



USTA

# National Advocacy Handbook



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[USTA.COM/ADVOCACY](https://www.usta.com/advocacy)

# What is Tennis Advocacy and Why is it Important?

Advocacy for tennis involves taking our knowledge and passion for tennis and connecting it to the needs of communities, schools, colleges and local governments. Advocacy is the ability to demonstrate to decision-makers how tennis programs can benefit the community.

This handbook is one of several tools from the USTA and other industry organizations that can help you succeed in engaging with public and private-sector decision-makers in support of tennis at the local level. This engagement will help to harness the public support and resources needed to expand the availability and quality of tennis facilities and programming like yours.

The sport of tennis can be an important part of improving communities, schools, the health of individuals and the quality of life for all. As members of the tennis family, we know how this sport can make a difference in people's lives. As advocates for tennis, our mission is to convince decision-makers in the public, private and non-profit sectors of this to gain their support.

## ABOUT THE USTA

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) is the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the United States and the leader for promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level, from local communities to the highest level of the professional game. A not-for-profit organization with more than 620,000 members, the USTA invests 100 percent of its proceeds into growing the game. It owns and operates the USTA National Campus at Lake Nona, in Orlando, Fla., and the US Open, one of the highest-attended annual sporting events in the world, held at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Flushing Meadows, N.Y.



# The Case for Tennis

Decision-makers in a community are presented with many athletic and non-athletic options in which to invest. As an advocate for tennis, you need to be able to convince others that tennis is an important option. You need to answer this basic question for them: Why tennis?

The answer should not focus solely on tennis as a game. Your message needs to convey how tennis facilities and programs can help solve public problems. Focus on how the sport can improve schools and the community, provide opportunities for youth, spur economic development and improve the quality of life for all residents.

In this section, you will find ideas, tips and assistance to help develop a tennis message that will convey the great role tennis plays in building a better community.

## START WITH THE FACTS

You may be presenting to an audience with little or no tennis experience. Some people may have preconceived notions about the sport, such as tennis is hard to access, expensive to play and only found at country clubs.

**Fact:** More than 70% of all tennis is played inexpensively at public facilities.

**Fact:** Tennis has historically been a core program for public parks and recreation departments.

**Fact:** Tennis is a sport that can be learned at a young age and, unlike other sports, played for a lifetime, appealing across all age demographics.

**Fact:** Tennis is one of the few sports in which you can have three generations being active and playing together, making it attractive to families as well as facilities that seek to create recreational opportunities that appeal across the demographic spectrum.

## BENEFITS OF TENNIS

For any tennis advocacy campaign, the general and wide-ranging benefits of the sport will be a central part of achieving your success. Here are a few benefits for players at any age to stress in your presentation:

- Stronger bones
- Reduced stress
- Cardiovascular fitness
- Weight loss
- New relationships

Younger players enjoy many benefits beyond physical activity:

- Teamwork
- Social skills and sportsmanship
- Coordination, agility and balance
- Strategic thinking and problem solving
- Self-confidence



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Tennis is ideal for long-term health benefits. It is the only sport where a person can be an active participant from age 3 to 103. The Cleveland Clinic has called tennis “an ideal sport for a healthy heart.” In fact, playing tennis just 3 hours per week can reduce your risk of heart disease by 56%. A nine-year study of 80,306 British adults, average age 52, reported tremendous benefits for tennis players:

- Risk of death from all causes: 47% lower among those who played racquet sports
- Risk of death from heart disease or stroke: 56% lower among racquet sports players

Tennis players live longer. A Mayo Clinic study of 8,577 Americans over the age of 25 found that playing tennis can extend your life by nearly 10 years, more than three times longer than running:

- |                        |                       |                                     |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Tennis: 9.7 years    | • Cycling: 3.7 years  | • Calisthenics: 3.1 years           |
| • Badminton: 6.2 years | • Swimming: 3.4 years | • Health club activities: 1.5 years |
| • Soccer: 4.7 years    | • Running: 3.2 years  |                                     |

SOCIAL HEALTH

The vast majority of organized tennis is played as a team sport: adult leagues, middle and high school teams, Division 1-3 collegiate tennis, Tennis on Campus, and Junior Team Tennis.

Tennis creates a network of friends who socialize beyond the court; this is vital today as technology often isolates people. For children and students, tennis teaches important life lessons about working together and working as a team.

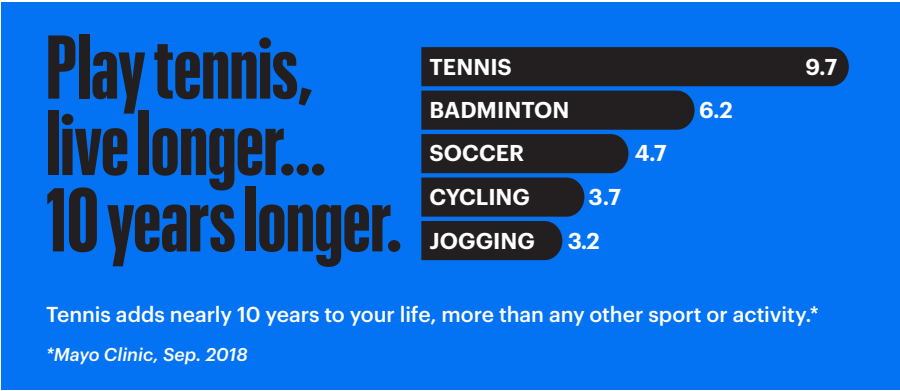
MENTAL HEALTH

Because tennis helps deal with physical, mental, social and emotional challenges, the sport is ideal for helping participants cope with stress. When playing tennis, challenges are ever-present, so individuals become problem-solvers on the fly. From alertness to tactical thinking, tennis helps keep the brain agile and young, and helps to relieve tension.

INCLUSIVE SPORT

Tennis is an inclusive sport. Advocating for tennis in your community can help increase participation in the sport from both under-resourced and under-represented populations. The USTA's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion strategy is designed to grow and promote our sport to the next generation—and future generations—of fans, players and volunteers. The USTA is removing barriers and creating opportunities wherever it can so that tennis becomes a true reflection of all of America.

Tennis is a game that can be adapted for any mental, physical or emotional ability. There are more than 200 active adaptive programs that welcome and support athletes of all ability levels across the U.S. Tennis is therapeutic for individuals dealing with post-traumatic stress or other mental health issues, stroke survivors, and those on the



autism spectrum, to name just a few. Athletes with cognitive disabilities learn and play the game, enjoying the social nature of clinics and tournaments. Volunteers and coaches working with adaptive programs find they benefit from the experience as much as the athletes.

As part of the USTA's effort to reach "all of America," it has assembled targeted engagement guides to reach out to key demographic segments vital to the growth of tennis, such as millennials, wheelchair athletes, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and the LGBTQ+ community. You can access these engagement guides [here](#).

Financial disparity is consistently identified as a significant barrier that prevents players from getting into the sport. To help boost tennis participation among aspiring under-resourced players, both the USTA Foundation and USTA Player Development, along with many USTA Sections, have created grant programs for programs and individual players. To learn more about these grants, click [here](#).

The USTA is also committed to enhancing the diversity of the workplace through recruitment, hiring, retention, training and professional development of a diverse group of employees. It also strives to maintain and promote an inclusive culture in which individual differences are respected and valued as qualities that strengthen the working environment and contribute to promoting and developing the growth of tennis at every level.

# Long live tennis, for those who tennis live longer.



## Get Fit

Lose Weight,  
Burn Calories

An hour of singles  
play can burn  
580-870 calories.

*Oja, et al, British Journal  
of Sports Medicine, 2016*



## Strengthen Heart, Muscles and Bones

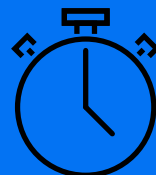
Compared to other sports,  
tennis players have the  
lowest incidence of  
cardiovascular disease.

*40-year study conducted by Johns  
Hopkins University*



## Develop Hand-Eye Coordination

Playing tennis  
involves several skills  
that contribute to  
good hand-eye  
coordination. You can  
improve your agility,  
balance, coordination,  
reaction time and  
more.



## Live Longer

Playing just 3 hours  
per week will reduce  
your risk of heart  
disease 56%

*Harvard University, 2016*

# Youth Who Play Tennis

**48%**  
GET BETTER  
GRADES



**73%**  
ARE BETTER  
BEHAVED



**81%**  
SAY THEY WILL  
ATTEND COLLEGE



**82%**  
ARE MORE  
COMMUNITY-MINDED  
AND WELL-ROUNDED



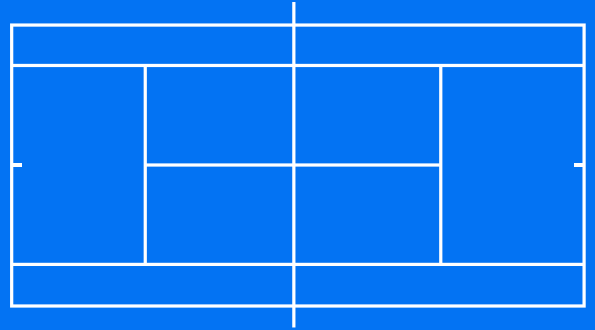
## ARE HEALTHY AND LESS PRONE TO RISKY BEHAVIORS



**TENNIS PARTICIPATION  
POSITIVELY INFLUENCES THE  
LIVES OF U.S. YOUTH ACROSS ALL  
SOCIOECONOMIC LEVELS.**

# Top 10 Reasons to Play Tennis

THE SPORT FOR A LIFETIME



## Your Body

### GET FIT

Lose Weight, Burn Calories  
An hour of singles play can burn 580–870 calories.

According to Oja, et al, Brit J Sports Med, 2016

### LIVE LONGER

Playing just 3 hours/week will reduce your risk of heart disease 56%.

According to a 2016 Harvard University study

### STRENGTHEN HEART, MUSCLES, AND BONES

Compared to other sports, tennis players have the lowest incidence of cardiovascular disease.

40-year study conducted by Johns Hopkins University

### DEVELOP HAND-EYE COORDINATION

Playing tennis involves several skills that all contribute to good hand-eye coordination. You can improve your agility, balance, coordination, reaction time and more.



## Your Life

### ENJOY FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Great for the whole family no matter what your age. With minimal equipment needed and plenty of courts nearby, it's easy to bring a friend or find one on the courts.

### DEVELOP TEAMWORK AND SPORTSMANSHIP

From doubles play to team and league play, tennis develops your ability to communicate and work together.

### IMPROVE SOCIAL SKILLS

Tennis outperforms all other sports in developing positive personality characteristics.

According to a study by Dr. Jim Gavin at Concordia University



## Your Brain

### REDUCE STRESS

Tennis helps you deal with physical, mental, social, and emotional challenges which increases your capacity to deal with stress.

### INCREASE BRAIN POWER

From alertness to tactical thinking, tennis enhances the neural connections in your brain. Kids who play tennis regularly get better grades.

According to a 2013 USTA study

### LEARN TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

Tennis is a sport that is based on evaluating angles, geometry and physics to get best result, which translates into better problem-solving off the court.

In the late 1990s, several experts proposed that tennis, since it requires alertness and tactical thinking, may generate new connections between nerves in the brain and promote a lifetime of continuing brain development. This was supported in John Ratey's book "Spark." Ratey was quoted in USA Today as saying, "A heart-thumping game of tennis can keep the brain in top shape."

## Tennis is Fun! Get Started Today!

Let tennis add years to your life — and life to your years!  
Go to [USTA.com](http://USTA.com) to find a place to play!



# The Ideal Sport for Youth Development & Education

After-school programs that combine tennis and education support the core mission of schools by increasing students' attachment to school and improving their attendance, thereby helping improve academic performance.

Along with its obvious physical benefits, tennis also builds discipline, confidence and independent thinking. It teaches responsibility, respect and a strong work ethic.

## GENERAL HEALTH

- Adolescents participating in tennis are 20% less likely to be overweight or at risk of being overweight.
- Adolescents are less likely to smoke and drink if they are participating in tennis.
- Regardless of socioeconomic levels, tennis participants are at a much lower risk of being suspended or expelled from school.

## SCHOOL ACTIVITY

- Youth tennis participants are more likely to complete volunteer work or get involved in community affairs.
- Students who play tennis spend more hours doing homework than participants in other major sports.
- Tennis participants vastly outperform other sports and non-sport participants when asked if they identify themselves as "A" students.
- Whatever the socioeconomic level, students who participate in tennis are more likely to respond "yes" when asked if they are attending college.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

In marketing a project, it is crucial to convey the WIIFM (What's in it For Me?) message to the specific audience you are trying to convince. The listeners need to hear about all the benefits tennis can bring to their own particular entity.

Tennis is one of the primary offerings a Parks and Recreation department can develop that consistently drives social well-being and a beneficial return to the community. Whether the municipality manages a tennis site itself or contracts with a third-party vendor, there is an economic benefit to introducing a tennis facility to a public location.

Since the sport can be played throughout a person's life, an investment in attracting a new player will generate benefits for many years. The Return on Investment (ROI) of a properly programmed tennis facility can be outstanding both in terms of revenue generated and in the health and happiness of the patrons.

Some of the positive impacts of a tennis project are listed below. When addressing any party about your project, it's essential to explain how it directly benefits them, as well as highlighting benefits to others.

- Creates local jobs, both for the initial buildout of a facility and courts, and for ongoing employment for site management and coaches.
- Increases visibility for a potential funder or supporter.
- Provides ongoing revenue potential for a municipality (fees from operators or direct revenue).
- Boosts the local economy. Attracting state, regional and national tournaments impacts local hotels as well as food and retail establishments.
- Large tennis tournaments increase national exposure of the city as a tourist destination.

## WHAT'S CHANGED IN TENNIS OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS?

The old model of one or two tennis courts and generally singles play has mostly disappeared. The majority of tennis today is played with teams and is heavily programmed.

Remember that 70% of tennis is played in public parks. While this may be surprising to most people, it builds the case that tennis is for everybody, and is not an exclusive country-club sport.

Over the last 15 or 20 years, there have been many important changes in the delivery of tennis in communities. Tennis complexes with multiple tennis courts are being built in one location, rather than having courts scattered around a community. The USTA's youth initiative—including Net Generation—is making it easier for kids to learn and play tennis. Blended lines are being used on regulation 78-foot courts, marking out 36-foot and 60-foot tennis courts and other short-court forms of tennis. Many communities have built permanent, standalone short courts for use by residents of all ages and abilities.

Importantly, communities are maximizing the benefits of their investment in tennis facilities by substantial, continuous programming. The old philosophy of leaving courts open or unscheduled for walk-on play is becoming less prevalent.

Tennis programs activate facilities and get families and people of all ages outside and active. Tournament play attracts visitors whose spending provides an economic boost to communities.



# Developing Your Advocacy Project

Taking up the cause for tennis is not a small commitment. For instance, having tennis courts constructed in your local public park can involve wading through levels of bureaucracy and take years to complete. However, if you believe in tennis and in all the benefits it brings to your community, your efforts will be richly rewarded. Remember to ask for help. Having friends and allies will pay off in the long run.

## STEP 1: IDENTIFY AN ISSUE OR PROJECT THAT RESONATES WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- What does your community need most?
- Is there a need for youth activities?
- Do the public schools need support?
- Are there local health issues in your area?
- Is there access to public courts? Do old courts need to be refurbished?
- What do local decision-makers care about?
- Who will be impacted by your project? Children, families, individuals?

## STEP 2: DEVELOP A CLEAR IDEA

- What do you want and why do you want it?
- Know how you will define success. What is your desired outcome?
- How does your plan positively affect the local community?
- Make sure your mission is specific and targeted.

**TIP:** You should be able to explain your idea or project in a single sentence. If you cannot, the idea is not as clear as it needs to be.

## STEP 3: DO YOUR RESEARCH

Research the local policy priorities and be prepared to show how tennis-focused programming can benefit your community as a whole. Explore the website of your local city or county government, focusing on the following:

CITY	PARKS	SCHOOLS
Government structure	Park master plans	Governing structure
Past minutes of city council meetings	Current program offerings	Past minutes of school board meetings
City council and board meeting schedules and timelines	Board contact information	School board meeting schedules and timelines
Five-year recreational facilities construction plans	Staff contact information	Five-year school facilities construction plans
	Park budget information	Athletic facilities available for students at all levels
	Proposed local bond referendums	Competitive/intramural sports and teams



Consider whether the decision-maker or decision-making body has influence over:

- Capital plans and funding
- Funding for operating expenses
- Local legislation
- Zoning regulations

#### **STEP 4: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL OBSTACLES.**

Being able to anticipate and solve issues or problems in advance will make carrying out your project easier in the future. Try to place yourself in the shoes of your potential opponents to understand their perspectives. Some things to consider are:

- Who will oppose your mission and goals, and why?
- What are potential obstacles to getting the response you want?
- What do opponents want?
- Is there a way for you to work with your opponents? Think outside the box to find common ground.





# Gaining Support for Your Project

How you propose your project to potential supporters, decision-makers, and potential funders, is as important as the nature of your proposal. Gather facts and develop a narrative to convince others that your idea is worthy of their consideration. Communicating your goals clearly, concisely and effectively is essential to securing support.

Here are the key areas to consider as you formulate your presentation.

