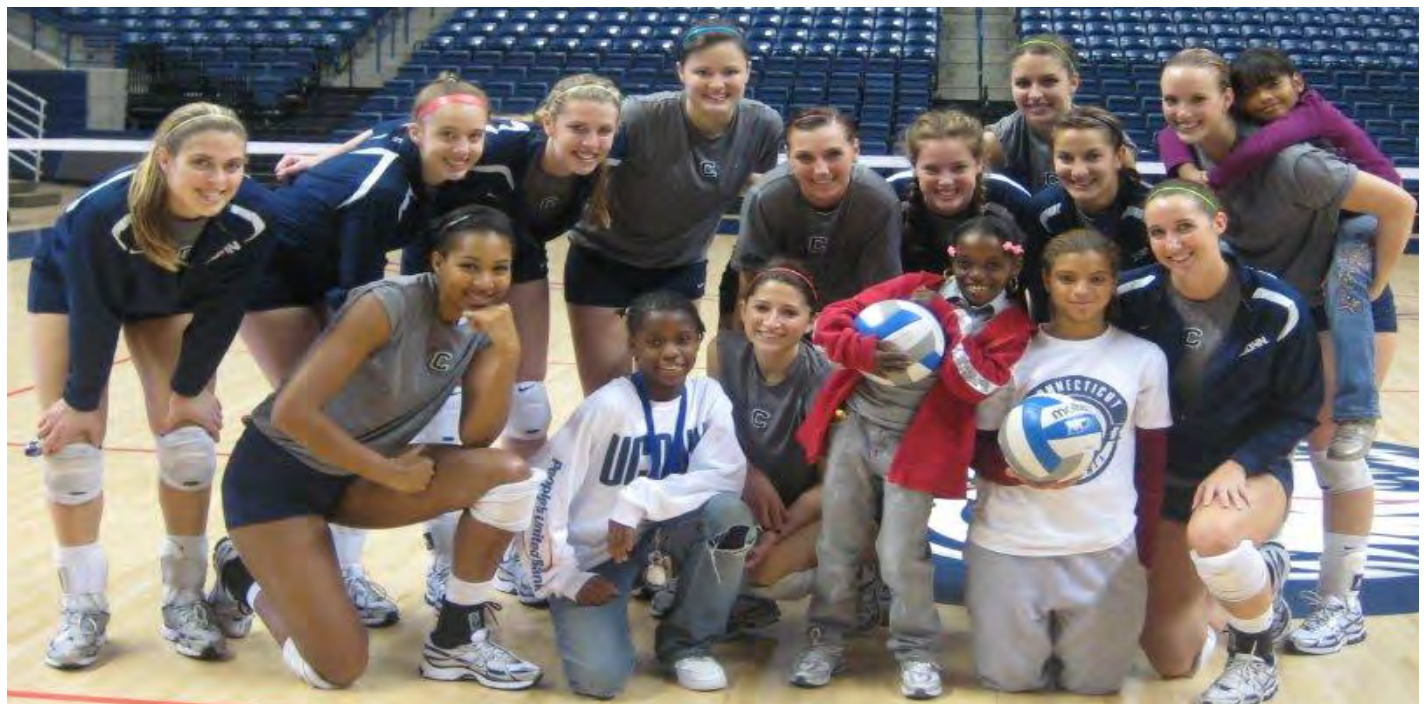
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## YEARS IN PICTURES













## REFLECTION OF AN ALUMNI KYDANI M. DOVER



My participation as a volunteer and graduate assistant for the Husky Sport program was an invaluable experience. It was a unique opportunity for me to extend my interests and talents beyond the UConn campus and impact the Hartford community in a meaningful way. The initial goal was simple; engage Hartford’s youth in physical activity and help them to develop a sense of well-being and worth that would allow them to be productive citizens in society. It is so great to know that Dr. Bruening took what was a fairly simple objective and turned it into a staple of the Hartford community.

