

DC

DESTINATION: COLLEGE

FROM ATHLETE TO STUDENT ATHLETE



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



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WELCOME!

Thank you very much for joining the Destination: College team. We appreciate your willingness to give us your time and energy, and we look forward to working with you.

We have created this handbook to provide you with an overview of our organization and help you understand what it means to be one of our volunteers. Please take the time to read this handbook carefully. Feel free to contact our Executive Director should you have any questions.

Volunteers are the mainstays of all our programs. From their experiences, we know that working directly with our student-athletes can be a wonderful and satisfying experience. We also know that our volunteers get just as much, if not more, from the students they work with as what they offer in return. Your time and efforts are valuable and empowering resources. We have many stories that celebrate that special moment when a student connects to the opportunity that Destination: College offers. We hope that you too will have one of these stories to share.



HISTORY AND MISSION

Destination: College (DC) was incorporated in 1994 as a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization under the name Aid for Children of Tomorrow. That same year and continuing to date, it has had the status of a tax-exempt nonprofit corporation. The name was changed to Destination: College in 2010 to reflect its mission more accurately. The mission of Destination: College (DC) began in earnest in 2006. Ten volunteers began a small weekly reading program with a group of 25 boys on the Mount Vernon boys varsity basketball team with the intent to bolster the boys' academic performances. From that small core of volunteers and one team, Destination: College has grown today to involve more than 65 volunteers working with multiple sports teams from all three of the high schools in Mount Vernon: Mount Vernon High School; Denzel Washington School of the Arts; and Mount Vernon STEAM Academy.* Our academic enrichment and college access programs reach over 150 high school students each year and our college retention program supports over 100 college students annually.

Our mission is to facilitate college readiness for economically disadvantaged student athletes through persistent mentoring and academic tutoring, to assist with all aspects of the college admissions and the financial aid process, and to support our students towards a successful completion of college.

Destination: College recognizes that many talented athletes are unable to fulfill their dreams of participating in sports at the college level because of academic deficiencies combined with low SAT or ACT scores. While we work only with athletes through their coaches and their teams, our goal is academic not athletic success. Through our network of local volunteers, Destination: College offers academic support and full-scale college application assistance to all of our student athletes. We continue to mentor our students in college as data strongly supports higher graduation rates in connection with early transition guidance. We track and support our students through individual and group format initiatives. College persistence is a critical mission for us.

**In the past, Destination: College has run programs at Woodlands High School/Greenburgh; Gorton High School/Yonkers; Tuckahoe High School/Tuckahoe; and Roosevelt High School/ Yonkers.*

GOALS AND IMPACT

There are vast economic and cultural differences among the neighboring communities in Westchester students who attend them. Many of the students who participate in the programs offered by Destination: College may come from homes where English is not the primary language or may not be understood by all members of the family or where making ends meet requires the participation of all family members resulting in little or no time to attend to and support the rigorous process of preparing for college. Many of our students come from families where higher education is not an implicit expectation and these students might be the first in their families to attend college.

But all our students share one thing. They are committed to the athletic programs offered by their high schools. Destination: College believes that participation in these sports programs can serve a major role in enabling these students to participate in higher education and broaden the choices available to them as adults. The goal of Destination: College is to ensure that ALL our students, regardless of athletic skill, can be accepted to a college of their choice, a college well suited to their strengths and interests, and that ALL our students qualify for NCAA or other scholarships for which they may be eligible. Each year, Destination: College sends a new group of students off to college thanks to the efforts of the volunteers who work with each of our participating teams. While building academic skills for our students is our main priority, an added benefit is the inevitable relationship that evolves between students and tutors because of our commitment to their success. Our dedicated volunteers give students the individual attention that overworked high school teachers and guidance offices simply cannot.

Since 2007, our students have been accepted to colleges throughout the country, including Cornell, Howard University, Rutgers University, West Point and many of the colleges and universities in the SUNY system, including the University at Albany, Binghamton University and Stony Brook University. Given the prohibitive cost of college today, we frequently encourage our students to look at the local SUNY or City College of New York (CUNY) systems. In addition, some of our students initially find the best fit is a community college setting, and some of our students start their college careers at Westchester Community College.