## DEVELOP A NARRATIVE/STORY

- Clearly identify a specific proposal. The proposal may be a capital building project, such as new tennis courts or adding bathrooms, or a new program, like hosting a tournament for local league players.
- Calculate the cost of your project. The USTA and local governments have resources available to assist you in this determination.
- Know your weight. Be able to quote the number of people or voters supporting the project—through signed petitions, letters or individual lobbying efforts and having supporters attend meetings. The broader your base of support, the better your chances for success.
- Be prepared to offer fundraising assistance. An increase in fees may be necessary to pay for new programming. Help local officials apply for grants to offset some of the cost of your project. Offer to raise money locally to offset public funds; it shows the level of interest and support for the project. Public-private partnerships may be viewed favorably. More information can be found in the Funding Your Project section of this manual.



## IDENTIFY YOUR ALLIES AND SUPPORTERS

- Form a committee of fellow advocates. Include a millennial or someone savvy about social media to help advance the cause.
- Look to your local tennis groups for support, such as Community Tennis Associations (CTAs), National Junior Tennis and Learning programs (NJTLs), Tennis Service Representatives (TSRs), area tennis clubs and facilities, tennis retailers, local sport/court-construction companies, tennis professionals and players.
- The geographic community that is impacted by your proposal will add important citizen support. Neighborhood groups, Advisory Councils, planning and zoning officials, and law enforcement groups should be cultivated for input.
- Find other organizations and non-profits that share or have similar interests. There is power in numbers. Such organizations include, but are not limited to:
  - Healthcare agencies and local hospitals, medical groups, physical therapy providers, recreational therapist
  - Youth-serving non-profits (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA/YWCA) along with adult agencies, such as senior centers
  - Media outlets, including newspapers, local magazines, radio and TV stations, local news websites (i.e. Patch)
  - Faith leaders and places of worship
- Engage educational organizations, such as school board members, parent-teacher organizations, athletic booster clubs, tennis coaches and team players, local college presidents, trustees, athletic departments and Tennis On Campus players.
- Speak to local business leaders, politicians and influential community leaders about your project. Attend local Chamber of Commerce meetings. Talk with the local Convention & Visitors Bureau and/or local Sports Commission.
- Find out if any local leaders play tennis.
- Cultivate city/county managers, and Parks and Recreation staff and advisory boards. Such administrative staff and appointed officials can be key supporters in your efforts, assisting with research, data and other information that will help you succeed.

## BUILD A TEAM

After identifying allies and supporters, such as others who utilize the park space, work with them to achieve your goals. By joining with others who have similar priorities, you establish that tennis has broad community support. Building a coalition:

- Increases your appeal
- Creates networking and partnership opportunities between you, your organization and partner organizations
- Can provide cost effectiveness; you can share duties and resources
- Has a greater potential to attract media attention
- Offers greater access to expertise by calling on a range of organizations and individuals

## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

You will present your project idea to a variety of audiences to gain support. While much of the information you present to each group will be the same, you'll need to tailor each presentation to the particular organization, such as to a community group, a league of tennis players, local business leaders or elected officials.

It is important to focus on the specific concerns of each audience, and how your project can help solve some of the problems facing the community. The goal is to sell your story, but more importantly, to highlight the key messaging points that contribute to building a better community. Think about communicating the overall big picture.

### **Community Groups, Tennis Players and Local Business Leaders**

- What are the economic, social and health benefits of your proposal to this audience?
- What are you asking these people to do to support your project? Are you looking for monetary contributions, or names to put on a petition?
- Find out if any attendees have personal relationships with elected officials. Ask them for advice and assistance in meeting with their contacts. Ask them for a personal introduction to decision-makers.

### **Local Public Officials and Staff**

- Learn the names and responsibilities of the public officials and staff members you want to influence.
- Review the department or agency's strategic plan and budget to determine its goals.
- Understand the local pressures and pressure points.
- Learn the budget cycle.
- Get the calendar and schedule for meetings, planning sessions and public hearings.

### **Local Elected Officials**

- Learn the names of each elected official you seek to influence.
- Find out on which board/council committee each elected official serves.
- Identify the elected official representing the area that will be affected by your project.
- Review the board/council strategic plan and budget to determine its goals.
- Learn the budget cycle.
- Get the calendar and schedule for meetings, planning sessions and public hearings.
- Understand the local pressures and pressure points.
- Learn about each officials' interests that relate to your message. Are they interested in economic development? Park enhancements? Children? Crime prevention?

## **DEVISE AN ACTION PLAN**

Now that you have an understanding of your local government and how it works, you are ready to develop your action plan for success. You will be presenting your project to your elected officials in both private and public settings. It is important to understand local open public meetings law so you do not put your elected officials in awkward positions. Here are some basics to keep in mind as you move forward:

- In most cases, you only need a majority to win support for your project.
- Attend or watch public meetings to understand the dynamics of the board/council you seek to influence.
- Identify the board member/councilor who will act as your "sponsor" on the board/council to introduce motions.
- Meet separately with each of the board/council members, tailoring your message toward his/her areas of interest.
- Be involved in various community projects to demonstrate that you're involved in the community outside of just tennis.

## **COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS IN PRIVATE**

Now that you have developed your message, identified potential supporters and researched potential costs, it is time to communicate your idea. It is important to be knowledgeable, direct and succinct. Do your research in advance so you are prepared to handle all eventualities. Here are some things to keep in mind as you reach out to elected officials.

### **TIPS BEFORE CONTACTING AN ELECTED OFFICIAL FOR A PRIVATE MEETING**

- Identify key supporting constituents and any other connections (family, friend, business, etc.).
- Contact the elected official's key local constituents/allies and ask them to attend a meeting with you. It is important to have a wide base of support for your project.
- Have a goal for a personal meeting time and date, with alternatives.
- Lock in meeting date and time.
- Develop a consistent communication plan: letters, phone calls and meetings.

### **EFFECTIVE WRITTEN AND ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

- Confine each communication to one focused topic.
- Include the most relevant basic facts.
- Have all key information in place. Don't assume they know the background.
- Stay positive, friendly and receptive. Always remember to say "Please" and "Thank You."
- Make communication stand out by being personal, thoughtful and passionate.
- Ask for a response.
- Be willing to do further research to find and report answers to any questions they ask.
- Keep a record of all communication with each decision-maker.
- Send a thank-you note after each meeting.
- If there is no response, wait two weeks and check back. Persistence pays off.

Keep your supporters and stakeholders informed about the ongoing advocacy efforts, so they will feel a sense of involvement. Small successes along the way will hold your group together and encourage future efforts.

## **COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS IN PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Public meetings require different preparation and presentations. The following advice will help you be effective at a public hearing:

- Watch public meetings, and read published meeting minutes, before you sign up to speak at one. You will gain valuable information about procedures, time limits and what is or is not effective as a talking point. Every local public body is different and has its own dynamic.
- Assign someone to act as your spokesperson.
- Show support with a large, visible turnout. Everyone can wear the same color T-shirt, raise a tennis racquet, or have some other method of identification. If your project involves children, bring them.
- Prepare written comments for any public meeting at which you make a presentation. Give your written comments to the Clerk for the public record.



- Remember: Public forums are for presenting information. Most decisions are not made at public hearings.
- Follow your project to wherever it is referred. Many communities have a Parks and Recreation Citizen Advisory Board that may need to consider your proposal. Councils/Commissions have committees to hear more details about proposed projects. Any time your project appears on a committee agenda, there must be at least one representative of your group present to show support and answer questions.

## **KEEP MOMENTUM ALIVE**

Ambitious projects requiring public funding take a long time to develop and gain support. Be prepared to promote and defend your ideas for the long haul. Be tenacious. It is not unusual for a project to take years to be funded and constructed. Pay attention to local political elections, as you may need to introduce your project to newly elected officials during that time.

Keep your stakeholders and supporters involved and informed as your project goes through the system and gains support. Public officials watch closely to see which ideas have real community commitment and which do not. Invite elected officials to tennis events. Attend public functions, such as the ribbon-cutting of a new building, to demonstrate community support and stay in front of your elected officials.



# Funding Your Project

Once a project is identified, an important next step is estimating the costs associated with your proposal.

Leaders and decision-makers need to know if you have a grasp on monetary estimates and ramifications both for the initial buildout of a site, and ongoing management and maintenance once the project is complete. If your proposal is for new programming, be prepared to discuss ways to fund your idea. Resources to determine the potential cost of your project are available through the USTA and your local government.

Local leaders will want to know what ideas you can bring to the table about raising needed funds. Public entities, such as a city council, county commission or school board, may be more receptive to funding a project if there are multiple private sources committed to the support of the project.

Below is a list of funding options you and your organization can explore in depth as your project moves along.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDS

- City or town budget
- County budget
- School district budget

Each local government funds parks and recreation projects differently. Research your local community to learn if tennis facilities and programs are funded by the city, town, county or school system. In many cases, the cost is shared.

Local governments begin working on their budgets in the spring, as the fiscal year begins July 1. Budget and planning discussions are open to the public and invite participation. You and your supporters can submit your project proposal at a budget hearing for local leaders to consider.

## LOCAL BOND REFERENDUMS

Building parks and recreation capital projects is often funded through public bond referenda. Bonds that are voted for by the people are available at lower cost to municipalities, counties and schools. Bonds cannot fund programs, but they can fund facilities such as tennis courts.

If your local government is considering a bond for parks and recreation facilities, ask that tennis facilities be included in the package. You can also volunteer to work on the bond campaign, submit petitions in support of the bond, and get people out to vote for the bonds on election day.

## GRANTS, DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIPS

### Grants

Grants are a vital way to create additional support for a project. Whether the grant is coming from a business or foundation, the initial support, especially from a well-known entity in the area, can supply the needed push to raise the remaining funds. Keep in mind that many grants may require the receiving organization to be a non-profit. Grant information can usually be found on the business or foundation website. It's important to understand whether the entity generally supports programs or capital campaigns to ensure the appropriate request is submitted. Working with a bank's endowments and foundations group is a good way to see which foundations will be willing to assist in your project or program.

## Donations: cash and in-kind

Corporations and businesses may be willing to make cash or in-kind donations to your project. For example, a fencing company may donate fencing materials or installation as an in-kind donation for a tennis court construction project. Or, a local tennis merchant may offer free tennis balls to support a new tennis program for at-risk youth.

## Sponsorship

Corporations and businesses invest in community projects as sponsors. This may be in the form of a cash donation over several years to have their name on a facility (referred to as a Naming Rights Agreement), or a one-time donation where the business is sponsoring the event. Your local government may have policies and procedures regarding naming facilities. Research what these are before approaching a business about sponsoring facilities or programs.

## USTA TENNIS VENUE SERVICES

The USTA Tennis Venue Services can offer your community assistance with technical and financial resources. Grants may require matching funds from the local community. Those receiving funds are appointed project consultants from USTA National, who deliver personalized support and service to help take your proposal from dream to reality.

To be considered for project funding, communities must:

- Start the process by completing the USTA Tennis Venue Services Form, found [here](#).
- Be actively engaged with the USTA Tennis Venue Services program (working with USTA-appointed project consultant, etc.). Any project completed prior to engaging the USTA is NOT eligible for funding.
- Meet specified industry standards for the project as determined by the USTA Tennis Venue Services program's technical team.
- Demonstrate financial need and matching (up to 50%) of project funds.

Below lists the types of financial assistance available. For current funding amounts please visit [www.usta.com/facilities](http://www.usta.com/facilities).

### Category I

- **Low Complexity Amenities** – Basic improvements designed to enhance the playing experience and appeal of tennis facilities, including adding fixed tennis court amenities and installing blended 36' and 60' tennis lines on existing tennis courts.
- **Tennis Court Tech** – Integration of technology on tennis courts to enhance the playing experience and assist with facility management, including SmartAccess Gates, video broadcasting and streaming technology, and scoreboards.

#### USTA CONTRIBUTION

Up to 50% of total project cost

Amenities – Maximum \$5,000

Tennis Court Tech – Maximum \$10,000

Inclusive Access – Maximum \$10,000

### Category II

- **Mid Complexity Lighting** – Installation of new or upgrades to existing tennis court lighting systems and fixtures.
- **Fencing** – Installation of new or repairs to existing tennis court fencing.
- **Resurfacing** – In addition to acrylic resurfacing, resurfacing existing tennis courts may include crack repair systems, patching birdbaths, and leveling high areas to reestablish the court's evenness.

#### USTA CONTRIBUTION

Maximum \$60,000

Lighting – Up to \$15,000 Per Court

Fencing – Up to \$12,000 Per Court

Resurfacing – Up to \$8,000 Per Court

### Category III

- **High Complexity Reconstruction** – More extensive repairs to restore the playability of existing tennis courts that have major structural issues, serious cracking, or improper drainage
- **New Construction** – Construction of new tennis courts.
- **Indoor Structures** – Construction or installation of tennis court enclosures including air structures (or bubbles), fabric-frame structures, rigid framed metal buildings, and indoor tennis buildings.

#### USTA CONTRIBUTION

Maximum \$150,000

New Construction – Up to \$35,000 Per Court

Reconstruction – Up to \$35,000 Per Court

Indoor Structures – Up to \$50,000 Per Court

### INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

Your local tennis community may be willing to put their own money into the project. If your local Community Tennis Association is a 501(c)3, partnering with the organization is a way to obtain the charitable tax status for your project.

Your local parks department may also be able to assist in this endeavor. A capital campaign to the local tennis community is another way to raise funds for a project and show city/county officials that members of the community are supportive of the project.

### FUNDRAISING PROJECTS AND TOURNAMENTS

Organize a local tournament to raise funds for your project. Participation fees can be used as “donations.” To keep your costs low, get local businesses to sponsor the event, donate food, cover court fees and provide prizes. Other fundraising events that may be successful are galas, 5K runs, casino nights, golf tournaments and car washes.

Engaging larger donors for a “matching grant” is a great way to encourage participation among other individuals who know their support is being matched. For facility projects, solicit donations for bricks, benches, landscaping or pavilions. The ideas are limitless. Those who donate can be memorialized by having their name on a brick, or on a plaque within the facility.

### USTA FOUNDATION, NATIONAL, DISTRICT, SECTION, STATE AND LOCAL GRANTS

The USTA has grants available at many different levels for both facilities and programs. Visit <https://www.usta.com/en/home/organize/grants-and-assistance.html> for current information. Your USTA district, state and section may also have grants to support your project. In addition, many sections and states have their own charitable arm that may provide grants to help with funding a project or program. Explore all avenues of funding through the USTA.

### ONGOING SUPPORT

The ongoing health of the project once it's completed is just as important as the initial funding efforts. Decision-makers and donors will want to ensure that a facility project can be successfully sustained once completed, ensuring the initial capital contributions were put to good use. The same is true for new programming initiatives.

Revenue streams such as pay to play, teams, memberships, coaching or lesson fees can help to support the ongoing operations while program grants can be used as a supplement to core programming. Sharing your pro forma income statement with potential donors and decision-makers is a great way to show how that income will be used to support your project.



## FUNDRAISING CASE STUDY: WOODSTOCK TENNIS CLUB JUNIOR CAMP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

| Submitted by Jesse Chalfin

### Introduction

The program has been very well received, and there are many returning scholarship campers. Club members have worked to grow the program every summer and have introduced kids to the game of tennis who otherwise never may have picked up a racquet.

A measure of success is the fact that children who, up until two years ago, had never played tennis, are now actively playing for their high school tennis teams.

**Funding:** The funding for this project came from outreach to club members, friends of members and people in the community. Many people were willing to donate the amount needed for one camper to attend a week of tennis.

### Goals

To give children from underprivileged communities and families the ability to learn and play tennis, to have them be outside in a safe and healthy environment, and to acquire skills and instruction they would not otherwise have the opportunity to receive.



- **Project Size:** The first summer the program was offered, organizers were able to offer eight children a two-week camping experience.
- **Location:** Woodstock Tennis Club in Woodstock, New York
- **Community Size:** Woodstock has a population of approximately 6,000 people. The club has just over 240 members; the members are the primary donors for this program.
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Woodstock Tennis Club; program leaders are Jesse Chalfin, Dana Patton and Vivienne Hodges
- **Length of Project:** This project started in the summer of 2020 and is now in its third year.
- **Budget:** Unlimited; the more donations received, the more children the program can reach.
- **Funding Source(s):** Donations from Woodstock Tennis Club members as well as other members of the community in Woodstock and surrounding towns.
- **Partnership(s):** USTA Eastern has written an article about the program. Mark McIntyre, executive director of the Junior Tennis Foundation and executive director of the Riverside Clay Courts in Manhattan, gave an extremely generous \$1,000 donation in the summer of 2021.

### History

The program was started in the summer of 2020 when members of the Woodstock Tennis Club became concerned about children who were cooped up inside because of COVID restrictions. Additionally, after-school programs and sports clubs had been closed, so it became a priority to get youngsters outside and into the sun and fresh air in the summer.

Two Woodstock Tennis Club members, Dana Patton and Vivienne Hodges, met with club and with junior camp director Jesse Chalfin to see what could be done. All three immediately were on the same page and on board and within a few days, had reached out to the club members and the community for donations to support the program, as well as to community centers to find students who would be interested in attending. Within one week, the ball was rolling.

Chalfin is enthusiastic, noting, “This is now the third summer running the scholarship program and the overall goal for the future is to raise enough money to give 15 to 20 children two weeks each. Last summer, the club hosted 10 children for two weeks, with an additional two children for one week; the latter children were offered two weeks but their schedules permitted them to attend only one.”

### **Tips from the Pros**

“When you have an idea that can help your community, it’s okay to ask for help from community members. People love to help and to be altruistic. You just have to put the word out there.”

### **Lessons Learned**

“When a community works together, they can make some really great things happen. By reaching out to the tennis community, program leaders were able to spread the word to the greater community and ended up getting a way bigger response than had been originally imagined.”



