

Tenacity and the Mario Umana Middle School Academy, Boston

[Tenacity link to: www.tenacity.org] is a year-round youth development organization that offers free tennis instruction and academic enrichment to over 3,000 Boston youth in the summer and intensive after-school programs that combine tennis instruction/competition and academic support with a focus on life-skills. At the Umana, Tenacity works with 75 students: a class of 25 8th graders each morning, and two mixed 6th/7th grade groups in the afternoons Monday-Thursday. Tenacity's staff and the Umana's administration have worked together to modify Tenacity's existing after-school model to meet the needs and schedule of the expanded school day.

Content

- **Literacy (~ 150 minutes weekly):** Tenacity uses their own curriculum which is aligned with Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, and has been modified to complement ELA classroom activities.
- **Tennis (~ 150 minutes weekly):** Students alternate academics with tennis instruction and competitions.
- **Homework Help and Tutoring (optional; on average ~120-240 minutes weekly):** Tenacity engages volunteers to provide individual and small group homework help and tutoring; many students chose to stay for this 2-4 hours/week after dismissal, from 4:15-5:15 PM.
- **Character development and life skills:** Tenacity integrates teamwork, leadership, and communication skill-building across their literacy and tennis curriculum.
- **Family engagement:** Frequent family events, bi-annual home visits to each family, newsletter.
- **High School Application Support:** in 2008-09, Tenacity expanded their partnership with the Umana to include specialized support for 8th grade students, teachers and families around the high school application process.

AT A GLANCE: Mario Umana Middle School Academy

Principal: Dr. Jose Salgado

Grades served: 6-8

Number of students: 607

School Schedule:

- M-TH, 7:20 AM - 4:15 PM
- Fridays, 7:20 AM - 11:40 AM

School Demographics:

% **Special Ed** – 19.7
% **Limited English** – 29.9
% **Low-Income** – 88.5

Other partners include:

East Boston YMCA, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, Citizen Schools, Museum of Science, The Trauma Center, Urban Ecology Institute

Conditions for Success

- Tenacity partnered with the Umana as an after-school and summer program the year before becoming an ELT partner.
- Tenacity's leadership was engaged in the ELT planning process, and met continuously with the Umana planning team to design and revise their program model/schedule.
- The Umana made a strategic decision to experiment with embedding Tenacity's programming during the morning for one grade level group, who all come from the same "travel group" (they have all core academic classes, including Tenacity, together).

- By serving 6th/7th grade students in the afternoon (1:30-4:15 PM), Tenacity is able to maintain an organizational goal to retain students from year to year to maximize the program's impact.

Staff

- 5 full-time staff: a Director, a Tennis Coordinator and Assistant, and an Academic Coordinator and Assistant, all hired and trained by Tenacity
- Volunteers from local colleges and universities
- The Umana's full-time Director of ELT (an Assistant Principal) oversees this and all other community partnerships

Funding

- Funded through a combination of the Umana ELT budget, Tenacity's private fundraising, and a Massachusetts 2020 ELT School-Community grant to support the 8th grade high school application support.
- One Tenacity staff position is partially funded through Americorps.

Contact

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