OUR SCHOOLS AND TEAMS

MOUNT VERNON CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

All programming runs onsite at
Mount Vernon High School
100 California Road, Mount Vernon, NY 10708

The Mount Vernon Central School District High Schools

Denzel Washington School of the Arts
Mount Vernon High School
Mount Vernon STEAM Academy

MVCSD

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Boys Basketball | Wrestling |
| Girls Basketball | Boys Track & Field |
| Baseball | Girls Track & Field |
| Football | Boys Swimming |
| Flag Football | Girls Swimming |
| Boys Soccer | Volleyball |
| Girls Soccer | Cheerleading |



PROGRAMS

Destination: College offers multiple academic and college access programs that serve our students in both their high school and collegiate experiences. Through this framework of support, we seek to increase the likelihood that each of our students match with a college acceptance that best fits his or her academic and financial profile.

TEAM READS - September - May

During the academic year we may conduct weekly, one-hour, academic enrichment sessions for some of the sports teams with whom we work. At a typical session, Academic Coaches (all volunteers) are assigned a group of two to four students. Our curriculum content is a mix of short documentary videos, relevant reading articles, critical thinking discussion questions, and occasional guest speakers. Our content relates to current events including: sports, music, and politics with the goal of building knowledge and relationships. An Academic Coach can also facilitate subject tutoring for students who request it. We strive to maintain the continuity of reading groups throughout the year.

Where an Academic Coach has subject specific expertise, some students may work on homework or practice skills during a Team Reads session. We have a library of materials and online resources for tutor use.

PEER TUTOR PROGRAM: Subject & Regents Prep - September - June

The NYS Department of Education mandates that all public-school students pass (with a score of 65) five Core Regents exams as a graduation requirement. Tests required are: Global History and Geography (10th grade), US History (11th grade), English (11th grade), one math and one science.

In partnership with Bronxville High School, Pelham Memorial High School, Ethical Culture Fieldston School, The Hackley School, Scarsdale High School and Rye Country Day School, we coordinate a Peer Tutor program for our student-athletes to work one-on-one with a volunteer student tutor who possesses a high level of subject mastery.

This program is offered weekly at the Mount Vernon High School library on Mondays- Thursdays from 3:15 – 4:30. If mutually convenient, we coordinate Zoom sessions for students who are unable to meet during our in-person sessions.

PROGRAMS

COONEY COLLEGE CENTER - September - June

Under the guidance of the Director of College Access, our team of volunteers works closely with our rising seniors and current seniors to facilitate their college application process. Tasks typically include identifying appropriate colleges, introduction to the Common Application, essay writing and editing, resume preparation, completing financial aid/scholarship applications and general support, including occasional communication with college coaching staffs. Our volunteer advisors typically commit 2-3 hours a week to work with students and meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays (3-4:30pm) in the Mount Vernon High School Library and virtually as needed. Destination: College provides volunteer group training on the College Application Process and Financial Aid each year as needed.

JEFF COONEY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 2013, Destination: College established a scholarship program for outstanding seniors based on weekly program participation, academics, leadership, and coach recommendation. In 2018, the scholarship was formally named The Jeff Cooney Memorial Scholarship to honor our late board member Jeff Cooney. Cooney Scholars are each awarded funds to support college related expenses. Scholarships are awarded each June.

COLLEGE SUCCESS MENTOR PROGRAM

Our Director of College Access, works closely with our DC alumni on college campuses. One on one guidance, group seminars and visits college campuses is offered to ensure the success of our students. DC provides our DC Alumni with a stipend for books, technology, dorm supplies and additional course needs to alleviate some of the financial burden that cause financially challenged students to abandon their college careers.

In 2020, we launched a mentoring program to give more formal guidance to many of our 1st-year college students to ensure retention and persistence to graduation. Our mentors and students work together for at least the first two years of college, communicating at least twice a month to discuss transition to school, healthy habits, resources for academic success, budgeting, etc. Our Director of College Success facilitates summer training and follow up meetings with mentors to provide relevant information and share best practices.