## FUNDRAISING CASE STUDY: BONITA BAY CLUB FINEMARK WOMEN'S PRO TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIP | Submitted by Paula Scheb

### Introduction

"More than 200 individuals are invested in making this event a success; club members volunteer multiple hours in this tournament in positions from ball runners to tournament chairs."

This is a long-term project; presently, as a result of the funds raised, an infusion center is being built.

### Goals

This tournament actually has a number of goals. All of them are essential. They are as follows:

- Create a pro tournament that lets the players (not just in the tournament but in the club) know how much they are appreciated and allows them to understand they are the number-one concern on the radar
- Bring together an event that bonds members and creates new relationships
- Promote tennis in the community
- Host an event that makes club members proud
- **Project Size:** The championship raised over \$250,000 for charity this year. Planning for the next event begins three weeks after this year's tournament concludes.
- **Location:** Bonita Bay Club, Bonita Springs, Florida
- **Community Size:** A multi-city area in southwest Florida, including Naples, Estero, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Cape Coral and Marco Island, approximately 3 million people.
- **Charity Partner:** Lee Health Systems | Cancer Institute

- **Length of Project:** 11 months, raising \$1 million in four years
- **Budget:** \$750,000
- **Funding Source(s):** Multiple sponsors over \$200,000, plus in-kind donations of over \$40,000. Additionally, there are vendor and member sponsorships, as well as member donors.
- **Partnership(s):** Bonita Bay Club members and staff

## History

The club wanted to run a \$100,000 pro tournament. To get started with this project, members spent time speaking with USTA staff, as well as with other tournament directors.

“As part of the goal to promote tennis within the community itself, the club made the decision to award the main draw wild card to Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), a Division I school, in an effort to help them grow their program and to set an example for other young women in the area,” says Paula Scheb, director of Bonita Bay Club. “This is repeated each year.”

## Tips from the Pros

Start early and engage people.

## Lessons Learned

Beware of burnout!



# Working with the Media

Media coverage is a powerful tool to build awareness for your tennis initiative. Whether print, online, broadcast or social media, you need to use the media to reach the largest audience possible to promote your goals and objectives. Media outreach can play an effective role in showcasing tennis as a lifetime sport for everyone and, more importantly, how tennis will be a positive force in your local area.

## BEFORE YOU CONTACT THE MEDIA

Meet with your committee and allies to formulate the specific and focused initiative and story that you will present. You may want to review *The Case for Tennis and Developing Your Advocacy Project* to prepare you for contacts with and submissions to the media. The key is to go in with a story, not an idea.

### For best results

- Designate a media coordinator who will develop and implement a media strategy, and who will act as the bridge between the media and your organization. The media coordinator should approve any material that goes out to ensure a consistent message, including social media.
- Create a contact list of reporters, editors, bloggers and broadcasters, especially those who cover sports, health/fitness and community affairs, or those who have a connection to tennis (i.e. if they play in a local league). Include email and phone numbers, and if possible, the area each covers. Find out the preferred method of contact for each individual. Consider following key media members on social media.
- Be ready with details about the name of your initiative, names of your allies and funding sources, details on your action plan, the project's cost and current fundraising efforts, the initiative's local economic impact, and the "who, what, where, when and why" of your initiative. The "why" may be the most important—the story here must be a strong message about the physical, social and mental health benefits of this lifetime sport.





- Make note of your key messaging points, such as: tennis facilities can serve as a safe haven for kids after school; tennis can offer opportunities for youth; tennis provides a better quality of life for all and helps to improve schools and communities; tennis contributes to community and economic revitalization.

**TIP:** While good coverage can help your organization, you should be prepared if the coverage is not what you expected. Have a rebuttal messaging plan in place.

**TIP:** Consider creating an app specific to your initiative. An app can alert your donors and friends about upcoming events, fundraisers, or fundraising progress.

## THE STORY PITCH

Communicate why the story, issue or event is important and relevant today. Include human interest stories. Reporters are interested in hearing about how tennis has made an impact on a particular person's life, and how they are looking to give back to the community. You can also give statistics on how tennis can change the community economically.

Connect with the media whenever you have news to share, such as: when announcing your tennis campaign or project; when a new supporter comes on board with your initiative; to report on fundraising progress; when you have achieved your goal or significant steps toward the goal; when there is a public ceremony about your project (i.e., the completion of a tennis court facility or new lighting in the public park).

Email is usually the preferred method of contact for members of the media, but whether by email or phone, be clear at the start of the conversation why you are contacting them. Be conscious of a reporter's time and whether they are on deadline. Be prepared to answer questions from the reporter. If you do not have the answer, tell them you will get back to them. Always call or email when you say you will, and send a thank-you.

If you haven't already sent press materials, releases and fact sheets, have them ready to be emailed directly after the conversation. Always keep a log of your calls.

**TIP:** Make sure you and your media coordinator's complete contact information (email, phone numbers, address if necessary) is on all press releases and material—and also in your email signature. Make it easy for the media to get in touch with you.

**TIP:** It generally is best to reach out to newspaper reporters and editors in the morning, as stories are generally written from mid-to-late afternoon. Sundays are often slow news days.



## IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

To prepare for an interview, write down two or three message points you want to communicate. Keep things simple, communicating your action-plan story points. You may want to consider taking a partner or colleague with you to the interview, who can help remind you of topics or details.

### During the interview, make sure to:

- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer.
- Use the other person's name in the conversation.
- Be patient and answer what you may think are obvious or awkward questions—a reporter may not know a lot about tennis.
- Talk slowly and clearly so you will not be misquoted. Few reporters can write as fast as you speak.
- Nothing is “off the record.” Never say anything to or around a reporter that you don't want to see in print, online, on the radio or on television.

### After the interview:

- Thank the reporter.
- Leave your printed materials and information with the interviewer.
- Write a note or email thanking the reporter for their time and interest in your story.

## ONLINE

If your story is printed in a newspaper, or appears on the radio or television, it will most likely be posted online on the publication's website, too, but make sure to double-check with the reporter or editor that that is the case.

Online-only publications and blogs that focus on community affairs, public policy or physical fitness are good places to pitch your story. You can generally find email addresses for online reporters and bloggers on their websites or from their bylines.

If you have presented at a public meeting, or to a non-profit group, your story may also appear on their website. Find out from the organization if you can provide the information that will be posted, or have an opportunity to review the material before it is published.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an effective and low-cost way to publicize your organization, cause, event, or project. It is also a useful tool to drive traffic to your other digital platforms, such as your website, blog, membership-management system, and social media.

Today, social media is essential for gaining attention and credibility among a broad audience. If organizations and causes do not have a presence on social media, they may go undiscovered, especially among younger demographics.

It is quick, easy, and free to set up social media accounts for your organization or project. The first step is gaining an understanding of the different platforms (also known as channels), the audiences they attract, and the type of content that works best for your needs.

## SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

### Here is a quick overview of the major social media platforms:

- **Facebook** is the social channel with the most critical mass. Over 79% of internet users log in to Facebook, with an average of 1.15 billion daily users worldwide. It is by far the most popular social channel.

There are Facebook Pages & Facebook Groups. A “page” is like a newspaper or magazine in that it pushes out news; think of it as a one-way presentation. A “group” is like a book club in that it encourages conversation and dialogue with and between followers.

The Facebook algorithm rewards content that is engaging. This means the more dialogue your content produces, the more people your posts will reach, therefore making your campaign more effective. You can purchase ads to boost your range or target a specific audience. In Facebook posts, you can insert a live link to longer form content that is hosted on your website or in another location. Facebook also allows you to set up events and invite your followers to attend.
- **X (formerly known as Twitter)** has 336 million monthly users that research shows tend to be younger and more highly educated than Facebook users. X users also tend to be early adopters of emerging technology, thought leaders, and media types.

X content is a very short form. Posts that include photos or videos tend to have higher engagement. Live links to content hosted elsewhere, such as a blog or website or article, can be inserted into X posts, making it a great platform to drive traffic to longer content hosted on your website or articles written about your organization or project.

“Hashtags” are key words or phrases preceded by a hash symbol (#) used to index information on X posts, making them more easily discoverable. Identifying key words and phrases for your organization and affiliated activities is important and can help create more reach and engagement for your posts. Hashtags originated on X but have now been adopted for use on every social platform.

Tagging people and organizations in your posts is a great way to target people and groups with your messages and increase engagement. If a person or group is tagged in a post, they will be more likely to open it and share it with their followers.
- **Instagram** currently has 650 million daily users and attracts a younger demographic. It is focused on short-form visual content, including both still images and videos.
- Live links cannot be inserted into Instagram posts. You can, however, point followers to the link in your Instagram bio to drive them to your website or content. Hashtags are critical to Instagram posts and help followers search for and find content that is relevant to their interests.
- **YouTube** has more than 1.3 billion users and 30 million visitors a day and is the second-largest search engine behind Google. YouTube is great for video content, both in long form and short form.
- If your organization generates a lot of video content, you can create a personalized YouTube channel to host it. Links can also be generated for content on YouTube, allowing you to insert the link into emails, websites, and Facebook and Twitter posts.
- **LinkedIn** is a professional networking site with 367 million registered users that is primarily business-oriented. Users tend to be highly educated with higher household incomes, and seek to network and share information on specific topics with other professionals. You can host articles on your LinkedIn profile as well as join groups where you can post news about your organization, cause, or project.

- **Blogs and Vlogs:** A “blog” is a discussion or informational website, often written in an informal, conversational, diary-type style. A “vlog” is a blog in video form. Regularly posting to a blog or vlog will inform your key audience about your organization’s or project’s latest developments.

Creating a blog is easy. Two things are required: a blog host, which is a company that stores and delivers all of the blog content files, and blogging software, such as WordPress, Blogger, or Medium. Blog posts can be from a single author or from multiple authors.

Vlog entries often combine embedded video (or a link to video) with supporting text or images. Increasingly popular in recent years is live video broadcasting on social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram.

- **Survey Monkey** is not a social media channel but is a great tool for aggregating feedback and insights from constituents, which is helpful when building a case or demonstrating support. Survey Monkey is free, simple to use and can be integrated into both email and social media, increasing the odds of getting larger sample sizes.
- For more information on Social Media Platforms, check out the blog post at Sprout Social <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/>.

## HINTS & TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS

- Choose a short, recognizable, consistent name for all your social channels. Less is more. Shorter is almost always better for account names, posts, videos, and hashtags.
- Ensure there is someone in your organization or on your board of directors with social media expertise. The social media landscape is in constant flux, so it is important to keep an eye on the latest trends in order to optimize your impact.
- Utilize your board members’ contacts and circles of influence. Most or all board members will have personal accounts through which they can invite contacts and share content.
- Create a “content calendar” for your social media. A content calendar is a way to plan and organize upcoming content to avoid scrambling to post something at the last minute. List dates and times of key events, campaigns and activities. Add newsletters, photographs, and other information that is useful and interesting to your followers. A content calendar makes it easier to collaborate with others, helps allocate resources effectively, and assists in determining content quality.
- Follow a 3-to-1 ratio—make three posts that provide helpful information or useful content for every one post that is an “ask,” such as a contribution or attendance at an event.
- Make your content mobile-friendly! Most people access email and social media on their cell phones.
- Make posts and information visually interesting and exciting, with a clear call to action. Engaging content will get shared more often and will reach more people.
- Keep information succinct. More images and fewer words works best on social media. You can link to your website or blog for longer content.
- Include your social channels on your website and business collateral, such as brochures, letterhead, business cards, and email signatures.
- Consider investing in social media. Most of the social channels have an advertising program for which a fee is charged based on usage. If you have an event or a fundraising campaign you’d like to boost, it may be worth allocating some funds toward advertising or promoting posts.
- Use hashtags and tagging posts to increase engagement and expand reach for your social media efforts. Remember to keep your words and phrases short, simple and consistent.



## **SOCIAL MEDIA: JUMP IN NOW!**

Social media is constantly evolving. Don't be intimidated or hesitant to participate because you don't feel like an expert. You will gain important insights about your constituents as you build a relationship with them through your social initiatives. Jump in with a growth mindset and be amazed at the results.

## **PRESS RELEASES**

In most cases, you and/or your media coordinator will be sending out press releases to the media. Journalists receive many press releases daily, so try to make your headline (and email subject line) as attention-grabbing as possible.

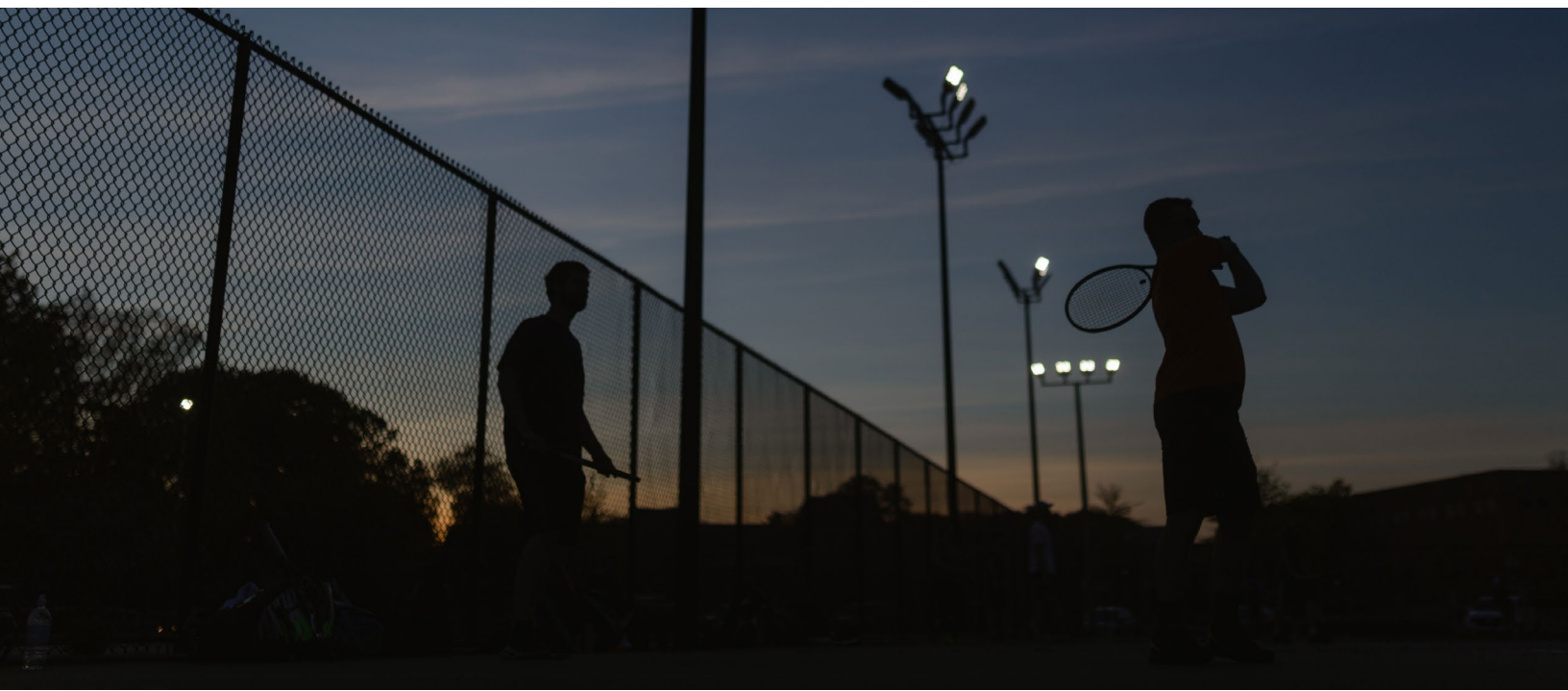
Here are some tips for writing a successful press release:

- The first paragraph communicates the most important information and the main idea—the who, what, where, when and why.
- The following paragraphs should discuss the details.
- Include quotes in the press release from people directly involved in the event or project, clearly identifying the speaker with properly spelled names and titles. Only include those who have given approval to be quoted, and include their title and affiliation.
- Include your (and your media coordinator's) complete contact information on all press releases.

## **POST-COVERAGE TIPS**

Always write a thank-you note to journalists or reporters who believe and understand your story and covered it.

If inaccurate information happens to be included once a story has been placed, do not overreact. Contact the media person you were working with, calmly acknowledge the mistake and ask for a correction. If the publication made the mistake, look at it as a chance to get additional coverage.





# Tennis Industry United



The tennis industry has come together as Tennis Industry United to help drive the growth of the sport.

The mission of Tennis Industry United ([www.TennisIndustryUnited.com](http://www.TennisIndustryUnited.com)) is to focus the strengths and resources of its respective industry organizations to promote and ensure the continual growth of tennis in the U.S. The TIU is focusing on grow the game initiatives, industry collaborations, tennis provider and coach initiatives and more, with all groups within the industry working together to assist those who are on the front lines.

Tennis Industry United was created in March 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, as a collaboration of the USTA, Tennis Industry Association, U.S. Professional Tennis Association, Professional Tennis Registry, American Tennis Association, Intercollegiate Tennis Association, major endemic media partners and others—the “founding members.” (TIU has since created a “supporting member” level, bringing smaller organizations into this collaboration to grow the sport.) As Covid closed down the country, the TIU was charged with assessing overall industry needs and making recommendations for how to best assist industry sectors in need of help.

