Above top: Matthew Coffin, PPSF ’17, and Yale ’19, enjoys time with his students at the courts during his PPSF summer. Matthew became our most loyal and committed volunteer and his PPSF summer helped shape his interest in a career in urban education. Above bottom (on the left playing dodgeball), Peter Levenstrong, PPSF ‘19 and DIV ’20 used the summer to develop his interest in teaching, leading a literacy blocks and two world religions electives. He continues to volunteer in our classrooms this fall.

- Organization: Squash Haven
- Full street address of organization: 78 Ashmun Street, New Haven CT, 06511
- Website: www.squashhaven.org
- Name and title of person who will be the Fellow’s direct supervisor (the supervisor must be available to supervise Fellow on a daily basis): Julie Greenwood, Executive Director
Phone number and e-mail address of proposed direct supervisor: 203-464-8644, julie@squashhaven.org

Placement dates: Tuesday, May 26th – Friday, June 26th and Monday, July 6th – Friday, August 7th

Are placement dates flexible? If so, please describe: Yes, within reason

Proposed work schedule (placements should be equivalent to full-time and not more than 37.5 hours/week): Weeks from May 26th – June 26th, 10:30 am – 6 pm, Weeks of July 6th – August 7th, 9 am – 4:30 pm

Organization description (mission statement, population served. 150 words or less.):

Squash Haven empowers New Haven youth to achieve and maintain school success and physical wellness, and to forge a path through higher education to engaged citizenship. 420 hours annually of academic and athletic sessions at Yale prepare team members, who predominantly come from low income families and would be the first generation college students, to thrive in college and beyond. The Squash Haven team is currently comprised of 110 students attending New Haven public schools in fifth through twelfth grades and 40 students in college with whom we work actively. In our first twelve years, we have helped team members earn 46 national-level squash championships, 21 private-school scholarships, and over $2.1 million annually in renewable financial aid grants and scholarships. 78% of team members have matriculated at colleges ranked in the top 60 in the country, including Bowdoin, Brown, Georgetown, Middlebury, and Yale.

Please write a 1-2 sentence summary of the work that the Fellow would be conducting (50 words or less. This will be used as your agency’s project description summary on the PPSF website, so please be succinct):

Our Yale Summer Communications Fellow will have the opportunity to create a lasting brand for our small but mighty education focused non-profit. The Communications Fellow will overhaul our website to incorporate video and better design elements and will create a new Squash Haven video - or a smaller series of videos - to communicate our program and impact.

Please write a complete description of the specific project you propose and list the duties/outcomes expected of the Fellow. (Suggested length: one to two pages.)
Squash Haven’s primary objective is to prepare New Haven Public School students to attend and succeed in higher education and to graduate prepared to successfully enter the workforce and engage in their communities. We have a long track record of success but are very lean in administrative staff.

The Communications Fellow will have two primary and very important projects, and will contribute in additional ways as time allows. The Communications Fellow will overhaul our website so that it incorporates better design elements and is more interactive. They will also help train current staff in updating the website so it can stay fresh after the summer fellowship. Additionally, the Communications Fellow will create a video - or a series of videos - that will be used to communicate our mission and impact. The Fellow will be the first person to wholly focus on our website or video since 2014.

The first few weeks of the Fellowship will include program immersion and research. During this time, the Fellow’s primary responsibilities will be to 1) get to know and understand the program through daily observations, 2) connect with each member of the staff - and other constituents as needed - to further their understanding; and 3) to create a plan for the website and videos to be discussed and tweaked with their Supervisor.

The duration of the Fellowship will be dedicated to the successful completion of both projects through daily office work and photography and video of ongoing academic and squash sessions. By mid-July, the Fellow will have draft videos and will have gotten an approved website redesign form the Executive Director. If time allows, the Fellow will contribute to additional administrative projects including data collection and data storage for a new database. The Fellow should also plan to take time out to enjoy team members at summer Fun Fridays and in other team outings.

We are extremely excited for the Squash Haven story to be told professionally in our communications, and we expect that the Fellow’s energy and vision will help make a lasting impact on Squash Haven!

Above: 2019 seniors boast their college shirts; our classroom at 78 Ashmun St
● Specific skills/experience required for the project (*please list*):
  ✓ Outstanding speaking, writing and interpersonal skills
  ✓ Adaptability, creativity and ability to take initiative
  ✓ Experience in web design, video, and/or marketing
  ✓ A belief in our mission and interest in connecting with a small and closeknit community

● Additional requirements (e.g. a car or weekend working hours). If a car is required, please include information regarding parking arrangements and mileage reimbursement):
As a youth serving organization, Squash Haven’s Fellow may be asked to work one or two weekends. If possible, we would like our Fellow to join our team for our season ending squash tournament (overnight trip) at Williams College during the third weekend in June. Additionally, they may be asked to support staff at one community service project or tournament locally. All other responsibilities will be performed throughout the week. A car is not required, though could be helpful.

● Briefly describe the work that Yale PPSF Fellows have done with your agency in the past and present. If you have not worked with Yale Fellows, please describe any work that Yale students have done with your agency.

We have happily hosted three PPSF Fellows, most recently Peter Levenstrong DIV ’20 in the summer of 2019. Peter taught one literacy block and two electives; his other major project was working to help overhaul our safety manual. He was a passionate, enthusiastic, and invaluable member of our summer staff, and we were so happy that the experience further strengthened his interest in a career in education.

Peter was responsible for developing and implementing curricula for 5th through 11th graders. He taught one book built around the summer’s theme of empowerment to rising tenth and eleventh graders: *The Fifth Season*. Activities surrounding these books included culminating projects, reading quizzes, vocabulary quizzes, and nightly homework. Peter also taught two electives on World Religions to our youngest students. Classes included interactive homework and activities to help students think through the ways these religions are realized. Activities included stopping five times a day to mimic prayer (Islam) and cutting up the prior night’s homework (Buddhism, nonattachment).

Some additional reflections from PPSF fellows follow below:
“I really loved that I had the flexibility to teach what I wanted, but staff not only spent a
lot of time helping me learn how to manage a classroom and how to write lesson plans
before we began teaching, but also helped me refine my lessons and better
differentiate my content for individual students while I was teaching.”

“My work over my PPSF summer provided me with the opportunity to intimately
discover the inner works of a small educational nonprofit. As a teacher, I had not only
the freedom to decide what I wanted to teach, but also benefited from professional
guidance from staff to shape my vision into standards-based curricula to implement in
my classrooms. But more important than the work I did was the people I worked with. I
have never encountered a more welcoming staff, who immediately treated me like their
equal and constantly prioritized my experience. But beyond this, the passion which
they bring to their work every day and the genuine respect that tints every interaction
with students in their programming showed are truly unparalleled. This is an incredible
organization filled with incredible people, and I am so lucky to have been able to be a
part of it.” - Matthew Coffin Yale ‘19

We encourage you to reach out to any of our past fellows or us if you are considering a
summer at Squash Haven!