

The Northside Staff

***José Williamson, Director** (top row, second from the left) recruited a multi-ethnic group from the North Minneapolis community to serve as his staff. He has been an ICT summer instructor for over 15 years who now heads ICT's outreach efforts on the Northside of Minneapolis. He is currently the head coach for both the boys and girls tennis teams at Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis.

- **Chong Vang** (top left) is a freshman @ St. Thomas and is aspiring to be a doctor.
- **Mai Kher Vang** (top middle) is a freshman @ St. Benedict college and plans to work with youth.
- **Tarrig Nakumbe** (top, second from the right) is a sophomore @ Roosevelt High School who also plans to work with youth.
- **Hassan Shahid** (top right) is a senior @ Roosevelt High School, aspiring to be a dentist.
- **Brian Grande Lemus** (bottom left) is a freshman @ Augsburg college, aspiring to become a scientist.
- **Derek Vang** (bottom middle) is a sophomore @ Carleton College. He is studying to become a doctor.
- **A Lor** (bottom right) is a freshman @ the University of Minnesota/Duluth, aspiring to be a doctor.
- **Sagírah Shahid** (not pictured) is a freshman @ St. Olaf college. She is studying politics.



Minneapolis Northside Initiative Summer 2007





Making an impact on the Northside

The 2007 Kidspeed Minneapolis Northside Initiative literally ended with a bang on August 3rd. An early morning gunshot in the neighborhood required kids to be escorted off of North Commons Park for a period of time. Nonetheless, after police and instructors deemed the area safe, the season ending party resumed. The party was comprised of games on the tennis courts and a grill out. Each child was given a Kidspeed T-shirt for completing the summer program.

Kidspeed Northside Director Jose Williamson spoke about the impact the program is making on the northside.

"This [the Northside Initiative] was about bridging the gap in the community and giving kids an opportunity to break down stereotypes and perceptions that may have been forced upon them, as well as self-perceived."

"Kidspeed opens up the opportunity for you to see growth in children, instantly. Kids may begin a game, the ring toss, obstacle course or whatever it is, and be not so good, maybe even terrible at it. After practicing, they start to see some progress and start to get better and then oh what a world that opens to kids when they realize, oh I can do this. I am capable of trying something, learning, and becoming good at it."

The local North Community YMCA staff, who brought their children to the summer program, praised the organization of the Kidspeed program.

One staff member commented, "The program was structured; everything was set up and ready to go. When the kids came in, they had no option but to compete, they had no option to sit out. They had to do it, and when they did they felt good."

In addition to the kids having a good time, the Northside staff involved also enjoyed their summer experience.

"This program shows kids a different path for what they do when they get older, not just growing up and going on the streets. It was definitely something new, a new experience for everyone. I will be back for sure next year," said Tarrig Ahmad Nakumbe, a 15 yr. old instructor from Brooklyn Park.

The Northside Initiative also included collaboration and programming with the Learning for Leadership Charter School in Northeast Minneapolis. This program engaged another 150 children, a majority of which being Somali. This outreach programming will be ongoing during our winter season (October - April).

Further collaboration discussions were initiated with agencies serving Hmong children on the Northside; it is expected that this programming will begin in the summer of 2008.

The Northside Initiative was made possible by grants from the USTA Community Tennis Association and the McKnight Foundation.