The following month, in April 2020, the USTA committed to \$50 million to provide relief for those areas most greatly affected, which included \$35 million to community tennis programming, \$5 million in facility grants, \$5 million in NJTL chapter support through the USTA Foundation, \$2.5 million in Certified Tennis Teaching Professional Grants, and a variety of other services and resources to help local tennis programs, facilities, and workers continue to remain viable throughout, and following, the pandemic. These efforts have continued, with a focus on providing resources, information and assistance for its constituents. The “Move Tennis Forward” campaign has also been a key push of Tennis Industry United, highlighting the opportunities for, and emphasizing the recruitment of, certified tennis teaching professionals in the U.S.

The aid and resources that the USTA and TIU were able to extend helped many facilities and tennis providers weather the pandemic, and as tennis play and other activities started to return to normal, Tennis Industry United focused on two key priorities: Advocacy and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion—collaborating with existing groups, associations, committees and others in developing and promoting assets to help move both areas forward. The TIU also hosted “provider appreciation events” across the country to thank tennis directors, teaching professionals and community leaders for all they do to help grow the game locally.

Tennis Industry United has developed educational, downloadable and customizable resources and information to help local tennis advocates promote the benefits of tennis, attract new players and re-engage past players, and help drive greater diversity and inclusion in tennis participation.

While still heavily involved in promoting both Advocacy and DE&I, Tennis Industry United has stepped into more of a supporting role, collaborating with existing groups and initiatives. A big push for the TIU is promoting National Tennis Month, particularly among the manufacturer and retail communities. Tennis Industry United also promotes a bi-weekly TIU Newsletter that carries news and events for tennis providers of all types.

Visitors to [TennisIndustryUnited.com](http://TennisIndustryUnited.com) will find schedules and links to webinars and online training events, with topics that include CTAs, Parks, Serve Tennis, Wheelchair Tennis, Schools, Professional Tennis Management programs, and more (including webinars in Spanish). Visitors can register for upcoming events or view previous webinars.

There is also a link to webinars and podcasts for tennis players, featuring leading experts, top-ranked players and world-class coaches discussing a variety of tennis topics and sharing personal success stories, advice and tips.

Tennis Industry United continues as a collaborative effort by key industry organizations, all with a mission to grow the sport, support initiatives and respond to challenges that may come our way—“Together, for tennis.”

## RESOURCES

- [Overview](#)
- [Webinars](#)
- [Podcasts](#)
- [Facility Resources](#)



# Congratulations!

**YOU'VE JUST TAKEN THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD  
ACCOMPLISHING YOUR ADVOCACY GOAL!**







USTA

# Resource Guide & Success Stories





# Resource Guide & Success Stories

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**[USTA.COM/ADVOCACY](https://www.usta.com/advocacy)**

# Adaptive & Wheelchair Resources

Tennis can be adapted so that everyone can participate in the sport. People of any age, environment, condition or ability are invited to enjoy the game. In addition, the USTA is dedicated to providing top-flight programming and developmental opportunities to athletes of all ages, backgrounds, and physical and cognitive impairments. The goal, above all else, is for athletes to learn the sport of tennis, develop new skills they can apply in everyday life and to have fun.

## 3 CATEGORIES OF ADAPTIVE TENNIS

1. Intellectual and Developmental – cognitive challenges, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome, Brain Injury
2. Physical and Recovery – CP, hemiplegia, amputees- standing, sensory impairments- blind, deaf, and/or stroke
3. Emotional and Social – psychiatric needs, substance abuse, PTSD

## ADAPTIVE TENNIS TIPS

1. Become a Safe Play provider as it will give you access to curricula and equipment. Safe Play approval information: <https://customercare.usta.com/hc/en-us/articles/360041617612-How-to-Become-Safe-Play-Approved>
2. In order to start a program, you will need adaptive tennis equipment. Recommended equipment is on pg. 5 in the Adaptive Tennis Curricula, which you can access via the USTA National Adaptive website (see below).
3. It is essential for the tennis coach to attend adaptive coach development workshops including the annual USTA National Adaptive Championships coach workshop hosted at the USTA National Campus.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[USTA National Adaptive website](#)

[Register an Adaptive Tennis Program](#)

[Find an Adaptive tennis program in your state](#)

[Adaptive newsletter \(opt-in link\)](#)

## CASE STUDY: DREAM COURT INC., ADAPTIVE TENNIS PROGRAM

| Submitted by Jessica Weyreuter

### Introduction

Dream Court is a non-profit based in Montgomery, Alabama, with a mission to provide an adaptive tennis program to individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities: striving for inclusion and acceptance. Currently, Dream Court provides programming to 100 athletes annually, offering regular opportunities for physical, emotional and relational growth.

The vision behind Dream Court came from the founder's ambition to share access to the sport she had found so transformative to her own life to those with disabilities.

The program was announced in 2013 and given non-profit status in 2014. Dream Court has steadily continued its upward trajectory, becoming the premier adaptive tennis program in Alabama, as well as in the nation.

Dream Court has a staff of one employee who oversees the functions of the organization, over 500 volunteers critical to program infrastructure and 14 board members committed to the mission.

Dream Court's services include organizing purposeful and structured practices, running innovative competitions, arranging out of town travel and coordinating social community outings and celebrations.

The core of Dream Court's program consists of creating capability-oriented practices. These routine practices provide a stable community in which participants can explore new ways of movement and social skills in a controlled but fun environment. The organization strives for every individual, regardless of disabilities, to become the best tennis player they can be.

Organizers write a coach curriculum to train its coaches to consistently deliver a first-class tennis lesson specifically designed for each skill level.

Practices are offered during the spring, summer and fall seasons.

Competition is an important aspect of all services, as it supports measurable goals for each participant. Dream Court hosts two competitive events annually for local and out-of-state participants, including its Unified Doubles Play Day and USTA Wheelchair Tournament.

### Goals

- Provide adaptive tennis programming for athletes with physical and intellectual disabilities.
- Provide opportunities for competition for Dream Court athletes within the adaptive tennis community.
- Create community among Dream Court athletes, volunteers, families and the general community.
- Create awareness, respect, and inclusion of individuals/athletes with physical and/or intellectual disabilities.
- Be a leading organization in the adaptive sports community by maintaining and furthering an impactful, sustainable and innovative presence.

**Project Size:** Served over 300 Individuals with physical and or intellectual disabilities throughout the last nine years.

**Location:** Montgomery, Alabama



**Community Size:** 199,054 is the population of the city. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Montgomery County of Alabama had 26,498 individuals under the age of 65 living with a disability as of July 2019.

**Lead Advocate Organization:** Dream Court, Inc.

**Length of Project:** Nine years; runs year-round

**Budget:** \$115,150

**Funding Sources:** Private donations, corporate sponsors, in-kind donations, local, regional and national grants.

**Partnership(s):** This program has benefitted from many partnerships:

- Collaboration with the City of Montgomery, Parks and Recreation Department which donated land for the construction of two tennis courts that became the program's home base and are still used for this project. The city has committed to provide ongoing maintenance of this site. Partnership with the city offers two more public tennis facilities for use for practices in the spring, summer and fall, as well as for Adaptive Play Days and tournaments.
- Great collaboration with local high schools, and colleges who send their tennis teams to volunteer with individuals in the program.
- Nonprofits such as Bridge Builders, Rooftop Friends and Junior League send volunteers.
- In-kind donations from local businesses have been beneficial to providing the best programs possible: Kreative Moments decorates the facilities for special occasions, and local restaurants provide meals for tournaments and social outings: Blue Bell Ice Cream, Chappy's Deli, Zaxby's, New York City Gyro and Burger King.

## History

The vision behind Dream Court came from the founder's ambition to share tennis, a transformative sport in her own life, to those with disabilities.

Announced in 2013 and given non-profit status in 2014, Dream Court has steadily continued the upward trajectory of becoming the premier adaptive tennis program in Alabama, as well as in the nation. Dream Court's history is full of growth, beginning with the organization's kick-off party in May of 2013.

A short period of successful fundraising culminated in the construction of two tennis courts in one of the city of Montgomery's Edward Thompson Parks off Ray Thorington Road.

According to Jessica Weyreuter, Dream Court Founder and Director, "The program has been well received by the participating athletes and their families as well as the community as a whole. The latter gives rise to donors as well as the large number of volunteers that are essential to the efficient operation of the program.

"Dream Court has served more than 300 athletes and utilized over 700 volunteers since the initiation of the program. It has offered adaptive tennis sessions every spring, summer and fall season, beginning in 2013.

"The program began at ground zero with the participants having no prior experience and with volunteers simply trying to teach them how to make ball contact. Since that time, the organization has evolved, offering organized practices designed to meet the athlete's needs based on Special Olympic levels for those with intellectual disabilities, and Paralympic Levels for those with physical impairments."

There have been some stellar moments, Wayreuter adds. "In 2019, Dream Court was selected by the United States Tennis Association to put on a demonstration of their skills in Arthur Ashe Stadium during the US Open in New York City. Members of our donor base provided the funding to allow a group of over 50 to travel to NYC, put their skills on display at Ashe stadium during the round of 16, participate in two coin-toss ceremonies (Roger Federer/David Goffin and Serena Williams/Petra Martec), tour NYC and attend the Broadway production, Aladdin. The trip was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the athletes and volunteers.



“We have witnessed our participants falling in love with the game through our program. Our biggest achievement is that we have formed a community through tennis that has broken barriers beyond the court. Through the construction of our courts, our athletes with special needs have a place to call home, and a location to go to where they feel welcome and safe.”

The program continues to give back to its participants, she notes.

“Consistency of year-round programs enabled each participant athlete to experience personal growth. Through structured programming, identification of strategies and elimination of roadblocks, each athlete has reached his/her current potential.

“Competitive opportunities have supported the settings of external and measurable goals for our participant athletes. We have offered seven Unified Doubles Play Days for those with intellectual disabilities and two USTA Wheelchair-sanctioned tournaments for those with physical disabilities. These opportunities have deepened the commitment to the game through reinforcing the desire for more practice.

“Offering several travel opportunities per year has instilled character, built confidence and shaped determination among those facing challenges.

“This year, we have ventured out beyond our original city of Montgomery. Just recently, we started an additional chapter in Daphne, Alabama, where we can promote an active lifestyle, model appropriate social behavior and continue developing self-esteem.”

## **Funding**

- Dream Court is funded 76% by sponsorships; there are four different sponsorship levels: Title \$5,000, Gold \$3,500, Silver \$1,500 and Bronze \$500. Each sponsor is recognized on yearly t-shirts, court signage, webpage and social media shout-outs.
- 12.5% of funding comes from grant income, 6.5% by in-kind donations, 3% by donations and 1.7% by tennis program income.

## **Tips from the Pros**

“We have the amazing opportunity to serve hope and to change lives through the sport of tennis. It is important to create and promote a worthy culture. Everybody who joins our team should feel better through a sense of belonging, connectedness, value, appreciation and dignity. Whether athlete, board member, volunteer or sponsor, each member of our community has a role in contributing to the impact and bigger picture of the mission.”

## **Lesson**

“Tennis is a bridge that can be used to reach people, to love people and to impact people. We do not have to have all the answers, nor see the whole picture, but we have hope and faith that our work can create a ripple effect and make a difference beyond what we can dream or imagine.”



## CASE STUDY: BUDDY UP TENNIS DALLAS | Submitted by Cheryl Halpern and Beth Gibson

### Introduction

The program started in December 2008 in Columbus, Ohio by Founder Beth Gibson to help her 3-year-old son, Will, learn to play tennis.

“Individuals with Down Syndrome face increased susceptibility to physical and psychological health complications, including risk of obesity and Type 2 Diabetes, low muscle tone, loose ligaments, decreased core strength, atypical development of motor skills, high susceptibility to depression and anxiety, social withdrawal and challenges in behavioral activity,” states Gibson. “In recognition of these issues, the Buddy Up for Life program was founded, beginning with simple, experimental tennis activities such as popping bubbles or hitting balloons to build hand-eye coordination.”

Buddy Up Tennis clinics are comprised of 30 minutes of fitness conditioning and 60 minutes of professional tennis instruction. In these clinics, buddy volunteers are partnered with athletes to maximize and customize the experience. Athletes are provided with the opportunity to join a team, improve motor skills, enhance coordination, grow emotionally and create friendships. All activities are supervised by specially trained Buddy Coaches.

### Goal

To enable athletes with Down Syndrome to flourish, succeed and reach their fullest potential in a unique environment that combines tennis, fitness and social activities.

- **Project Size:** As of May 2022, Buddy Up Tennis Dallas had 106 registered athletes and 385 volunteer buddies. Enrollment per tennis season was, at that time, approximately 40 athletes, ranging in age from five to 48.
- **Location:** The Episcopal School of Dallas, Dallas, Texas
- **Community Size:** The population of Dallas is approximately 1,300,000. The Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas has about 2,200 member families, many of whom actively seek programs that will engage their children.

- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Buddy Up for Life, Inc.
- **Length of Project:** This is an ongoing program. Buddy Up Tennis Dallas was offered weekly from March 2019 - February 2020 at an indoor tennis facility. During the pandemic, activities were all virtual and one-on-one. The program returned to its signature tennis clinics on beautiful outdoor courts in September 2021. Given the weather extremes in Texas, Buddy Up Tennis is now offered in the spring and fall, complemented by Buddy Up Fitness indoors in the winter and summer.
- **Budget:** The annual budget for Dallas is approximately \$25,000.
- **Funding Source:** Local grants and individual donors.
- **Partnership(s):** The Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas promotes these programs to its members and The Episcopal School of Dallas lets the program use the facilities on their campus at a reduced cost.

## History

With extensive research and refinement over the past 14 years, the program has evolved into the first and only organization with a comprehensive tennis and fitness program tailored to athletes with Down Syndrome. But it wasn't finished growing yet.

In September 2018, Dallas community volunteer and lifelong tennis player, Cheryl Halpern, was inspired when she saw a feature on NBC National News about Buddy Up Tennis. Buddy Up Tennis had just been named the USTA Adaptive Program of the Year.

Cheryl raced to her computer to volunteer with the organization, only to discover that the Ohio-based organization did not have a chapter in Dallas. She immediately reached out to the organization's founder and the two began collaborating to build a chapter in Dallas.

In March 2019, Buddy Up Tennis Dallas made its debut as the largest launch in the organization's history. Fueled by community enthusiasm and the support of the Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas, the program has continued to grow, boasting 106 registered athletes with Down Syndrome (ranging in age from 5 to 48) and more than 385 volunteer buddies as of May 2022. It is the largest chapter in the country.

## Based on a survey conducted this spring among Buddy Up Tennis participants

- Nearly 90% of parents strongly agreed that their athlete is excited to attend Buddy Up Tennis
- Over 80% of parents observed improvements in their athlete's tennis strokes, balance, coordination, movement and sportsmanship.
- 70% of parents strongly agree that their athlete has a positive attitude for the remainder of the day after Buddy Up Tennis.
- The three interpersonal skills for which parents observed the greatest improvement were listening, manners and comfortably speaking with peers.
- The three intrapersonal skills for which parents observed the greatest improvements were confidence, handling adversity and mental alertness.

## Funding

This program has been funded by local grants from The Sandlot Children's Charity, Tennis Competitors of Dallas and The Down Syndrome Guild of Dallas. Individual donors were solicited through e-mail and social media campaigns; session fees are paid by most athletes (though full scholarships are provided upon request).

Buddy Up Tennis is now a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with 26 chapters nationwide.

## Tips from the Pros

- Establish and maintain high expectations of athletes. Buddies are empowered to adapt drills and exercises to challenge their assigned athlete at an appropriate level. They model and promote sportsmanship, etiquette, teamwork, respect and effort during all activities.
- Utilize consistent language for tennis instruction. In Buddy Up Tennis, each of the major tennis strokes has been broken down into a series of simple steps that are verbalized and demonstrated regularly, facilitating learning even when athletes are paired with different volunteers from week to week.

## Lessons

“The tennis community wants to give back to the sport,” says Beth Gibson. “When building a tennis program for a targeted population, tap into the local tennis community via leagues and personal networking. Many players recognize that the benefits of tennis go far beyond the court, and they are eager to share these gifts with others. This network of players can then leverage their contacts to help the program gain traction in the community. Ensure that volunteers have a rewarding experience so they will naturally advocate for the program.”

Enthusiasm and compassion are more critical to successful volunteering than tennis experience. Volunteer buddies and coaches create a positive and fun environment for the athletes, regardless of their skill level. This builds a love for the game and, more importantly, self-esteem.



# Business Development

## LARGE FACILITY BUSINESS PLAN

The following is an operations proposal for a large 30+ court tennis facility. This proposal will be in three parts. Part I will include assumptions for operations and the relationships between a university, tennis management team and the city. Part II will include operation and staffing plans. Part III will include options on management structure between the university, city and tennis management team.

