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## **An Achievable Dream Celebrates 25 Years**

*Annual Tennis Ball gala to commemorate 25 years of success and student achievements*

Newport News, VA – What began in 1992 as a small after-school and summer tennis and tutoring program has grown into what is now one of the most successful education programs in Virginia, An Achievable Dream, Inc. (AAD). Twenty-five years later, the nonprofit serves nearly 2,000 students in elementary and middle and high school in Newport News, as well as an elementary school in Virginia Beach and in Henrico County. The organization is built on the same belief that guided founder, the late Walter Segaloff: all children can learn and succeed.

AAD operates in partnership with Newport News Public Schools, Virginia Beach City Public Schools and Henrico County Public Schools, utilizing partnerships with community donors and grants to boost each school's existing programming with SAME® (Social, Academic and Moral Education) curriculum, state-of-the-art technology, individual mentoring, more academic time, "soft skills" job and career training and more. AAD students, or "Dreamers," as they are called, score equal to or better than top Virginia students on state Standards of Learning (SOL) exams. In addition, every student must participate in community service projects during the school year. AAD boasts a 100% on-time graduation rate, with 90% of graduates attending college or trade school and 10% joining the military or entering the workforce. AAD's class of 2017 received over \$2 million in college scholarship funds, with many students being the first in their family to attend college.

“When Walter Segaloff founded An Achievable Dream twenty-five years ago, he did not do it alone,” recalls Kathy Edwards, President and CEO of An Achievable Dream. “He formed a coalition of partners – including public school districts, city leaders, the military, law enforcement, and the business and political communities. Today, more than ever before, these partners are critical to our success. Our teachers, staff, our students’ families, our community’s clergy, and many others continue to dedicate their lives to the success of our *Dreamers*. That is why our anniversary this year is a celebration for our entire community to share and to be proud that we all played a role in our students’ success.”

AAD’s trademark annual *Tennis Ball* gala, held November 18, 2017 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center, is expected to sell out. The event will be a celebration of this milestone anniversary, as well as an exciting opportunity for members of the community to share in the work of An Achievable Dream. The evening features dinner, and live and silent auctions to benefit AAD, as well as a ceremony honoring the Class of 2018 graduates and the announcement of the class sponsor.

Jeshon Copeland, AAD graduate Class of 2012, speaks firsthand about the impact An Achievable Dream had on his life.

“My life did a 360 when my cousin adopted me and told me that she was going to enroll me in An Achievable Dream. The rest of my life would never be the same.” Each morning, An Achievable Dream students recite the banners, positive affirmations that remind them of the school’s beliefs and expectations. Years after graduation, Jeshon still recalls them. “My favorite banner... is ‘I am somebody.’ These three words were so important to me because they were a constant reminder that no matter how difficult your childhood was... you can still achieve anything as long as you don’t give up and believe in yourself.”

For the students, staff, sponsors, and community supporters of An Achievable Dream, the impact made over 25 years is worth celebrating all year long.

Visit [www.achievabledream.org/tennisball2017](http://www.achievabledream.org/tennisball2017) for more information and to purchase tickets.

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### **About An Achievable Dream:**

An Achievable Dream is a nationally-recognized educational nonprofit dedicated to the belief that all children can learn and succeed. Operating schools in partnership with Newport News Public Schools and Virginia Beach City Public Schools, and AAD Certified Academy in Henrico County near Richmond, Virginia, An Achievable Dream offers children in kindergarten through twelfth grade quality social, academic and value-based education, enrichment activities inside and outside the classroom, and assistance with higher education.