MVHS SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

We provide a summer reading and enrichment program in connection with a basketball camp run by Mount Vernon High School Boys Varsity coach Bob Cimmino. The goals of this program are to build higher level reading, vocabulary strength, and cultural awareness. The curriculum is varied and has included speakers that discuss career exploration and local youth issues, organized tours of the Westchester D.A.'s office, the New York Botanical Gardens, the Museum of Natural History, Broadway plays, and places of business. The program serves 25-30 students and meets Tuesday - Thursday during the month of July.

STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMS

Why Volunteer?

Volunteers are the backbone of our organization and bring a wide variety of interests and skills to our students. Volunteers can work in our Team Reads program, act as tutors for homework help and Regent's prep, or assist students in our Cooney College Center. Working with our student athletes is extremely rewarding. As one of our coaches said of our volunteers, "These young people know when someone is just showing up or when they truly care. The volunteers from Destination: College really care and my players know that." DC volunteers are the additional adults in our students' lives who care about them and cheer them on in the game of life.

How Are Volunteers Assigned?

Volunteers are assigned to specific teams based on current need and volunteer availability. Should a volunteer have an interest in working with a particular sports team or concentrating on tutoring in a specific academic subject, the volunteer should contact our Executive Director or the appropriate Program Head. While most volunteers commit to one-hour weekly sessions with an assigned group of athletes on a specific team, many volunteers work with more than one team.

Program Structure

Each sports team is assigned a Program Head who works directly with the individual team coach. The Program Head is responsible for general organization and supervision of the Team Reads Program, including setting the overall meetings schedule, organizing volunteers and students, communicating with volunteers, and handling any required logistics, such as meeting locations. Program Heads typically send out weekly emails to gauge tutor availability, snack reminder, volunteer assignments and other pertinent information. The Program Head is the "go to" person if you have a question, issue, or concern.

STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMS

Volunteer Commitment

We ask that each volunteer commit a minimum of one (1) hour per week during the school year. This may vary when a team is in season and meeting schedules may vary. We fully understand a tutor's need for flexibility and we strive to accommodate everyone's schedule. All programs meet weekly for one hour in a predetermined classroom. Program Heads are responsible for notifying volunteers of the assigned classroom and location.

Our students feel valued with your consistent involvement, and we encourage you to attend their sporting events when convenient. Our students notice when you are there to cheer them on. Volunteers provide a snack for students at the beginning of each session to give them the necessary fuel to keep their attention during the session. It is the responsibility of the Program Head to coordinate snacks, and he or she may ask for help from the volunteers each week.

At the end of the session, Destination: College provides pizza before the students head to practice or training.

All volunteers are asked to attend a Volunteer Orientation held in early September of each year. We typically meet on a weekday morning from 9:30 -11:00am. Guidelines, best practices and group discussion are the headline topics on our agenda.

Coach's Commitment

At least one coach is required to be on-site during tutoring sessions to ensure student attendance and proper behavior. When a team is using multiple rooms, classroom doors are to be left open so a coach can periodically check on each room. *It is important that doors be open for assurance of safety and integrity of the student-tutor pairing, especially in instances where there may be only one pair in a room.*

Feedback

Observations and feedback are a welcome part of the success and growth of our programs and organization. We value your opinion and hope you will feel comfortable sharing your ideas, challenges and program-related needs with your Program Head, Executive Director or Board Chair.

As volunteers we work closely with children and may be party to privileged information should a student share sensitive information about issues and concerns in their personal lives.

If a situation arises where you do not feel comfortable or you have questions/concerns about a child's safety, immediately notify your Program Head, the Executive Director, or Board Chair.

STRUCTURE OF PROGRAMS

Last minute program changes/communication protocols:

While rare, programs may be canceled at the last minute due to inclement weather, activity conflict, or other unforeseen circumstances. Given the number of volunteers that come to DC programs on any given day, texts and emails are the most efficient way to relay last minute changes.

