

**Lead Instructor Honored for Her Work, Commitment and Dedication to the
National Junior Tennis League Summer Program
Kailee Grabbe Receives the Excellence in Summer Service Education Award**

Indianapolis, IN—On Thursday, September 3rd at 6:00pm at the Indianapolis Art Center, the Marion County Commission on Youth (MCCOY) and the partners of the Summer Youth Program Fund will honor 22 local young people with the Excellence in Summer Service Education Award, including Kailee Grabbe, Lead Instructor at National Junior Tennis League Indianapolis. Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard will speak at the ceremony honoring the work, commitment, and service young people provide our community as full-time staff or volunteers in Marion County summer youth programs.

“Beyond providing a positive atmosphere and encouraging growth and maturity, these activities can also help prevent crime among our young people by engaging them in meaningful programs that can lead to a brighter future,” said Mayor Ballard.

Young people who work in summer programs serve as positive role models for their peers and campers alike. They demonstrate a committed work ethic, compassion and sensitivity to the needs of others. Often working long hours, they make a difference in their program, neighborhoods and community. Whether as camp counselors, program managers, lifeguards or educational staff, many summer programs would not exist without their dedication and sacrifice.

“Thanks to these young men and women, thousands of Indianapolis children had positive and productive experiences in summer camps and programs across our community. They helped keep children safe, taught their campers new skills, and provided countless opportunities for learning and development. This award recognizes the tremendous contribution each made to our community,” said John Brandon, MCCOY President.

Besides teaching lessons to children, the award winners learned quite a few lessons as well, according to Brandon. “Many of them learned how to be flexible, creative, and responsive to the many needs that children in their programs presented. They also learned that youth work is hard work but work that is worthwhile and valuable to our community.”

Through her work at the National Junior Tennis League (NJTL), Award winner Kailee Grabbe, a senior at Purdue University, says, “I learned that a lot of kids really do have it bad at home, and it showed me how important my job is and how much they need someone to work with them. There are also many kids who can lift your spirit and really affect you in ways you never expected or thought possible. Working with kids is an amazing experience.”

Kirsten Smith, Program Director at NJTL, says Grabbe also taught her campers other important life and healthy living skills, “She taught with clear and high expectations, consistency and humility to ensure that each student had a pleasant experience while under her watch.”

Although focused on tennis instruction, the NJTL encouraged students to participate in the National Arthur Ashe Essay and Art Contest. The contest had the kids describe what this quote from Ashe meant to them: “From what we get, we make a living; what we give, however, makes a life.”

While NJTL’s goal was to have at least 33% of students from each site submit an essay or artwork, 41% of Grabbe’s sites submitted work. “Through this contest, Kailee had a direct impact on her kids’ view of the importance of giving back to others and their community,” said Smith.

Fifty-five young workers from 25 different summer programs submitted applications for the Excellence in Summer Service Education Award. At the awards ceremony, the 22 winners will receive a certificate of recognition and \$1000 to be used for education-related expenses such as buying books or equipment, paying tuition, or making a deposit in an educational savings account.