

# HILL STUDENT SHARES APPRECIATION FOR OPPORTUNITIES OF A LIFETIME



**T**anesha Jackson '09 knows what life is like growing up as the youngest of seven, living in the Bronx. But, now she also knows first-hand what it is like to “escape the oppressive cycle of poverty.”

Tanesha was first drawn to The Hill through her passion for the game of squash and a program called City Squash program, which helps New York's urban youth learn to play the sport and helps them gain entrance to private preparatory schools. But it was the generosity of Hill's alumni, parents, and other friends, that enabled Tanesha to enroll here and fully immerse herself in the life and activities of the School.

In January, Tanesha had the chance to talk publicly about her life experiences during a two-hour-long Pottstown-community celebration and remembrance of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which was held in the Center For The Arts theater. The program included participants from 20 local churches, community residents, Hill students and vocalists, and faculty.

During her speech, Tanesha highlighted several of Dr. King's teachings and shared her interpretations with the audience, noting how they related to her personal struggles and those of her family, friends, and neighbors. She acknowledged Dr. King's understanding of the educational inequalities of children in different communities — an issue with which she personally was familiar.

## How Tanesha arrived at The Hill

Before squash became Tanesha's passion, it was the game of chess that fascinated her. Her mother introduced her and her twin brother to chess in kindergarten because few other resources or opportunities were available to them in their surrounding communities. She said, “Not many people played chess in our neighborhood and it was one of the only opportunities at the time that could guarantee a different life that could lead me to a different path.”



Encouraging her children to play chess was Tanesha's mother's way of providing her daughter with a skill that could help her break free from the oppressive behaviors so many of their friends and family members adopted. "In just our elementary school years," Tanesha said, "my brother and I had participated in numerous tournaments all around the U.S., racked up trophies from those tournaments, and had the ability to see some of the best chess players from all over the world."

In order to continue pursuing chess, Tanesha and her brother attended a middle school that was more than an hour away from home; her mother supported the commute because she knew it would help to provide her children with a firmer foundation in the future.

While attending middle school, Tanesha was introduced to the game of squash, which became her new passion. After making the squash team and playing for a few years, Tanesha said, "I knew [squash] was my way out and that I had to make the best of [the] opportunity." Her family was not able to send their daughter, a budding squash player and intellectual, to a private high school because they couldn't afford the expenses.

Fortunately, through the continued financial support of Hill School donors, Tanesha has enjoyed all of the wonderful benefits that come along with being a part of The Hill community and receiving a Hill School education — and she is forever grateful for the opportunity. Tanesha even served as one of The Hill's first-ever Student Stewards, a program initiated by the Advancement Office in which students, eager to share their appreciation with donors who have invested in their futures, personally thank alumni, parents, and friends for their contributions through hand-written notes and/or phone calls. "I think Hill has done an excellent job in preparing me for college. I have learned to manage my time and study efficiently," says Tanesha, who will be attending Wesleyan University this fall. "Being in a competitive environment where everyone wants to do well inspires you to want to achieve the same things. I worked hard these past years and it has paid off greatly. My work ethic and overall demeanor has changed greatly these past four years and it is all because I went away to Hill and worked as hard as I did to make a change within myself through the help of the community here." ✨

ABOVE: One of Tanesha's most memorable experiences was a trip she took to England as part of The Hill-Charterhouse Challenge. During the 2007-08 school year, Tanesha traveled to Godalming, England with a group of Hill students and faculty. Here she is pictured with: Mr. Jim Taylor, instructor of science *emeritus*, and friends (from left): Jessica Seman '09, Loren Teetelli '08, Devon Gray '08, and Elizabeth Kunkle '08.

LEFT: Tanesha Jackson delivers the keynote address during Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Pottstown community celebration.

## Hill financial aid at a glance: 2008-2009

The Hill School provides need-based financial aid, without regard to academic or extracurricular standing, race, color, or ethnic origin. Based on careful assessment of each applicant's need, The Hill helps students meet their tuition expenses through endowed scholarships and funds set aside in the School's budget for financial aid.

Below are some statistics for the 2008-09 academic year:

- Approximately 38% of Hill's current students receive some form of financial assistance from the School.
- Grants range from \$1,000 to full support.
- For the 2008-09 school year, The Hill dedicated \$4,480,000 of its operating budget to providing Hill families with tuition assistance packages.
- Approximately \$1 million or 25% of that tuition assistance is derived from endowed scholarships.
- This year, the average boarding student grant was \$27,900 and the average day student grant was \$17,100, while the total average assistance package was \$24,400. While these amounts are generous, one also must take into consideration that these figures do not cover the full cost of tuition and other expenses such as laptop computer purchases, athletic equipment costs, lab fees, books, travel expenses, and personal expenses, all of which put an even greater financial strain on these families, adding \$5,000 or more to the cost of attending The Hill for one year.
- 182: Total number of students who receive financial aid from The Hill
- 123: Number of boarding students who receive financial aid
- 59: Number of day students who receive financial aid

— Approximately 55% of The Hill's student leaders receive financial assistance. For example, these students hold positions in the Student Government Association and Honor Council; serve as dormitory prefects and athletic captains; write for *The Hill News and Record*; and assist with producing the *Dial*. ✨