### Part I: Assumptions

- The facility will include 24 outdoor hard courts and 12 indoor courts.
- The city will be responsible for all utilities, major capital and maintenance of the facility.
- Janitorial and court maintenance (windscreens, nets etc.) will be managed by the management team.
- The university will provide \$25,000 to support facility operations in return for priority access for the varsity program in the afternoons for six to nine courts with some limited access in the mornings for three courts, and for select evening/day matches on the weekends.
- There is an interest for a group to provide facility management or tennis programs.
- The pro shop will be managed by a different vendor.
- Facility goals include:
  - Providing the men's and women's varsity tennis programs with practice courts and match courts.
  - Provide tennis programs for all ages and all levels of play.
    - Community programs for introductory players
    - Special needs
    - NJTL
  - Host tournaments and events.
    - Host local tournaments to meet the needs of the tennis community
    - Host high-profile economic impact events

### Part II: Operations and Staffing Plan

Facility operations and staffing will be integral to achieving the goals outlined in the above assumptions. A facility of this size could eventually have gross revenues of \$2.5 to \$3 million a year with an operations budget of over \$2 million. Below are some operational recommendations that will need to be considered:

- Administrative, maintenance operations and tennis staffing
  - To maximize the facility's use and community impact, the facility should be open and staffed for 14-18 hours a day and 98-126 hours a week. A minimum of two front desk staff is recommended during operating hours. (Avg. - \$12 hr/\$122,304-\$157,248)
  - Operations Manager: Oversee daily operations and coordinate activities, supervise desk, accounting and marketing staff. This position would be responsible for ensuring financial transactions are handled appropriately, courts are scheduled and blocked off for instructional programs, tournaments, social and league play and the varsity tennis programs. (The recommended salary range for this type of position is \$50,000-75,000.)

- Additional support for administrative operations would include accounting and marketing support. (\$30,000–50,000 per position)
- **Facilities Supervisor:** Oversee and coordinate facility maintenance. This position will oversee and coordinate capital maintenance with the city, ensure daily facility needs are met from replacing lights and nets to maintaining equipment and minor repairs. (\$50,000-80,000)
- Additional part-time maintenance staff will be needed for support due to the number of hours the facility is open.
- **Tennis Director:** This position will oversee tennis programs, tournaments, coordinate court use with the operations manager, develop budgets, coordinate capital maintenance, develop and implement vendor contracts, supervise the operations manager and facilities supervisor and hire teaching professionals. (\$120,000–\$170,000)
- **Head Professional:** Oversee tennis services and tournaments. This position will work with the tennis director to implement tennis programs, tournament and event management, oversee other teaching professionals and provide on-court tennis instruction. (\$75,000–\$125,000)
- **Senior Tennis Professionals (1 or 2):** Provide tennis instruction and event support. These positions will work with the tennis director and head professional to manage tennis programs, develop lesson plans and participant pathways, provide tournament and event management and support, and on-court tennis instruction. (\$70,000–\$100,000)
- **Staff Professional (4-8 professionals):** Provide tennis instruction and event support. These positions will work with the head professional and senior tennis professionals to provide instruction on tennis programs, implement lesson plans and move students through a participation pathway, provide tournament and event support and on-court tennis instruction. (\$40,000–\$75,000)

The above staffing plan is for a facility of this size at program and operational maturity. A staffing growth plan is our recommendation.

- **Pro Shop Operations and Management:** The proposed arrangement for pro shop operations is for an outside contractor to provide these services. The success and services of a small specialty shop brings value beyond a financial impact. It serves as a convenience for the facility’s regular customers. Therefore, it is important that the shop is successful. It is recommended that agreement with the shop operations and management group include the following:
  - Pro shop point of sales conducted by front desk staff.
  - Pro shop inventory management and product turnover be managed by the outside contractor
  - Agreement should initially be a percentage of gross sales in the 30% range.

### Part III: Operations Structure

To ensure the success of this facility the operations structure and the roles of each of the partners must be clearly defined. Each partner’s commitment to the facility will enhance the experience of the users. There are three models for operations that should be considered.

#### Model – Contractor-Managed

- **Tennis Management/Contractor role:** Tennis management would provide total operational management. They would provide all of the administrative and facilities staff listed above.
- **University Role:** The university would provide a lease payment for the varsity team’s access.
- **City Role:** The city would cover utilities, major capital and court maintenance.
- **Revenue splits:** Tennis management would collect all facility revenues. A revenue split would be recommended between tennis management and the city.

This operational model puts the facility's day-to-day operations and tennis programs under a contractor. The contractor would be responsible for ensuring facility operations meet the standards of the university and city.

## Resources

Spreadsheet: [Large Facility Sample Budget](#)

## MEDIUM FACILITY BUSINESS PLAN

The following is an operations proposal for a university tennis facility. This proposal will be in three parts.

Part I will include assumptions for operations and the relationships between the university and the local CTA as well as NJTL. Part II will include an operation and staffing plan. Part III will include a management structure.

### Part I: Assumptions

- The facility will include 20 outdoor hard courts when fully restored. (Financials built upon 10 current courts.)
- The university will be responsible for all utilities, major capital and maintenance of the facility.
- Janitorial and court maintenance will be the responsibility of the university.
- The university will have priority access for the varsity program in the afternoons for 6-9 courts with some limited access in the mornings for three courts, and for select evening/day matches on the weekends.
- The pro shop could be managed by a different vendor.
- Facility goals include:
  - Providing the men's and women's varsity tennis programs with practice courts and match courts
  - Provide tennis programs for all ages and all levels of play
  - Community programs for introductory players
  - Special needs
  - NJTL
  - Host tournaments and events
  - Host local tournaments to meet the needs of the tennis community
  - Host high-profile economic impact events

### Part II: Operations and Staffing Plan

Facility operations and staffing will be integral to achieving the goals outlined in the assumptions. A facility of this size could eventually have gross revenues of \$500,000 a year with an operations budget of over \$350,000. Below are some operational recommendations that will need to be considered:

- Administrative, maintenance operations and tennis staffing to maximize the facility's use and community impact, the facility should be open and staffed for 14-18 hours a day and 98-126 hours a week. A minimum of two front desk staff is recommended during operating hours.
- **Operations Manager:** Oversee daily operations and coordinate activities, supervise desk, accounting and marketing staff. This position would be responsible for ensuring financial transactions are handled appropriately, courts are scheduled and blocked off for instructional programs, tournaments, social and league play and the varsity tennis programs.
- **Administrative Operations:** Additional support for administrative operations would include accounting and marketing support.

- **Maintenance:** Additional part-time maintenance staff will be needed for support due to the number of hours the facility is open.
- **Tennis Director:** This position will oversee tennis programs, tournaments, coordinate court use with the operations manager, develop budgets, coordinate capital maintenance, develop and implement vendor contracts, supervise the operations manager and facilities supervisor and hire teaching professionals.
- **Head Professional:** Oversee tennis services and tournaments. This position will work with the tennis director to implement tennis programs, tournament and event management, oversee other teaching professionals and provide on-court tennis instruction.
- **Senior Tennis Professionals (1 or 2):** Provide tennis instruction and event support. These positions will work with the tennis director and head professional to manage tennis programs, develop lesson plans and participant pathways, provide tournament and event management and support and on-court tennis instruction.
- **Staff Professional (4-8 professionals):** Provide tennis instruction and event support. These positions will work with the head professional and senior tennis professionals to provide instruction on tennis programs, implement lesson plans and move students through a participation pathway, provide tournament and event support and oncourt tennis instruction.
- The above staffing plan is for a facility of this size at program and operational maturity. A staffing growth plan is our recommendation.
- **Pro Shop Operations and Management:** The proposed arrangement for the pro shop operations is for an outside contractor to provide these services. The success and services of a small specialty shop bring value beyond a financial impact. It serves as a convenience for the facility's regular customers. Therefore, it is important that the shop is successful. It is recommended that agreement with the shop operations and management group include the following:
  - Pro shop point of sales conducted by front desk staff.
  - Pro shop inventory management and product turnover managed by the outside contractor.
  - Agreement should initially be a percentage of gross sales in the 15% range.

### Part III: Operations Structure

To ensure the success of this facility, the operations structure and the roles of each of the partners must be clearly defined. Each partner's commitment to the facility will enhance the experience of the users. There are three models for operations that should be considered.

#### Model 1 – Managed

University role: The management company would provide day-to-day oversight of the facility. It would provide the following administrative and facilities staff: director of tennis, front desk staff, tennis staff and support staff. University staff would manage select college events. The management company would collect all rentals and user fees to offset their operations costs.

University staff will need to be involved in game day operations, athletic trainers, locker rooms, etc. It ensures the presentation of the facility meets the standards of the university. Additionally, the incremental cost of using university public works and facilities staff would be much lower than another organization coming in to provide that support.

A revenue split and monthly management fee could be discussed.



## Opportunities

- Utilizing college interns to save on staffing costs and begin a mentoring program.
- Developing a Professional Tennis Management Program (PTM) In conjunction with the USTA.

## Resources

Spreadsheet: [Medium Facility Sample Budget](#)

## Revenue Sources

### User Fees/Memberships

- It is important to line up your verbiage with the market you are establishing in a club or tennis facility. Municipalities use terminology like Player Pass, Daily User, Facility Fee and Resident. Oftentimes in the municipal world, the facility is paid for by tax dollars and open to the public. City officials shy away from membership as, most of the time, that infers a private business. The revenue generated in Player Pass fees should offset the fixed expenses and the staff that support the operation.
  - Player Pass monthly fee with an annual contract is common practice.
  - Facility Fee or Team Fee is a non-discounted fee paid to participate on a league team.
  - Discounting a resident or adding a surcharge to non-residents is widely supported.
  - Memberships at these facilities (private clubs) are dues driven and dues supported.

### Programming

- Programming is the most important revenue stream to a facility. Developing a full and comprehensive junior and adult program will keep your players at the facility for their tennis experience.
  - Developmental junior classes
    - Tiny Tennis, Futures, Challenger, HS Comp and Play
  - Advanced Juniors
    - Academy-style program levels designed by ability and playing prowess (UTR)
  - League Play and Teams
    - Facility needs to have a role in the organization and court bookings.
    - Organize the teams by season and length of season to balance courts.
  - Private and Group Instruction
    - The most expensive product but the best program for building relationships with players as well as individual development.
    - Know your market price and range.
  - Summer Camps
    - Largest revenue stream for most facilities. Ratios are high and staff expense is low, using senior staff to lead and interns and college students to support.
  - Schools and NJTL
    - Getting involved in schools and PE classes, local CTAs and local groups
      - Discounted rates and high ratios.
      - Serves as marketing as well as bringing programming to the consumer.

## **Tournaments**

- Tournaments serve as a competitive way for play. Tournaments can serve a purpose as economic impact for a community, a way to showcase your facility and players and run during the shoulder hours of a facility.
  - National and Regional USTA Events
  - Local play
  - Local events
  - Revenue can range from minimal to thousands of dollars per weekend
  - College play and exhibitions

## **Pro Shop**

- Pro shops are an amenity for your players. With the major presence of online retailers, keep inventory levels in check.
  - Stringing ROI is about 30%
  - Apparel ROI is under 30%
  - Racquets and Shoes ROI is about 50%
  - The amount of risk owning a shop is high. Make sure qualified staff is involved.

## **Other**

- It is quite possible with the size of the facility, other uses will identify themselves.
  - Large outings can be held in indoor/covered courts.
  - Staging areas for triathlons, etc. in parking lots
  - Movie nights in the green spaces
  - Pro events
  - Rentals for team building and development
  - Futsal soccer
  - Small concerts
  - Tennis socials and happy



## CASE STUDY: DECATUR ATHLETIC CLUB | Submitted by Chuck Kuhle

### Goal

To grow the game of tennis and, consequently, the membership of the Decatur Athletic Club, and involved inviting members to bring a friend to play on the courts and use the ball machine. The club was seeking an innovative way to bring new players into the game besides just an Intro to Tennis program.

- **Project Size:** Participation was open to the entire membership of the Decatur Athletic Club.
- **Location:** Decatur, Illinois
- **Community Size:** Decatur's population is 70,000. The DAC has approximately 200 tennis members
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Decatur Athletic Club (Chuck Kuhle, Director of Tennis)
- **Length of Project:** Six weeks (April 1 to May 15)
- **Budget:** Zero-sum (all costs were in-house).
- **Funding Source(s):** The winning pair of players received two tickets to the Western and Southern Open in Cincinnati over the summer. The member received six free ½-hour lessons. The member's friend received 50% off a new racquet and stringing as well as a one-month membership.
- **Partnership(s):** USTA/Midwest donated the Cincinnati tickets. Decatur Athletic Club donated the lessons, membership and discount on racquets.
- **Promotions:** The program was promoted at the club through flyers and social media, as well as by talking to members one on one.



### Background

The idea came to the club's tennis pro as a way to grow the game; the concept was that if every tennis player in the country brought one friend to the game, it would double participation to 44 million players.

The parameters were simple: Each member of the Decatur Athletic Club was invited to bring a friend, and to hit for an hour as often as they wanted; the courts and use of the club's ball machine were offered free of charge.

The program was a success in that it resulted in 10 new players trying the game. Two have since joined the club and several are continuing to play. These players that they brought in for the most part were new players, although some were experienced but just hadn't played in a while.

### Tips from the Pros

"This is a no-lose program," says Chuck Kuhle, tennis pro. "It was decided early on that even if one player tried the game, it would be a success; having 10 try it was great. Obviously, we would have liked to have 100 people try tennis, but it is a somewhat hand-holding promotion and I was pleased with the results."

### Lessons Learned

"When we run this program again, we probably will do so during the winter months when our players are a captive audience, and when people are looking for ways to get recreation in a climate-controlled environment. With the April 1-May 15 time frame, our members are starting to do outside activities because the weather is getting nicer."

## CASE STUDY: MAY IS NATIONAL TENNIS MONTH IN WYOMING | Submitted by Peg Connor

### Introduction

Wyoming's outdoor tennis season begins in mid-May, making the National Tennis Month (NTM) promotion the perfect time to kickstart summer tennis by bringing attention to tennis through public relations efforts and engaging community tennis associations across the state to offer free or low-cost events to attract all the players who have flocked to tennis over the past two years.

These free or low-cost events/activities served as loss leaders for the upcoming summer programs, as program information and sign-ups were offered during the NTM activations.

Additionally, a Level One Coach Workshop was offered in mid-May as part of NTM, again, to increase the numbers of trained tennis providers just in time for the summer season. Finally, the Wyoming Tennis Association requested that Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon take up its request for a May is National Tennis Month proclamation in an effort to bring awareness to NTM on a state-wide basis.

### Goal

This program had a two-fold goal:

- Increase awareness of tennis in communities across the state through public relations efforts and offer 13 recreational events/activations targeted toward entry-level adults and youth in five key communities across the state.
  - Host a Level One Coach Workshop to increase the number of in-state coaches who are able to deliver tennis to beginning adults and youth.
- **Project Size:** The program was applicable to tennis in the state of Wyoming
  - **Location:** Wyoming
  - **Community Size:** 500,000 people
  - **Lead Advocate Organization:** Wyoming Tennis Association
  - **Length of Project:** Preparatory work took place in April and activations took place in May.
  - **Budget:** \$2,000
  - **Funding Source(s):** USTA Wyoming and local CTA, as well as community support
  - **Partnership(s):** Cheyenne Tennis Association, Casper Tennis Association, Sheridan Tennis Association, Teton County Tennis Association.

### History

There were several communities across the state that formerly had very active community tennis associations; however, those had declined over the past several years. As well, there were communities that have never had a community tennis association.

The National Tennis Month activation allowed for outreach to all the communities with the offer of a small grant to help get their projects off the ground. Communities with active CTAs jumped right on it. There were mixed results in communities with lapsed CTAs; some engaged but all were interested in the NTM activation. The NTM promotion was an excellent incentive and provided a timeline to reach out to all with a compelling promotion.





Peg Connor of USTA Wyoming says, “The results are still coming in, as we are collecting information from some of the communities and activations. The weather this May was challenging, with snow on several days, so some events were pushed back.

“Regardless, we had great success, with the Governor inviting us to the State Capitol for the May is National Tennis Month proclamation signing ceremony. Thirty people from the Wyoming tennis community attended the signing and had the opportunity to make public comments in support of tennis and pose for pictures with the Governor and his staff. USTA apparel and gift bags were given to the Governor and, as we departed, the Governor commented that he might have to take up tennis again!”

Other successes followed. “The Casper Tennis Association was invited by the Casper City Council to a proclamation signing, as well. In other communities, the CTAs offered Tennis Festivals and Spring Into Tennis events for parents & children. Several communities asked their local libraries to begin stocking tennis equipment, with packages to include two Net Gen racquets and a felt ball in a sling bag so that parents and children could check out the equipment the same way they would check out books and CDs. On the sling bag was a luggage tag with a QR code that could be scanned to take the user to the Net Gen “Tennis At Home” activities, as well as a lead generation survey.

“High school coaches from Sheridan and Torrington offered drop-in tennis events for parents and kids, and the Cheyenne Tennis Association offered a weekend drop-in, social triples event.

“All in all, the events reached over 300 people directly with countless others hearing about the proclamation signings through the media. And NTM is the gift that kept on giving, as all the communities gained momentum from the events in May as they headed into the summer.”

## **Project Funding**

The Wyoming Tennis Association provided most of the funding for these activations. However, after such a great event, the opportunity to explore sponsorships and more partnerships is in the cards for next year.

Other Support/Donations: Every CTA or organization that offered a NTM activation had volunteers deliver the activities; those volunteers also worked to get donations of goods, such as popsicles, sodas, lunch, etc., from local businesses.

## **Tips from the Pros**

Get started promoting in mid-March and early April. Reach out to public officials event earlier, starting in January or February to increase the odds that you’ll get a spot on their busy calendar.

“Engage and incentivize your CTAs to participate. Focus on events that are free or low-cost that are drop-in and social in nature. These events are so important for communities that are planning to refurbish or construct a tennis facility; showing support for tennis is crucial to getting decision makers to say yes and then open their wallets. Have a plan in place to capture leads. And make sure the events are fun so people walk away wanting more tennis!”

## **Lesson**

The National Tennis Month promotion is an outstanding tent pole around which an array of events, activations and attention can be built and brought to tennis. Also, it serves as a rallying cry for CTAs and avid tennis players and supporters.

