



MALIVAI WASHINGTON
YOUTH FOUNDATION
SERVING HOPE | CHANGING LIVES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation Reaches \$5 Million Goal at 23rd Annual Champions for Children Gala

JACKSONVILLE, FL, October 22, 2019 – 23 years ago Wimbledon finalist '96 MaliVai Washington had a dream to introduce the sport of tennis to low income children in the urban core of Jacksonville, Florida. Since then, that dream has expanded to provide after school and summer youth development programs to hundreds of Jacksonville youth each year. On Thursday, October 17th over 450 Jacksonville business leaders and community members came together to support the MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation (MWYF) at the 23rd Annual Merrill Lynch/Bank of America Champions for Children Gala, presented by Florida Blue. Participants were invited to “Dare to Dream” with MWYF and rose to the challenge by raising over \$250,000 during the gala. MWYF recognized the students and alumna who earned more than \$93,000 in college scholarships earlier this year. The 2019 Student Athlete of the Year and recipient of a \$5,000 college scholarship, Tyhlur Reynolds, gave a testimonial. Attendees at the event included Pat Geraghty, Florida Blue President & CEO, and Councilwoman Ju’Coby Pittman. Donovan Darius, former Jaguars player and philanthropist, attended as the special guest and keynote speaker.

“The work for me was not just on the field, it was using your image, your likeness, your ability, everything for a greater cause beyond yourself,” said Donovan Darius. “One of the things I admire most about Mal Washington is that he’s doing that. Building a greater family, a greater community – he’s going to continue doing that for years to come.”

Last October, MWYF publicly announced a capital campaign to build a new Teen Center, filling a great need for space, programming and offerings that serve and support teens. The Teen Center will offer age-appropriate services including academic assistance, college preparation, job and leadership training and recreational activities. The new 13,000+ square foot facility will be located at Emmett Reed park, adjacent to the current Youth Center. Before the gala, MWYF had \$50,000 left to reach the \$5 million goal needed to build the Teen Center. The USTA Florida Section Foundation made the announcement during the gala that they would be donating the remaining \$50,000, completing the Capital Campaign and making this dream a reality. An additional \$30,000 was raised from attendees to support the Teen Center.

“We are thrilled to have received such a generous gift,” said MaliVai Washington. “The unwavering support from the USTA Florida Section Foundation and this evening’s generous \$50,000 gift not only helped us pass our \$5 million goal for our Club 904, but it will help us continue to serve hope and change the lives of thousands of youth for decades to come.”

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About MWYF

The MaliVai Washington Youth Foundation’s mission is to develop champions in classrooms, and tennis courts, and throughout communities. The mission is being fulfilled by providing a 3-hour afterschool program focusing on education, life skills, and tennis for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. The Foundation’s vision is that young people who participate in its programs will gain the resources they need to rise to their full potential and become contributing members of society. Learn more at www.malwashington.com.

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