Interestingly enough, the interactions I had with the young people involved in the Husky Sport program, helped me to develop my own sense of well-being and worth. It was not until I started participating in Husky Sport that I understood my own talents and my desire to impact the lives of young people. Although I was always drawn to the helping professions, I never quite which profession was the best fit for me. Husky Sport paved the way for me to determine the capacity in which I could reach young people the best. Working towards my Master’s in Education and assisting with the Husky Sport program certainly set the foundation for my interest in teaching and instruction. In my current role as a Learning Specialist at Louisiana State University, I assist student-athletes in reaching their maximum potential in the classroom. The progression of experiences within my career have evolved from understanding who I was as an individual, developing my interests, and making a selfless contribution to the future of our society, young people. I truly enjoy helping students learn and find out what their passion is. I am extremely thankful for my experience with Husky Sport and for where the experience has brought me. Not only was I able to contribute to the well-being of the youth in the Hartford community, but I grew as an individual, as a professional, and as a productive citizen who will always be grateful for the teachings of the Husky Sport Program.

# Programs

## Clark In-School

- Weekly 45-minute classes emphasizing the importance of literacy, nutrition, physical activity, & life skills.
- 15 classes K-6, close to 300 students participating each week.
- Sample lessons for this fall: Sportsmanship, creativity, team work, and community.

## After School

### Tuesdays & Thursdays

Students are pick-up from their classrooms at the end of the school day at both Clark and Wish schools.

- Participating children [120 total] are taken to the Parker Memorial Recreation Center.
- Activities include: nutrition lessons and tastings, swimming, sport/games and homework help.

### Wednesdays

- Tutoring sessions and engagement in several community partners' after school programs.
- Places include: CRT, Salvation Army and the Green House.

## EKIN Courses

- Service learning courses available to all UConn students.
- EKIN 1160, Health and Education in Urban Communities [1 credit].
- EKIN 3547, Introduction to Sport Based Youth Development, also available as a writing intensive course [3 credits].
- EKIN 4300, Advanced Sport Based Youth Development, EKIN 3547/W prerequisite [3 credits].
- EKIN 5518, Introduction to Sport Based Youth Development [graduate].

## Early College Experience

- High School students enrolled in the Husky Sport service learning affiliated course EKIN 1160. Discussions are focused on Hartford, as well as national trends in urban education and health.
- Participating schools: Capital Prep [Hartford, CT] and East Catholic High School [Manchester, CT].

## Catholic Worker House

Husky Sport participates twice a week at programs geared towards physical activities and academics at the *Green House* across the street from Clark School.

### Mondays

- Participants have play-time followed by homework help provided by UConn students and volunteers.

### Saturdays

- Husky Sport students engage in physical activities and crafts with the green house students, ranging from pre-k to high school during this program from 10:00am to 1:00 pm, nutritional family-style lunch is provided.

## Read & Raise

- Literacy initiative held during the spring semester. Husky Sport staff and volunteers spend 5-10 hours per week during Read & Raise to promote literacy in the Clark, MLK and Wish elementary schools.
- The program aims to assist in increasing students' reading and writing skills, personal interest in reading, and building positive relationships between UConn and Hartford students.
- In the four years of R & R more than 167,000 books and curriculum-driven worksheets have been completed.

Save The Date

**2nd Annual  
Community Fall Fest**  
**Thursday, Nov. 15th**  
**4:30 - 6:00pm**  
**Parker Memorial Rec Center**  
**2621 Main Street**

Fun-filled Physical and Nutritional activities for the youth, led by the Husky Sport staff and students

**Parents & Families Join Us For...**

**CHANGE THE GAME FAIR**  
Interact and learn about different services, programs and opportunities for children and families

*Games!*                      *Food!*                      *& More!*

*Want to get involved or represent your organization at the Fall Fest? Please email Alex Piñeres at [alexander.pineres@uconn.edu](mailto:alexander.pineres@uconn.edu)*



Get Active!      [WWW.HUSKYSPORT.UCONN.EDU](http://WWW.HUSKYSPORT.UCONN.EDU)      Change the Game!