There is strength in numbers, and having an enthusiastic crowd show up sends the message to our public officials that there are a lot of tennis players and they are fired up! Also, engaging schools as well as parks & rec departments with CTAs is key and we will focus more on that area, getting the NTM events and, consequently, the summer tennis programs, on their schedules and into their programming books. The Wyoming Tennis Association is looking forward to next year’s activation already!

# Colleges, Universities & Tennis on Campus (TOC)

## COLLEGIATE COMMUNITY HUBS

The USTA has developed a plan to assist universities in activating their tennis venues locally while adding a new revenue stream to an athletic department. The purpose is to engage the community, faculty and staff by offering robust programming, lessons, tournaments and social leagues. By doing this, you have increased your fan base, philanthropic development and donor/sponsor relationships, and connected academics to athletics, media and revenue streams.

College and university tennis venues can be excellent assets to connect to the community and become sources of additional revenue while not impacting university priorities. Tennis is a connective tissue to faculty, staff, the student body and the community. The USTA has the tools, resources and expertise to assist colleges with the creation of proven revenue driving and community-engaging programming, membership and seasonal court time plans.

### Resources

[Collegiate Venue Community Hub Playbook](#)

## TENNIS ON CAMPUS

### What is TOC

Tennis On Campus is the US Tennis Association's program for college club tennis players. It has been designed for and organized by college students who want to stay involved in the game, make friends, and compete in events all around the country.

Over 300 colleges and universities participate and compete in the program with more than half of them competing to make it to the National Championship.

### Who can play

Any student (including undergraduate and graduate) currently enrolled in their university can play club tennis. Your school may have specific rules, so be sure to check with them.

To play in USTA Tennis On Campus Championship events, players will also have to meet certain eligibility guidelines.

### Why should I play

Tennis On Campus is the best way to meet new people and continue playing in college! With over 100 events across the country a year, you can travel with your team or just play on your own campus.

### How do I find a team

You can search for your university's team profile to get in touch with the captain of the team or visit your school's campus recreation page to see if there's a club tennis team.

No luck finding a team at your university? Why not start one? The USTA is here to help you get a team started with start-up grants and other resources.

## [Advocating for college tennis](#)

The USTA has developed a plan to assist universities in activating their tennis venues locally while adding a new revenue stream to an athletic department. The purpose of these “Collegiate Community Hubs” is to engage the community, faculty, and staff by offering robust programming, lessons, tournaments and social leagues.

### [How to turn your tennis venue into a collegiate community hub](#)

### [USTA guide to tennis on college campuses](#)

There are many reasons why students play college tennis—whether in a varsity tennis program or in a USTA Tennis On Campus program.

For many junior players coming out of high school, a tennis scholarship can provide an opportunity for a college education that may not have been possible otherwise. There are also many associated benefits that playing tennis can offer to college students—staying fit and healthy, making friends and social connections, having a chance to take a break from studies and more.

Tennis during a person’s college years also is an important bridge to continuing on in the sport through their 20s, 30s and beyond. That was one of the key reasons the USTA instituted the Tennis On Campus program more than 15 years ago. Tennis On Campus offers tennis players who do not play varsity tennis a structured opportunity to continue on in the sport.

The importance of college tennis facilities goes beyond the use by students during the school year. Courts at colleges also are used by community members, and often these same courts host tennis camps for youth during the summers.

One of the challenges facing collegiate tennis today, however, is that administrations are cutting varsity tennis programs—which usually means losing the tennis facilities, too. Often, by the time the varsity tennis coach, team members and the tennis community learn a program is in jeopardy, it is too late to implement strategies to save it.

Strategies to increase a tennis program’s relevance to the college or university should be developed with college coaches and communities before programs are jeopardized. The key is to advocate, educate and encourage coaches, athletic directors and college presidents to develop long-term, meaningful community outreach programs on their campuses. By linking the campus and the community together, it’s easier to build a constituency that helps protect and grow college tennis.

## **SAVING VARSITY PROGRAMS**

The threats to varsity tennis programs are a localized issue, unique to each campus. If your local college or university program is threatened with cancellation, however, you have nationwide resources available to you to help bring the situation to a positive resolution.

### **What should you do if you hear that a program is in jeopardy?**

- Communicate with your tennis and general alumni.
- Form a core group to serve as the brain trust to direct the campaign. It is likely that this core group will do the majority of the legwork.
- Communicate with your current team members and their parents.
- Reach out to influential members of your community.
- Reach out to your booster club members and to influential tennis alumni.
- Research the financial situation of your athletic department. Know the relationship of your team budget to the overall athletic department budget.

- Ask for and try to schedule meetings with your university administration (President, Board of Trustees/Regents, Athletic Department, etc.).
- Find contact information (name, mailing address, phone number, email address) for all decision-makers with relation to this issue and provide this to your boosters, and members of the community.
- If the tennis program is a member of the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA), a team representative, preferably the coach, should inform the ITA that the program is in jeopardy. The ITA is both the governing body and coaches' association for NCAA Division I, Division II, Division III, NAIA and Junior College Tennis. If you believe it would be helpful to have letters of support from the ITA to the President, Board of Regents/Trustees and/or Athletic department, please contact ITA COO David Mullins ([dmullins@itatennis.com](mailto:dmullins@itatennis.com))

### Emphasize the value of college tennis

- Attracts new students
- Showcases top student-athletes
- Enriches student life
- Builds relationships
- Generates revenue

### What the USTA can do

- The USTA will write a letter of support to the President, Board of Trustees/Regents and/or Athletic Department.
- The USTA Section will assist with your local campaign.
- The USTA may provide a representative(s) to attend key meetings, whenever possible.
- The USTA will help to identify influential people who might help.
- The USTA may be able to provide some stop-gap, emergency funding.

The USTA has developed a plan to assist universities in activating their tennis venues locally while adding a new revenue stream to an athletic department. The purpose is to engage the community, faculty and staff by offering robust programming, lessons, tournaments and social leagues. By doing this, you have increased your fan base, philanthropic development and donor/sponsor relationships, and connected academics to athletics, media and revenue streams.

College and university tennis venues can be excellent assets to connect to the community and become sources of additional revenue while not impacting university priorities. Tennis is a connective tissue to faculty, staff, the student body and the community.

The USTA has the tools, resources and expertise to assist colleges with the creation of proven revenue-driving and community-engaging programming, membership and seasonal court time plans.

[Collegiate Venue Community Hub Playbook](#)



# Community Tennis Associations (CTAs)

USTA Community Tennis Associations (CTAs) are not-for-profit, volunteer-based organizations supporting programs that grow the game of tennis. They are located in towns across the country and are great entry points if you're looking to get started in the game, to play more often or to give back to our lifetime sport.

First and foremost, CTAs work to coordinate and maintain tennis programs and services, guaranteeing that they are open and accessible to everyone. Those who run CTAs are tennis enthusiasts who act as advocates, program administrators, promoters or fundraisers – and sometimes, as all of these things at once.

## RESOURCES

The USTA has information dedicated towards the three stages of a CTA life cycle. To learn more, please see the following:

[Learn about CTAs and how to start one](#)

[Annual Report Sample: Asheville Tennis Association](#)

[Sample CTA Annual Report to City Council by the Asheville Tennis Association](#)

## CASE STUDY: BILL HERMANN PALMER COURTS

| Submitted by: Susan Brunner

### Introduction

There are currently seven tennis courts in the Matanuska Susitna Valley of Alaska. The geographical area of the MatSu Valley is the size of West Virginia, with nearly 20,000 people in the core area.

MatSu Tennis Association formed as a community tennis association and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit in 2013 with the goal of growing tennis in the valley and the state of Alaska. Back in 2013, there were only five tennis courts in the area, and the CTA began as a small group of volunteers who loved tennis and wanted to connect others with opportunities to play.

### Goal

The replacement of three existing tennis courts, which had not been repaired or maintained in over 30 years.

- **Project Size:** Three outdoor courts at \$200,000
- **Location:** Palmer, Alaska
- **Community Size:** 7,500
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** MatSu Tennis Association
- **Length of Project:** 12 months
- **Budget:** \$200,000
- **Funding Source:** The CTA secured grant funding in the amount of \$140,000. After successfully securing grant funding, the local municipality Department of Recreation and the area school district agreed to fund the completion of the project.
- **Partnership(s):** Palmer Rotary, Wasilla Sunrise Rotary



## History

After the initial success of a community tennis program with activities including Family Play Days, Adult Round Robins and QuickStart Under-10 programming, the CTA lobbied the local school district and state board of athletics and activities to begin a varsity level high school co-curricular team at Colony High School.

The first year the area had a recognized team (2015), it was able to bring five of the seven positions available to the state conference in Anchorage. The following year, it supported two other area high schools in creating competitive teams. Since 2016, there have been approximately 60 high schoolers who participated in co-curricular tennis in the community.

In 2019, MatSu Tennis Association advocated to the local school district to rebuild two tennis courts that had laid fallow for over 20 years at Colony High School. With fundraising and collaboration from the district, the two courts were repaired and became playable.

“This addition increased the number of courts in the community from five to seven, a marked improvement for our community,” states Susan Brunner, founder and president of the MatSu Tennis Association. “Since its incorporation in 2013, MatSu Tennis has advocated for the City of Palmer and the MatSu Borough governing bodies to invest in the repair of the area courts. Its research of borough records went back 30 years and was unable to find any record of funding allocated to repair or maintain the original five area courts.”

In 2021, MatSu Tennis Association partnered with Palmer Rotary and Wasilla Sunrise Rotary who agreed to take on renovation of the tennis courts as their focused project for the year. In July of 2021, it embarked on a fundraising and grant writing campaign.

“The outcome is that, through the work of our local community tennis association, in partnership with area Rotarians, the CTA was able to secure grant funding and donations in the amount of \$200,000 to provide three newly constructed tennis courts to the community of Palmer, Alaska,” notes Brunner. “The new courts have become the home facility for Palmer High School, which was the second area high school to start a team that began in 2016, following Colony High School. All high school players use the newly constructed courts for practice and competitive play for three solid months during the tennis season.”

The community response to the project, says Brunner, has been positive, allowing MSTa to expand its programming immensely.

“This summer, it will add new programming (including a juniors tournament, juniors camps, adult flex leagues, and rec tennis camps for ages five through 12), in addition to its previous programming schedule.”

## Funding

The two local rotary clubs each donated \$10,000.00 to kick off the project funding. With this seed money available, MatSu Tennis Association applied for grants from various organizations and was awarded the following:

- MatSu Parks and Trails Foundation: \$90,000
- Gateway Community Grant: \$10,000
- Thrive MatSu: \$5000
- United Way of MatSu: \$4,600
- Matanuska Electric Association: \$10,000
- Private Donations: \$4,000

Brunner adds, “The City of Palmer, after we had secured nearly \$126,000, agreed to contribute \$25,000. It wasn’t until our project was nearly 85% funded that the local school district, MatSu Borough School District, agreed to contribute the remaining nearly \$40,000 to allow us to complete the project.”

#### **Other donations were as follows:**

- Wasilla Sunrise Rotary: \$10,000
- Palmer Rotary: \$10,000
- MatSu Sea Hawkers: \$500

#### **Tips from the Pros**

“Through the initial reconstruction of the Colony High School Courts and this second project of a total rebuild of the Palmer Courts, we have learned a great deal regarding court construction, which is especially challenging in Alaska where our temperatures are extreme six to seven months of the year. As a result, this current court project included the special design and materials to ensure that the courts will resist cracking, as was the case shortly after the Colony High renovation.”

#### **Lesson**

“Ultimately, the most significant lesson learned here is that it truly takes a village. For nearly six years, our small, grassroots tennis association attended city council and borough assembly meetings, reached out to area schools (elementary through secondary), talked to local media, the school board, etc., constantly and tirelessly advocating for tennis facilities in our community.

It wasn’t until we partnered with two area community service organizations that our door-knocking and signature-gathering took hold. It has been seven years since we initiated the first high school competitive tennis team. This summer, those high school players have returned as young adults and are participating in adult programming such as leagues.”

## CASE STUDY: MINGO TENNIS | Submitted by Steve Mingo

### Introduction

“Teaching high-risk, inner-city youth the skills to become successful in life is at the core of the Mingo Tennis program,” states Steve Mingo. “Mingo Tennis is committed to helping USTA Eastern have a presence at NYC Mayor’s Action Plan (MAP) Open Street Fairs within all boroughs of the Metro Area by introducing tennis as a means to help combat violence, improve relations between law enforcement and NYCHA housing residents, expand recreational activities and promote the sport’s health benefits throughout underserved communities in 2022. The program started in March 2022 and ended in October 2022.”

Mingo Tennis attended 10 or more scheduled activations and, when necessary, brought and set up portable tennis equipment. Additionally, participants led tennis workshops, engaged community members in conversation about local programming opportunities (including NJTLs) and the health benefits of tennis.

Mingo Tennis took photos and videos of participants, distributed promotional giveaways and marketing brochures, and completed a project status report to track event information such as the number attendees (adults vs. children) who were playing tennis, inquiring about tennis or being spectators. Mingo Tennis also tracked the numbers and types of giveaways distributed.

Mingo Tennis continued to benefit from attending these activations by realizing an increase in tennis participation from those who selected the organization as their local tennis provider. As a result, Mingo Tennis has been able to provide a budget to support and sustain this anticipated growth in programming.

### The four major components of the Mingo Tennis program are:

1. Nutrition education to promote healthy lifestyles and combat obesity.
2. Life skills which are integrated throughout all phases of the program.
3. Tennis instruction where participants engage in fun physical fitness, enjoy the camaraderie of playing in team tennis format with friends and peers, and learn to become responsible adolescents and adults.
4. Participants receive tennis instruction in one-on-one and clinic settings, and practice skills in team format play. They learn about rules of the game, etiquette, sportsmanship, positive attitudes, fair play, self-esteem, taking responsibility for choices and about management of emotions.

“These life skills are integrated throughout the tennis program, and instructors routinely demonstrate how they apply to situations in all aspects of life,” Mingo points out. “Nutrition and healthy lifestyles are stressed both in the classroom setting and on the courts. Healthy snacks are provided.”

The Mingo Tennis program, he adds, “is fortunate to have a corps of volunteers who are dedicated to the program and are available to work with the children on improving their academic skills.”

### Goal

The goal of Mingo Tennis was simple: to introduce the game to everyone.

- **Project Size:** 10 New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Properties
- **Location:** New York, New York





- **Community Size:** 20,000
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Mingo Tennis
- **Length of Project:** The first time the program was offered, it spanned the summer of 2022, running from April through September.
- **Budget:** \$5,000
- **Funding Source:** United States Tennis Association
- **Partnership(s):** USTA Eastern, Mayor's Action Plan, NYC Parks

## History

This involves a unique partnership. In 2010, Full Effect Group was established as a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization with the purpose of providing a safe haven where inner-city youth participate in a comprehensive program of journalism. As part of the partnership, the organization supplied the necessary resources to local schools for training students interested in gaining skills, knowledge and firsthand experience in the field of broadcasting, communication and other related areas of expertise. This journalism program has been a recipient of the Verizon Foundation Grant. A USTA grant for Grow The Game of Tennis allowed Mingo Tennis to offer activations in NYCHA.

In addition to training individuals to develop or improve skills as amateur radio operators, Mingo Tennis is now seeing kids enjoy the game of tennis. As they hit forehands and backhands and yell, "nice shot" from across the net, they are developing not only good strokes but good sportsmanship, respect and social skills such as learning how to shake hands cordially at the end of a match.

Since its inception, the program has impacted over 170 individuals, both youth and adult. The original plan was to commit to four street fairs. Feedback showed a demand for additional events.

## Funding

\$4,200 from USTA grants

## Tips from the Pros

Introduce tennis by having pop-up nets on any flat surface. This is effective in demonstrating that tennis can be played anywhere, not just on a tennis court, furthering its image as something available to everyone.

## Lessons

Steve Mingo notes, "The most important lessons to teach are a "no violence" philosophy, and the importance of safe spaces where children and adults alike can come to play.

"Another lesson is the importance of changing the perception of tennis as a sport only females and Caucasian individuals play. This program has proven that tennis is available to everyone, regardless of economic status."

## **CASE STUDY: PADUCAH TENNIS ASSOCIATION, PADUCAH, KY.**

### **Goals**

- Construct a bathroom facility near the Bob Noble Park Tennis Courts.
- Convert one (of six) 78-foot court to two 36-foot courts for youth tennis.

### **Initial “Ask”**

- The Paducah Tennis Association (PTA) approached the City of Paducah in 2005 about providing seed money for building the bathrooms.
- Local Partnerships:
- The PTA partnered with the City of Paducah and the Paducah Parks and Recreation Department.

### **Funding**

- In 2013, the city allocated \$50,000 for the project. The PTA created the “P is for Pavilion” fundraising campaign.
- PTA spearheaded a letter campaign and personal calls to individuals and businesses, netting \$60,000.
- A St. Mary High School tennis parent donated \$10,000, with the stipulation that the school team would have free use of the park courts in perpetuity.
- USTA National Facility Grant for \$20,000, with expert help from the USTA National technical staff on bathroom and youth court location.

### **Other Support/Donations**

- The city provided sewer, water and electrical infrastructure.
- A local company donated concrete for the pad for the bathroom pavilion.