1. Executive Director and College Access Director are on the school district robo-call and email distribution list
2. Coaches may make changes and communicate with the Program Leader and Executive Director
3. Program Leader and the Executive Director keep volunteer email and cell info up to date.
4. Program Leader will send notification by email of unexpected change
5. Executive Director will send notification to affected volunteers through a quick text distribution app - Reach
6. It is the responsibility and it is important for the volunteer to check emails and text when heading to DC programs

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES & CODE OF CONDUCT

Volunteer Status

The relationship between volunteer and Destination: College is “at will,” which means that either the volunteer or Destination: College can terminate the volunteer’s service at any time, for any reason whatsoever, with or without cause. Volunteers are not employees and are not entitled to compensation or any form of employee benefit.

Insurance

Destination: College does not maintain health, medical or disability insurance coverage for its volunteers. Also, since you are not a Destination: College Employee, you are not covered by any workers’ compensation insurance for any injuries you may sustain while volunteering with Destination: College.

Expectations of a Volunteer

A volunteer is expected to:

- Report on time on the days you volunteer
- Notify your Program Head in a timely fashion if you are unable to volunteer on the days or at the times you have been assigned
- Be careful, prudent and avoid any careless and reckless behavior while performing assignments
- Be dependable and prompt
- Be able to relate well to a variety of people
- Have good listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills
- Be flexible, friendly, patient, and optimistic. Have a good sense of humor
- Keep confidential all information about Destination: College, its staff, the school staff, the students and its other volunteers, that you may learn as a volunteer
- Treat all Destination: College staff, school staff, students and other volunteers, with respect and courtesy without regard to age, creed, color, disability, familial status, gender identity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by applicable law
- Not facilitate or engage in any form of harassment
- Agree to a background screening, which is required of all Destination: College volunteers (to be paid for by Destination: College)
- Sign the Destination: College Volunteer release that will be provided electronically.

VOLUNTEER GUIDELINES & CODE OF CONDUCT

Code of Conduct

To provide the best possible tutoring environment, Destination: College expects volunteers to conduct themselves in a way that will protect the safety of all students and volunteers, and the interests of the organization. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fighting or threatening violence
- Boisterous or disruptive behavior
- Sexual or other unlawful harassment

Confidentiality

Destination: College recognizes that student academic information is private. Should a student, coach or school employee share academic information with our Program Heads or volunteers, this information must not be shared outside this relationship to protect a student's privacy and dignity.

Boundaries

Boundaries set the parameters of what is and is not acceptable behavior by staff and volunteers in the Destination: College programs. These clear boundaries help to develop trusting relationships and will help to set student expectations as it relates to volunteers. It is our role to provide academic skill building in a safe environment for both volunteers and students. It is very important that our volunteers maintain proper boundaries with our students. Inappropriate relationships with students are expressly prohibited, and Destination: College reserves the right to terminate any volunteer for engaging in such a relationship.

Some students may ask for additional tutoring outside the Destination: College established sessions. A Program Head can facilitate additional time and locations and should be aware if a tutor coordinates additional time. A school location is strongly encouraged with a public library or other public space (restaurant, coffee shop, etc.) being an acceptable alternative. The door of any classroom used within the school should always remain open during sessions.

- Never tutor at a student's home or in your own home
- Never provide transportation to a student
- Please refrain from giving any student money unless for team fundraising efforts under the supervision of a coach. Donating to a team cause is entirely up to a volunteer and is in no way mandated by Destination: College

Texting is an acceptable form of communicating with students, and is known to help students by giving them a source of encouragement. Please exercise appropriate language and monitor how a teenager or parent-guardian can interpret conversations. Do not use any terms of endearment or language (including emojis) that cross a professional line.

Dismissal Policy

Any volunteer violating the Destination: College Code of Conduct will be subject to immediate dismissal.

CONTACT INFORMATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email Address:

info@destinationcollegeny.org

Mailing Address:

Destination: College
81 Pondfield Road, # 290
Bronxville, New York, 10708

Website Address:

www.destinationcollegeny.org

Facebook:

DestinationCollegeNY

Instagram:

destinationcollegeny

STAFF:

Michele Roque Executive Director

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Laura Amigone Director of College Success

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240-994-2516



VOLUNTEER RELEASE

In exchange for the value and benefit of services received, including the opportunity to serve as a volunteer with Destination: College, a New York not-for-profit corporation having an address of 81 Pondfield Road, Bronxville, New York 10708 (the "Organization"), I have read, understand, and willingly sign this release (the "Release").

