

BUSTING BARRIERS Most of us would call 100 rambunctious sixth-graders swatting at little blue balls with long-handled racquets a scene of chaos. For Mary Beth Horn, however, it's simply enthusiasm. Horn, 24, is the academic and community service director for SquashBusters, an organization that brings squash to inner-city school-children around Boston. While at one time Horn had visions of becoming a public school teacher (she has her master's in special education), at SquashBusters, she gets to combine her love of

help them beat opponents. It takes much longer to get that message across about school," she says. The hope is that their discipline on the court and with their schoolwork will earn participants scholarships to prep schools, admission to top public schools, or simply better report cards. "Every success is a victory," says Horn.

BEHIND THE SCENES With the proliferation of sports outreach programs, making a difference doesn't always mean you're on the front lines coaching and tutoring. From fund-raising to program development to public relations, a number of behind-the-scenes positions have also been created. Take Mackenzie Hurd, 24, who after captaining his college's men's golf team landed a job with the United States Golf Association's foundation office, which gives grants to golf programs that reach disadvantaged youth and disabled individuals. After a two-year stint processing applications for the foundation office, he was given the opportunity to go out in the field. Hurd, who grew up in Rhode Island, had heard about a 30-acre plot of land outside Providence—once an eyesore filled with stray trash and abandoned cars—that was being transformed into a nine-hole golf course for inner-city kids. He wanted to take part.

"The reason I got involved is because I want to see these kids get into golf, but I think my resources and skills are better used behind the scenes," says Hurd, who now works at the course, known as Button Hole. His primary tasks are fund-raising and putting together a development document that will be the major resource for anyone else looking to create a similar facility. (Hurd says that more than 100 such courses are in the works nationwide.) The facility's mission is to provide kids from various organizations, like social service agencies and Boys and Girls Clubs, with free golf lessons and access to the course. If the present pilot program is any indication, Button Hole will be a huge success. The kids now in the pilot program, captivated by both the acres of green space and the game, will be back for intermediate instruction next year—and they'll be joined by nearly 1,000 newcomers. What does it mean for Hurd? He'd better keep on raising money.

GET INVOLVED If you're interested in being involved in sports outreach, seek out an established program by surfing the web, contacting the



JOHN SOARES

Mackenzie Hurd works with the U.S. Golf Association to supply grants to golf programs for disadvantaged youth.

teaching kids with her love of squash—in an environment where respect and enthusiasm are paramount. While she's at it, she's happy to be helping squash become less elitist.

One week each year, Horn and her fellow SquashBusters arrive at schools in the Boston area with 100 squash racquets and 100 balls. The most spirited students—few of whom have heard of squash before—will eventually be selected for the three-year program, where they'll spend two afternoons a week receiving squash lessons, as well as academic tutoring from SquashBusters staff.

Horn calls squash the "carrot" that is used to motivate the kids to put their absolute best effort into everything they do. "It's interesting to see them realize that hard work, extra hours on the court, can