### **Results**

- The bathroom was installed in May 2018.
- One regular-sized tennis court was converted to two youth courts.
- In addition, the city resurfaced the remaining five courts, plus erected new fencing. City funds are budgeted to pave more sidewalks and bleacher pads.
- “We now have a bathroom pavilion, five beautiful 78-foot courts and two youth courts, painted in US Open blue and green, with new fencing, and some sidewalks.”

### **What Did We Learn?**

Be tenacious and don't give up! This whole process took 13 years and lasted through five different mayoral administrations. The leadership of the PTA and creative partnerships with Paducah Parks and Recreation, schools, local businesses and citizens resulted in a tennis facility where everyone enjoys playing—and using the Pavilion.

# Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion are integral to the USTA mission of promoting and developing the growth of tennis and has been a formal area of focus, with a team in place to lead our efforts, since 1994. We are committed to striving for equity and leveling the playing field of opportunity for all.

Attracting, engaging and retaining a new generation of diverse tennis participants is a key to our future relevance as a sport and our ongoing success as a national governing body. At the USTA, we celebrate the open format – the idea that anyone from anywhere should be able to play and compete. That’s the driving force behind our Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion strategy, designed to grow and promote our sport to the next generation – and future generations – of fans, players and volunteers.





# Tennis Venue Services (TVS)

Whether you're just starting out and dreaming of building a state-of-the-art, multi-court tennis facility, you're interested in 36' or 60' tennis courts, or simply need to repair cracked courts at the local park down the street, USTA's Tennis Venue Services are here to help.

Customers are appointed project consultants from the USTA national staff, and they deliver personalized support and service to help take your project from dream to reality.

## RESOURCES

[Tennis Venue Services Link](#)

**CASE STUDY: HOLLA! RURAL TENNIS YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM** | Submitted by Alex Gaddy and Gwen Jackson

### Introduction

The HOLLA! Eagles Tennis program was started in 2013 through the LET'S MOVE project funded by a grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. Leon Gatewood, Founder and CEO of HOLLA!, had the vision and foresight to include a regulation-size tennis court in the plans of the HOLLA! Center's design. The court was funded and installed, and recently (in 2020) was refurbished through public and private contributions. (The on-site court qualifies the organization to receive funding for coaching and supplies.)



### Goals

This organization had a number of objectives, all of which are important. They are as follows:

- To develop players of racially diverse backgrounds.
- To serve low-income junior tennis players and enable them to use their tennis ability to secure a college education.
- To offer opportunity for youth to play and learn tennis in a tennis desert.
- To support education in the Anson County School System.
- To provide a variety of services and programs that aid in increasing test scores for children.
- Teaching and improving skills while instilling discipline on and off the court.
  - **Project Size:** One newly refurbished court
  - **Location:** Morven, North Carolina (located in Anson County, North Carolina)
  - **Community Size:** 466 residents in 2019.
  - **Lead Advocate Organization:** HOLLA! Community Resource and Community Development Center, a non-profit organization



- **Length of Project:** 13 years
- **Budget:** Annual Tennis Program: \$10,000
- **Funding Source(s):** Private, Corporate, Municipal, Institutional, Individuals, USTA Diversity Grant
- **Partnership(s):** One Love Tennis, Livingstone College Women Tennis, Wingate University Tennis Team, American Tennis Association (ATA), The Future Scape Foundation, William Brown Tennis Academy

## History

HOLLA! was founded in 2005 to support education in the Anson County School System. Inspired by the words of Frederick Douglass, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men," the organization strives without ceasing to level the playing field for the underprivileged and disenfranchised.

Realizing that mentoring and tutoring were not quite enough, the founders of the organization purchased a former hardware store in the rural town of Morven, North Carolina to better serve the community. Thanks to a grant from The Golden Leaf Foundation, they were able to convert the rugged 1920s structure into a modernized resource center, complete with a commercial kitchen, cafe, media center, activity rooms and office spaces. On the outside, the building has the tennis court, the home of The HOLLA! Eagles Tennis Team.

Once HOLLA! built a tennis court at the HOLLA! Center in Morven, the organization began recruiting young people to play on the team. In just three years, the organization has built a team that has become a member of the United States Tennis Association.

Through partnerships with the local school system, other non-profits, programs and resources, HOLLA! continuously strives to build strong children and to develop their opportunity to learn Tennis as a means to college scholarships, physical fitness and competitive opportunities via tournaments.

Alex Gaddy, Activities Director for HOLLA!, was able to consult with people for resources to help build the tennis program. Part of this was the recruitment of the late coach, Alan Blackwell, a local well-known tennis professional. HOLLA! also forged partnerships with the USTA. Gatewood once said of the tennis program, "It has validated the need for the sport in our local schools; we need to give our students an opportunity to play tennis."

Tennis coach Gwen Jackson said the success of HOLLA!'s program was measurable. "The HOLLA! Eagles Tennis Team had the opportunity to attend the American Tennis Association's National Tournament and to come to New York for the US Open Tennis Tournament. At the US Open, they were able to go on center court for the Net Generation promotion for youth tennis. They also witnessed the unveiling of the Althea Gibson statue and participated in tennis demonstrations. It was through a partnership with the One Love Tennis Foundation in Wilmington, North Carolina that the HOLLA! tennis team also instituted an annual trip to Charleston, South Carolina for the Family Circle Cup Tennis Tournament.

Those working in the program are aware that they are not only developing tennis players, but exposing children and teens to people and places that have a high likelihood of making positive impressions on them for the rest of their lives."

"The young people work so hard with very little resources, and in the tennis world they are over-achievers based on that alone," Alex Gaddy said.

## Funding

The community has been a staunch supporter of the program from day one. Travel and participation have been totally funded by donations from the private sector and generous individuals.

HOLLA! and One Love Tennis in Wilmington partnered to help three local youth attend the US Open Tennis Tournament in Flushing, New York.

### Tips from the Pros

Networking is essential: Alex Gaddy has forged relationships with One Love, the ATA and the USTA.

### Lesson

Sometimes, the best lesson is a success story. Drenre Taylor, a HOLLA! Eagles tennis player, accepted a \$10,000 scholarship to play tennis at Livingstone College in Salisbury in 2019.

“Anson County Schools have no tennis program,” said HOLLA! Center Director Leon Gatewood, “so Taylor’s skills have developed to college level through the HOLLA! Let’s MOVE Project, which included free tennis lessons for interested Anson County students.”

At the time of receiving the scholarship, Taylor had been playing tennis at the HOLLA! Center for six years.

## **CASE STUDY: PENINSULA TENNIS CLUB – TENNIS VS. PICKLEBALL** | Submitted by Geoff Griffin

### **Introduction**

Pickleball advocates are pushing hard to find places to play in San Diego, since the high price of land makes it nearly impossible to build new courts. Currently, there is no club just for pickleball. Knowing that they are very unlikely to get a new facility built, pickleball players are aggressively going after existing public tennis clubs. They believed Peninsula Tennis Club was their best option. The San Diego District Tennis Association had a different opinion and did not want to see their facility taken from them to be used by another sport.

### **Goal**

To conserve the city's remaining tennis courts

- Project Size: Peninsula Tennis Club has 500 members and is open to the public
- Location: San Diego, California
- Community Size: 1.3 million people
- Lead Advocate Organization: San Diego District Tennis Association
- Length of Project: Unlimited
- Budget: Zero-sum
- Funding Source(s): N/A

### **History**

Several years ago, an article was published in the San Diego Union Tribune, discussing the fact that pickleball lacked courts in the area. The article had some truths (and some non-truths) that were disturbing to tennis advocates.

"There can be no argument that pickleball is growing and that the sport needs more courts built to support its growing player population," admits Geoff Griffin of the Greater San Diego Tennis Council. "The frustrating part, however, was that the leaders of the pickleball contingent were stating that tennis was not as popular, and that tennis courts were vacant and if taken away, would not be missed. Peninsula Tennis Club was specifically mentioned in the article."

The inaccuracies ran further. "The article stated that the club had only 200 members, which was incorrect; it has 500. It was also stated that the courts were not being used and that the place was run-down, neither of which were true. In fact, about five years ago, the members of Peninsula (assisted by the San Diego Tennis Council) raised funds to have all 12 courts resurfaced.

Recently, the San Diego District Tennis Association (the local arm of USTA) notified tennis advocates through an e-mail that there was going to be a meeting of the local parks and recreation department that handles the area in which Peninsula is located. On the agenda was an item put forward by pickleball enthusiasts, proposing the conversion of the tennis club to a pickleball facility."

It was clear, however, that nobody had counted on the tennis contingent showing up to defend its courts.

"That meeting was held about four weeks ago and there were 100 pickleball advocates and 150 tennis advocates present," says Griffin. "Both sides were given a chance to state their case. It was obvious that the people who play tennis at Peninsula Tennis Club were going to put up a real fight to save their facilities."

## Results

“Though there has not been any public notice of the decision, sources inside the city government have said there will be no changes to the Peninsula Tennis Club at this time.”

## Tips from the Pros

It is essential to stay on top of the playing scene, and to know about proposed changes to facilities. If the local arm of the USTA had not been on the ball, there may not have been as many tennis people at that meeting.

“Get key people at the top to know what is going on in your city. Tennis players need to know it is up to them to hang on to their existing facilities; this necessitates keeping their eyes and ears open to developments that might take away any courts.”

## Lesson

Sitting back and assuming that someone else will advocate for you is not enough. Tennis needs more squeaky wheels like pickleball has.



# Schools and Out-of-School Programs

## TENNIS IN SCHOOLS

Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the students they teach every day, and tennis offers an exceptional avenue to support that mission. Beyond physical activity, studies show that youth who play tennis are more likely to adopt healthy behaviors and actively volunteer in their communities. The USTA developed the Net Generation suite of tools and resources specifically with educators in mind. With your partnership, we can inspire students to get active and stay active, fostering lifelong habits that extend far beyond the classroom.



## BENEFITS OF TENNIS IN SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS

**Academic Excellence:** Tennis participation has been linked to higher academic performance, with a significant percentage of youth tennis players maintaining an “A” average. Students involved in tennis also show improved concentration, attention, and classroom behavior.

**Problem-Solving & Critical Thinking:** The strategic nature of tennis, requiring players to constantly analyze opponents and adapt tactics, significantly enhances critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

**Reduced Risky Behaviors:** Studies indicate that tennis participants have lower rates of binge drinking and drug use compared to their peers in other sports or no sports at all.

**Improved Psychological Health:** Tennis players often report higher levels of vigor, optimism, and self-esteem, while experiencing lower instances of depression, anger, confusion, anxiety, and tension.

**Well-Rounded Individuals:** Adolescent tennis players tend to be more involved in other extracurricular activities within their school and community, indicating a broader engagement in various aspects of their lives.

## RESOURCES

[Tennis in Schools](#)

## SCHOOL TEAM TENNIS

School team tennis provides an incredible opportunity for students aged 12-18 to experience healthy competition in a supportive environment, playing alongside their friends. Whether you’re an experienced coach or organizing a team for the first time, the USTA offers a wealth of helpful resources and coaching tips to guide you in leading and developing a successful squad. Beyond the game, team tennis helps students cultivate crucial skills such as teamwork, communication, and sportsmanship, all while staying physically active and engaged in their school community.

## BENEFITS OF SCHOOL TEAM TENNIS FOR STUDENTS

**Enhanced Teamwork and Cooperation:** While tennis is often seen as individual, the team setting of school tennis fosters strong bonds and teaches students to work together towards common goals.

**Improved Academic Performance:** High school tennis athletes are often required to maintain specific academic standards, which can serve as a strong motivator for academic achievement. They tend to have higher grades and better attendance.

**Increased Sportsmanship:** The inherent rules and etiquette of tennis, including calling lines and shaking hands at the end of a match, instill a strong sense of fair play and respect.

**Leadership Development:** Students learn the responsibilities of a student-athlete, balancing academic demands with athletic commitments and serving as role models for their peers.

**Sense of Belonging:** School team tennis fosters a strong sense of belonging by creating a supportive environment where students play alongside their friends, work together toward common goals, and feel more engaged in their school community. Which is crucial for mental and emotional wellbeing during this stage of development.

## RESOURCES

[USTA Middle and High School Team Tennis](#)

[National Federation of State High School Associations – Tennis](#)



## OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Out-of-School programs are a vital component in developing future tennis players and fans, while also serving as a crucial resource for youth. These programs provide a safe and positive alternative to unsupervised time after school, offering engaging and enriching activities. Academically, these programs enhance learning through a range of creative, hands-on experiences. Tennis is an ideal sport to introduce in this setting. Successful programs often use tennis as a captivating “hook” to introduce young people not only to the sport itself, but also to essential life skills, critical thinking habits, and the positive virtues of determination, hard work, and sportsmanship.

The USTA offers comprehensive resources for Out-of-School programs incorporating tennis, including a full community curriculum for teaching large groups available on USTA.com. While this program often features diverse activities, tennis can be a standout offering. Some programs may integrate tennis as a core activity for all participants, often funded by external sources or through a fee paid to a provider. Other programs might offer tennis as an add-on option, with families paying an additional fee. It's essential that all out-of-school programs provide a clear pathway for interested children to transition into more specialized tennis programming at local clubs, NJTL chapters, CTAs, or parks. This should be communicated to students and parents, with an emphasis on providing affordable options for all families.

## BENEFITS OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL TENNIS PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS

**Improved Academic Outcomes:** Regular participation in high-quality after-school programs, including those with tennis, is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores, improved work habits, and better overall behavior. Students also show better attitudes toward school and higher educational aspirations.

**Enhanced Safety and Supervision:** The program provides a safe and structured environment, reducing the risk of unsupervised time during peak hours for juvenile crime and risky behaviors.

**Reduced Risky Behaviors:** Out-of-School programs can contribute to decreased delinquency, substance use, and other risky behaviors by providing positive alternatives and engaging activities.

**Increased Physical Activity:** These programs offer valuable opportunities for children to engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily, which is associated with numerous health benefits and improved academic performance.

**Social and Emotional Development:** It fosters improved social and communication skills, stronger relationships with peers and adults, increased self-confidence, and enhanced emotional well-being.

## RESOURCES

[USTA Health Benefits for Kids](#)

**Additional Resources:**

[Tennis Venue Services](#)

[Schools Pathway Flowchart](#)

## CASE STUDY: COLMESNEIL HIGH SCHOOL | Submitted by Sergio Ramos

### Introduction

Sergio Ramos, Tennis Coach at Colmesneil High School in Colmesneil, Texas, notes, “I have been actively involved with promoting tennis in Southeast Texas for 60 years, first as a college tennis player, then, after college, as a high school tennis coach. I coached in Woodville High School (50 years) and now, I coach in Colmesneil High School.

“My goal has been to introduce as many people as possible to the sport of a lifetime, tennis. While in Woodville High School, we resurfaced two old asphalt courts, then we built four new concrete courts. Woodville built a tradition of winning consistently in district and regionals and then advancing to the state tournament for many years.

“After leaving Woodville, I came to Colmesneil High School. One of my goals was to restart the tennis program by promoting tennis among the students, the school community and administration. I made a presentation to the local school board about building a tennis facility. Since we did not have tennis courts, the tennis team practiced in one of the gyms. The team has been able to win our district tournament twice since then. A presentation was made to the school board nearly four years ago about building tennis courts.”

### Goals

To restart the tennis program at Colmesneil High School, and to build courts at Colmesneil High School

- **Project Size:** Colmesneil High School has 28 students involved in varsity, junior varsity and freshman teams
- **Location:** Colmesneil High School, Colmesneil, Texas
- **Community Size:** The high school is a Texas Region 3-2A school
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Colmesneil High School
- **Length of Project:** Project took nearly a year to complete
- **Budget:** \$300,000
- **Funding Source(s):** Colmesneil ISD paid for the whole project, although it was able to fund only two courts instead of the four requested

### History

“After four years, this goal has become a reality. Colmesneil High School has two brand-new, beautiful tennis courts as well as active teams. We dedicated our courts with a ribbon cutting to go along with the USTA’s promotion of May as National Tennis Month. ”

Activities to coordinate with the court opening and with National Tennis Month included the following:

- Tennis team members spoke in the local elementary school about tennis sportsmanship and tennis etiquette.
- Several area tennis coaches were invited to participate in the event. Three of these coaches were members of the Texas Tennis Coaches Association Hall of Fame.
- Colmesneil also offered a student mixed doubles tournament after school where high school tennis players asked another student in the school to play doubles with them. The benefits of tennis as a lifetime sport were the main emphasis for all events.

### Tips from the Pros

Promote tennis consistently among students, parents, school administrators and the whole community.

### Lessons Learned

Patience and perseverance.





## CASE STUDY: ECADEMY K8 TENNIS CLUB | Submitted by Lyndsey DiLorenzo

### Introduction

eCADEMY K8 Online Magnet School was a brand-new Albuquerque public school created in 2020 in response to community demand. eCADEMY K8 continues to offer a completely online comprehensive education and to serve students from kindergarten to eighth grade.

When the eCADEMY K8 Tennis Club was created, there were no in-person clubs at eCADEMY K8, but there was a need for in-person community and engagement. With generous grants and a lot of heart from all those who helped this project come together, students had the opportunity to have their lives positively impacted by the game of tennis with fellow students and friends.

### Goal

The goal of the eCADEMY K8 Tennis Club was to meet a need for in-person connection at an online school and to provide the opportunity for students to engage, grow and develop, and overall for us to be able to promote the game of tennis.