As a volunteer with the Organization, I may participate in certain "Volunteer Activities", defined herein as providing one or more students, introduced to me by the Organization ("Participating Students"), with tutoring, homework assistance, or assistance with the college application process (collectively, the "Volunteer Activities"). I understand that Volunteer Activities may only take place in "Approved Locations", defined as restaurants, coffee shops, libraries, shopping malls, and the following schools:

Mount Vernon High School 100 California Road
Mount Vernon, NY 10552

I acknowledge that my participation in the Volunteer Activities has certain inherent risks, which risks I voluntarily assume. These risks include, but are not limited to, the risk of economic loss and/or physical injury, resulting from: (1) travel, by vehicle or otherwise, arising from my participation in the Volunteer Activities; (2) the acts and/or omissions of Participating Students; (3) the acts and/or omissions of other third parties to this agreement, who may be present at the Approved Locations; and (4) physical, environmental, and/or other hazards present at the Approved Locations. I acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in the Activities and have considered those risks. I hereby expressly and specifically assume such risks, including any and all risk of injury, harm, or loss that I may incur as a result of my participation in the Activities.

I hereby give consent and authority to the Organization to obtain medical treatment on my behalf if I am injured or require medical attention during my participation in the Activities. I understand and agree that I am solely responsible for all costs related to such medical treatment, medical transportation, and/or evacuation. I hereby release, forever discharge, and hold harmless the Organization from any claim whatsoever in connection with such treatment or other medical services.

I agree to follow any instructions given or rules established by the Organization or its employees or agents with regard to my participation in the Volunteer Activities. I acknowledge that the Volunteer Activities do not include: (1) providing transportation to any Participating Student without a Destination: College generated permission slip signed by a parent/guardian[1] or (2) tutoring any Participating Student other than at Approved Locations (items (1) and (2) collectively, "Prohibited Conduct"). I agree to refrain from any Prohibited Conduct.

I hereby indemnify, release, hold harmless and forever discharge the Organization and its agents, employees, officers, directors, affiliates, successors and assigns (collectively, the "Released Parties"), of and from any and all claims, demands, debts, contracts, expenses, causes of action, lawsuits, damages or liabilities, of any kind or nature, whether known or unknown, in law or in equity, that I ever had or may have, arising from or in any way related to my participation in the Volunteer Activities.

Notwithstanding the foregoing sentence, this Release does not limit the liability of the Released Parties with respect to any acts of gross negligence, or intentional, willful or wanton misconduct on their part.

I UNDERSTAND THAT THIS RELEASE DISCHARGES THE ORGANIZATION FROM ANY LIABILITY OR CLAIM THAT I MAY HAVE AGAINST THE ORGANIZATION WITH RESPECT TO ANY BODILY INJURY, PERSONAL INJURY, ILLNESS, DEATH, PROPERTY DAMAGE, OR PROPERTY LOSS THAT MAY RESULT FROM THE ACTIVITIES, WHETHER CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE ORGANIZATION OR OTHERWISE. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE ORGANIZATION DOES NOT ASSUME ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR OR OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR OTHER ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO MEDICAL, HEALTH, OR DISABILITY INSURANCE OF ANY NATURE IN THE EVENT OF MY INJURY, ILLNESS, OR DEATH, OR DAMAGE TO OR LOSS OF MY PROPERTY.

VOLUNTEER RELEASE

Additionally, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties of and from any and all claims, demands, debts, contracts, expenses, causes of action, lawsuits, damages or liabilities, of any kind or nature, whether known or unknown, in law or in equity, that any third party ever had or may have, arising from or in any way related to my having engaged in Prohibited Conduct. Such indemnification shall include, but not be limited to, the reimbursement of all costs, expenses, reasonable attorney's fees, and judgments, incurred by or assessed against any of the Related Parties, arising from my having engaged in Prohibited Conduct.

This Release will continue in full force and effect even after the termination of my affiliation with the Organization, whether such termination occurs by agreement, by operation of law, or otherwise.

