

Jahquan Gilford joined StreetSquash in 2014 as a 12-year-old in middle school.

He was introduced to StreetSquash, the summer before he began middle school. Gilford recalls StreetSquash staff picking up a few kids every day after his middle school program, and his coach, Kush, would teach his team the fundamentals of squash. This led to the start of his 5 year journey at StreetSquash.

Jahquan is thankful for all the amazing friendships StreetSquash has provided him and the cool experiences he was able to have.

One of his favorite team memories is a late-night dinner run after a long tournament in Newark.

“I just remember we were all exhausted like we were on a world tour and we just finished the last show of the tour,” Jahquan said.

It was a feeling only a team could share and one that he would cherish.

One of Jahquan’s most memorable birthdays was in part because of his coach at StreetSquash.

“I’ll always remember that on the morning of one of my birthdays, my parents surprised me with my very first squash racquet,” Jahquan said “It was a black and yellow teardrop Dunlop racquet and when I asked my mom how she knew where to buy a squash racquet from, she told me our coach at the time, Gabby, helped her choose that specific one”.

Gilford shares his gratitude through a heartfelt message for his former StreetSquash coach, Gabby.

“Her time being our coach was one of the best times I had at StreetSquash,” Jahquan said. “She is missed.”

Following his high school graduation, Jahquan decided to pursue his passion for photography. So far he has built up a portfolio and has continued refining his skills.

“One minute you’re motivated and the next you’re discouraged and doubt yourself but all in all I love and have fun doing it, that’s all that matters,” he expressed.

Post-graduation, StreetSquash continued to provide him with the necessary resources for him to thrive professionally. One of the Senior Academic Directors at the time, Nnemoma,

recommended him for two opportunities at StreetSquash. Both opportunities allowed him to hone in on his skills, network, and explore photography in an environment outside of his comfort zone.

In the near future, Jahquan hopes to be able to travel the world through his art and build up the resources to potentially assist those in a creative field who may lack the necessary tools to grow.

He says StreetSquash made him more outgoing.

“It made me come out of my shell a little bit more,” Jahquan said “It also exposed me to a new sport that I’ve grown to love and appreciate and played a major part in introducing me to the concept of there’s always more out there in the world.”