I understand and agree that during the Activities, I may be photographed and/or videotaped by the Organization for internal and/or promotional use. I hereby grant and convey to the Organization all right, title, and interest, including but not limited to, any royalties, proceeds, or other benefits, in any and all such photographs or recordings, and consent to the Organization's use of my name, image, likeness, and voice in perpetuity, in any medium or format, for any publicity without further compensation or permission.

This Release is governed by the laws of the State of New York and is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by that law. If any provision of this Release is held invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions will continue to be fully effective.

This Release contains the entire agreement between the undersigned parties regarding the subject matter of this Release, and supersedes any prior written or oral agreements between them concerning the subject matter hereof.

The provisions of this Release may not be altered, in whole or in part, except by means of a writing bearing the signatures of the parties hereto. Any claim or controversy that arises out of or relates to this Release or the subject matter hereof shall be brought and heard exclusively in a court of competent jurisdiction located in the County of Westchester in the State of New York.

[Volunteer Name: _____

Address: _____

Accepted and Agreed to this _____ day of _____, 20 _____ :

Destination: College By:

Volunteer Name: Signature: _____

Parent Signature for High School Student Volunteer Tutor under 18 _____

General Information

All Programs operate at Mount Vernon High School, 100 California Road, Mount Vernon, NY 10552 .

Volunteers should enter at the main entrance under the canopy at the front of the school. Please bring a gov't issued idea to check in at security.

Parking available at the front of the school and to the left of the gym.

2023-24

Mondays

3:10 – 4:10 MV Football, Boys Track, Wrestling, Baseball

Room 255

3:10 – 4:10 MV Girls Volleyball

Room 110

Tuesdays

3:00 – 4:00 MV Boys Basketball Room 122

3:15 – 4:45 Cooney College Center MVHS Library

Wednesday

3:10 – 4:10 MV Girls Soccer Room TBD

3:10 – 4:10 MV Boys Soccer Room 110

3:10 - 4:10 MV Girls Basketball room TBD

Thursdays

3:15 – 4:45 Cooney College Center MVHS Library

Girls and Boys Track currently participate in the College Center & Jeff Cooney Memorial Scholarship Programs

DC Academic Coach: Tips, Strategies, and notes for Reading Groups

- Printed packets are delivered to the classroom for volunteers and students for all Team Reads programs.
- Volunteers do not need to bring printed packets from home.
- Assigned groups are 3-4 students with a DC Academic Coach (volunteer)- Program Leaders work with the coach to determine groups each fall.
- Reading groups may be adjusted after sports season attrition/JV additions/new team additions.
- Reading packets are typically 3 articles with some vocab and discussion questions at the end.
- DO NOT feel pressure to finish packets. Some groups are so happy discussing the 1st article, they don't get through others.
- Some volunteers like to jot down names on their packets - helps them remember reading ability for subsequent sessions.
- You can canvas students to see what article that would like to start with. If you think one article is more important, you can set that as the start.
- Ask students if they know anything about the story based on the title or byline.
- Students 'popcorn' read - each one taking 3-4 paragraphs before the next reader picks up and starts.
- You can moderate the switch in readers if needed.
- If a student doesn't feel comfortable reading aloud - he/she can pass (our kids are typically very supportive of their peers)
- If your group is 1-2 students due to some absences and they tire of reading, feel free to join in as a reader or encourage some silent reading. Be flexible.
- Pause the reading on occasion to check for understanding or to discuss context/vocab.
- The discussion questions are a basic guide - feel free to use your own.
- Rapport and building trust is the top goal - if we build some critical thinking along the way - bravo!
- The kids LOVE praise!
- Check to see if students need any subject help from DC - relay to your Program leader if student makes a request.
- Students are encouraged to take packets home if interested in any unread material.
- PROGRAMS DO NOT MEET ON PUBLIC SCHOOL HOLIDAYS/VACATIONS/GAME DAY – Program Leaders will relay info as needed.

NOTES

NOTES



DESTINATION: COLLEGE

FROM ATHLETE TO **STUDENT** ATHLETE

81 Pondfield Road #290
Bronxville, New York 10708
info@destinationcollegeny.org