- **Project Size:** 25 students
- **Location:** Highpoint Sports & Wellness in Albuquerque, New Mexico
- **Community Size:** Fourth through eighth graders at eCADEMY K8 Online Magnet School, a Title 1 School located within the Albuquerque Public School District
- **Lead Advocates for Organization:** Lyndsey DiLorenzo (eCADEMY K8 School Counselor) and Wendy Thomas (Highpoint Sports & Wellness Instructor)
- **Length of Project:** 2021-2022 School Year was the first year. (The Tennis Club is set to continue each year.)
- **Budget:** Zero-sum

### Funding Source(s)

- Grants from partnerships
- Tennis court time donated from Highpoint Sports & Wellness
- Donation of time, food and miscellaneous items from Lyndsey DiLorenzo and Wendy Thomas

## Partnership(s)

Tennis Club organizers were grateful to the following:

- Highpoint Sports & Wellness: Donation of court time
- USTA-Southwest Section: Donation of tennis racquets, tennis balls and prizes
- New Mexico Youth Tennis Foundation: Donation of \$300 for T-shirts

## History

According to Lyndsey DiLorenzo, “The eCADEMY K8 Tennis Club began as an idea in the Summer of 2021 with Wendy Thomas (a tennis instructor) and me (Lyndsey DiLorenzo), a collegiate tennis player and current professional school counselor, brainstorming and researching, then grant writing to put the vision into action. We advocated for the students and the sport for the benefit of all involved. The eCADEMY K8 Tennis Club started in early October and concluded at the end of April. There was great success, both emotionally and physically.

“The eCADEMY K8 Tennis Club started as a dream of adults and leadership but was accomplished with amazing students who were, and continue to be, filled with endless potential. The students would come week after week, improving their skills and building their confidence.

“I would reach out to students of the eCADEMY K8 Tennis Club via e-mail, school chat and phone calls to encourage participation and conversation. It was fun and character-building. I decorated with a professional banner, balloons (first day), banner flags and certificates (last day). I provided gifts, prizes and healthy snacks after each session. There was also a pizza party at the end of each semester to celebrate our successes. Gently used racquets and balls were given to family members to encourage play between sessions and beyond. Tennis is a lifelong sport with numerous benefits, and we want to foster a love for it!”

## Funding

Lyndsey and Wendy donated their time and money to make the eCADEMY K8 Tennis Club a success, but it always takes a village. The USTA-Southwest Section generously provided tennis racquets and tennis balls. New Mexico Youth Tennis Foundation generously provided funds for a group T-shirt for students to keep which fostered unity and a greater sense of connection. The confidence and joy seen as the players sported their T-shirts was contagious. The eCADEMY K8 Tennis Club members did not have to pay any money to participate; they only needed to arrange their transportation to the tennis courts.

Other Support/Donations: Many people and organizations worked together to create something beautiful from scratch. The program enjoyed visits from the two other eCADEMY K8 school counselors to promote balanced wellness and to address questions and concerns on the spot.

## Tips from the Pros

Follow your dreams and don't give up!

## Lessons Learned

Lyndsey DiLorenzo notes, “Success is always possible, even at a completely online school. I was able to use my experience of playing collegiate tennis and being a professional school counselor to weave life lessons into the tennis curriculum to provide lifelong success on and off the court. Friendships were formed and tennis strokes were refined. It really was the best of both worlds!”

## CASE STUDY: FREE HOME TENNIS CLUB | Submitted by Keith Furstenberg

### Introduction

The Free Home Rocket Tennis Club began in 2018, coinciding with Coach Keith Furstenberg being hired by the Cherokee County School District. At the time, Free Home Elementary School had neither a tennis program nor access to tennis equipment. The Free Home community is primarily a rural farming area.

### Goal

This program had several goals:

- Promote wellness and activity to elementary students through tennis
- Promote the game of tennis to students in a community where it is not commonly played
- Foster sportsmanship in school
- Provide opportunities to underserved students
- **Project Size:** A total of 28 fourth and fifth grade students participated in the first year
- **Location:** Free Home Elementary School, Canton, Georgia
- **Community Size:** The school has 317 students
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Free Home Elementary School
- **Length of Project:** Eight months
- **Budget:** \$600
- **Funding Source(s):** The new balls and pop-up nets were bought by a grant to improve participation
- **Partnership(s):** The USTA and the school PTA

### History

Within his first year at the school, Coach Furstenberg applied for a USTA grant for tennis equipment. He was then paired with a USTA member from Cherokee County. Together, they brainstormed ideas on how to make an elementary tennis club that would provide players with their first glimpse into the world of tennis.

Coach Furstenberg has always had a love for racquet sports. He knew that he was going to share his passion for the game with students who had never experienced it before. The first step was to obtain the equipment through a USTA grant. In the meantime, he scoured garage sales and estate sales to get equipment. He began incorporating the basic skills as stations during his physical education class and in the after-school program.

After receiving the USTA grant, and subsequently enough equipment to begin a club (and with the school principal's approval), the Free Home Tennis Club was formally created, offering before-school tennis. In its first year, 18 students from the third, fourth and fifth grade joined. The school gym hosted all play. In the beginning of the club, most of the students had never even seen a real tennis racquet in person, let alone held one.

Coach Furstenberg honed in on his tennis skills by attending special racquet sport sessions at the "Share the Wealth Conference" in 2019, 2020 and then again in 2022 after a year where many events were cancelled due to COVID-19. The program was selected in 2020 as a USTA Superhero Event. A representative came out and shot a short film of the tennis club, while participants enjoyed becoming "tennis superheroes," wearing superhero outfits while they had a blast playing.

The Rocket Tennis Club has enjoyed growth and renewed interest each year. In 2021 and 2022, the group grew to 26 students who met every week. All of the students in kindergarten through fifth grade are also getting opportunities to use the racquets and equipment during a two-week tennis unit.

Coach Furstenberg has been using skills from additional USTA webinars and conferences to enhance the experience for his students. Students can also use the equipment during the after-school program on the schools' blacktop area. Tennis has also been incorporated into the annual field day as a station.

Most recently, Coach Furstenberg has been encouraging and growing the game with minority students. His aim is to get more support from the USTA and the school PTA for the upcoming school year to purchase more equipment. Another goal is to have continued growth and support from the community. This would include getting financial support to replace old and broken equipment as needed.

### Funding

Funding came from a USTA grant, and from a separate Grow the Game grant.

Other Support/Donations: The group has received support from the school PTA to purchase portable nets and new tennis balls.

### Tips from the Pros

Coach Furstenberg says, "We were fortunate to receive some fantastic support from the local pros when we were first establishing our club. They provided ideas on how to run stations and small-sided games. We also obtained laminated skill cue cards to help during stations and instructional time."

### Lessons Learned

Coach Furstenberg is thrilled with the success of the program, noting, "A project that is small and operated by one person can be a wonderful opportunity to share the love of tennis and to grow the game. My goal is to create a lifelong appreciation for tennis and other racquet sports. Many components are a piece of these sports lessons, including teamwork, social and emotional learning, as well as a chance to create memories with others. Some of these students would not have had a chance to learn about the game if it were not for the USTA and the grant it gave to our school several years ago."



## CASE STUDY: THE HOMESCHOOL HELPERS TENNIS PROGRAM | Submitted by Rick Hassler

### Introduction

Homeschool children in the Lakes Region, Nashua and Seacoast can learn tennis, thanks to a new program started by two residents and supported by funding from USTA New England and USTA New Hampshire, as well as additional help from Advantage Kids.

Jolie and Rick Hassler launched the program at Gilford Hills Tennis & Fitness Club in March, the first of six weekly lessons for more than 100 homeschoolers in the state at the Gilford club and also at Longfellow Tennis & Swim Club in Nashua and Great Bay Athletic Club in Newmarket.

This project began with Jolie Hassler teaching tennis to homeschoolers in the local gym as a physical education course. The students loved it. Jolie borrowed racquets, nets and balls from Advantage Kids and the word started spreading. Other parents started asking for similar programs, and wanted to know how they could help. Adam Hirshan of USTA New England heard about this and facilitated a grant to make the program a possibility.

### Goal

To teach tennis to homeschool students, giving them a sport they can enjoy for the rest of their lives.



- **Project Size:** The goal was to have 250 new homeschoolers playing tennis by 12/31/22
- **Location:** Program used three tennis clubs located in New Hampshire
- **Community Size:** The New Hampshire homeschool community has been estimated at 5,000
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** The Homeschool Helpers and USTA New England
- **Length of Project:** Current project funding until year end, then continuation
- **Budget:** Currently \$20,000 with hope of expansion
- **Funding Source(s):** USTA New England and USTA New Hampshire
- **Partnership(s):** Advantage Kids, Gilford Hills Tennis Club, Great Bay Athletic Club, Longfellow New Hampshire Tennis & Swim Club

## History

After the first two sessions and teaching over 100 new students in three clubs, Jolie had a considerable waiting list for additional sessions and was being asked by homeschoolers around the state to bring the program to their area.

## Some quotes from Jolie and stories about students:

- I have one 10-year-old student who walked up to me and said, "This is the first sport I have ever played, thank you so much," and hugged me.
- Another student wants to become skilled enough to try out for the local tennis team.
- I have many students and parents who wrote wonderful letters and cards, thanking us for the program.
- I had three kids hug me when I came into our Homeschool Cooperative on Monday, because they enjoyed it so much.
- Another came to tennis class with a great smile and I said, "What's the word of the day?" The answer: "I love tennis, thank you so much!"
- The parents' support and appreciation is constant with thank you e-mails and texts.

Rick Hassler notes, "Jolie is grateful for this opportunity to grow this incredible sport and just is working on figuring out how to keep it going, and how to build this out in order to serve homeschoolers across the U.S."

The result, say organizers, is nothing short of phenomenal. Many of the students had never played a sport and had limited access to any type of sports teaching. They now love tennis and their parents are also playing with them for a great experience.

## Funding

Grants as follows:

- USTA New England: \$12,164
- USTA New Hampshire: \$3,500
- Rick and Jolie Hassler donated their time and teaching, as has one of the pros at Great Bay. So far, the program has taught six-week beginner sessions to 108 different students at a cost to organizers of only \$ 67.59 per student

Other Support/Donations: Support of homeschoolers, minimal registration fee of \$20 per student



## Tips from the Pros

“Use a minimal registration fee (\$20 is good) to assist in sustainability and commitment from the student/parent,” notes Rick Hassler. “Most important is having the correct racquet, court and balls available, which we did, and this facilitated happiness instead of frustration. We also made sure they had the correct grip. Students had a fun warm-up, as well as an explanation of the court, including the names of all lines. From there, we progressed to forehand, backhand, volley and serve, as well as many fun games. After that came instructions on how to rally and play with family and friends and how to enjoy tennis. Most importantly, we made sure they had fun; the pros all made this happen.”

## Lessons

Have a daily theme or word of the day, like “effort” or “teamwork” to assist with character building and working together. Always emphasize fun.

## CASE STUDY: LETT TENNIS SKILLS CHALLENGE | Submitted by Suzy Harris

### Goal

To create tennis P.E. programs in elementary and middle schools in order to increase the number of underserved youths playing tennis, and to increase the number of middle and high school tennis teams.

- **Project Size:** Seven schools, with a total of 1,300 students in P.E.; teams of 15 took part in the Skills Challenge
- **Location:** Various schools and Highland Park Tennis Center (all located in Alabama)
- **Community Size:** 1.1 million in the metro area
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Birmingham Area Tennis Association/Learning Excellence Through Tennis (LETT)
- **Length of Project:** The program first ran between March and May 2022
- **Budget:** Between \$10,000 and \$15,000
- **Funding Source(s):** Birmingham City Schools, USTA Foundation, USTA Southern, USTA Alabama, Friends of Highlands, Birmingham Park and Rec, individual donors
- **Partnership(s):** Birmingham City Schools P.E. Department; University of Alabama-Birmingham Minority Health and Health Disparities Center

### Introduction

“Our National Tennis Month program supported the development of P.E. tennis and the LETT Tennis Skills Challenge in the Birmingham City Schools, a 100% free and reduced lunch district with students who are primarily African American and Hispanic,” says Suzy Harris, LETT’s executive director. “The goal of this program is to introduce tennis to underserved third through eighth graders in the P.E. setting and to allow them to compete as teams against one another in the hopes that we can involve students in after-school, summer and weekend tennis programs. We hope to see the development of middle and high school tennis teams.

“The Skills Challenge itself allows P.E. coaches from area schools to select up to 15 students from their P.E. tennis classes to form a team to compete against those of other schools. P.E. tennis programs began in February and March and continued into April in anticipation of the Skills Challenge, which was first held on May 25, 2022.

“The teams competed against each other in five activities while P.E. teachers also had the option of competing against other P.E. teachers in the same skills. In addition to tennis skills, we introduced nutrition, life skills and reading components that will count toward their team standings.”

### History

LETT laid the foundation for this program in 2018 and 2019 by hosting two professional development days for all 85 P.E. teachers in the system. The program introduced P.E. teachers to tennis (if they did not yet play it) and provided Net Generation training in the computer lab.

With the assistance of USTA Southern and Alabama staff members, LETT also provided instruction on the new P.E. tennis curriculum. For P.E. tennis, about 600 to 800 students were involved and up to 150 students competed in the Skills Challenge.

Harris notes, “We hope to continue the challenge in the future and are in talks with the district to extend this program in the fall and spring with the creation of an after-school junior team tennis league for fourth, fifth and sixth graders. The district is willing to invest funds in the program and we will be approaching the Police Athletic League to try to involve officers in the program as well.”

The numbers and results speak for themselves. For P.E. tennis, about 600 to 800 students were involved, and up to 150 students competed in the Skills Challenge. Harris says, “Our challenge in 2019 resulted in six students arriving at their high school ready to help create a team. This led to a boys’ team at Ramsey High School for the first time in years.”

Each participant is also offered the opportunity to join LETT’s free Saturday Tennis programs. One recent event has already resulted in three students and their siblings signing up for the programs.

### Tips from the Pros

Plan for inclement weather; at one point, the forecast did not call for rain, but overnight, it rained.

### Lessons Learned

“The weather did not cooperate but we were lucky in that the school’s event room was available; however, it still had voting machines from the previous day’s elections,” Harris says. “One of our volunteers happened to be on the Election Board and she was able to reach the judge for permission to use the room. He asked her to stay in the room and we were able to use pop-up nets and foam and red balls for the activities. (No voting machines were harmed.) Next year, we will book the event room, just in case. We will also work with the district on working around testing and other key activities.”

## CASE STUDY: OKMULGEE PRIMARY TENNIS PROGRAM | Submitted by Dr. James Quinn

### Introduction

Okmulgee is a small rural town about 40 miles south of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The town did have a rich history of tennis, but that was long ago and there were very few people who played anymore. The school tennis program was gone and all that was left of the robust program was the public tennis courts and two school courts that needed to be refurbished.

Okmulgee is a community that has a median family income of about \$34,000 and many of the students in the schools come from broken homes. There is a diverse student population that is made up from three large groups: Native American (First American), African American and Caucasian.

“I had a vision to help young people become interested in something other than videogames and drugs,” says Dr. James Quinn. “Since I play tennis and I am a school counselor, I got permission to start an after-school program for the kids to play tennis.”

### Goal

To develop a tennis program for elementary students that will enrich the lives of the participants and their families.

- **Project Size:** 30 students
- **Location:** Okmulgee, Oklahoma
- **Community Size:** 12,500 residents
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Okmulgee Public School
- **Length of Project:** 10 weeks
- **Budget:** Zero-sum
- **Funding Source(s):** Donations from Victory Tennis in Little Rock, Arkansas; Tulsa Area Tennis Association; Indian Springs Tennis Club; RH 91 Tennis Club Tulsa; the founders of the program, Dr. James Quinn and his wife, also purchased balls, a net for indoor use and racquets
- **Partnership(s):** Tulsa Area Tennis Association



## History

“There is only a 10-week history as we are wrapping up the after-school program. It is very successful, and the local paper has run two stories about our program. We have 30 kids who have fallen in love with the sport and have learned the basic skills – and at least 30 more want to join.

“Not only are they physically active but they play together cooperatively and they have improved their listening skills. The kids and parents have expressed their excitement and they want more tennis-related activities for next year. We hope to expand our program into a summer camp and a new program for our middle school. The kids just love the program and have learned many skills (both on and off court) that will help them in all areas of development.”

## Funding

“We started with zero money. My wife and I bought a net for the gym and some red-dot practice balls. I received donations of used junior racquets to get started. Tulsa Area Tennis Association provided junior racquets and coaches’ racquets to help our program grow. The school PTO is providing more balls and a net; we have not received those yet.”

## Other Support/Donations

“We are getting more and more support from the community. So far, the Tulsa Area Tennis Association, the Okmulgee PTO and local T-shirt shop, Main Street Customs, have donated shirts for the kids.”

## Tips from the Pros

Don’t be afraid to get expert help. “The director of Junior Tennis at Racquet and Health 91(RH-91) in Tulsa, Matias Marian, helped me by inviting me to watch and participate in their junior program. After a few sessions with Matias, I felt comfortable starting the sessions with our kids. He taught me drills for the kids and how to link with Net Generation to receive equipment for the school, as well as the curriculum to help out with tennis lessons.”

## Lesson

Sometimes, it’s all about the learning experiences of the participants. “The kids have learned the importance of exercise and activity,” Quinn says proudly. “They also know that they have to keep practicing to develop a skill. They have learned to work together as a team. They are learning kindness and the importance of obeying rules in the game and in life. Many of the students have improved behavior in the classroom as a result of participation in the tennis program, and for many, grades have improved as well.”



# Local Play and Competition

Integral to growing and improving tennis opportunities in the unranked space for communities across the U.S. are the USTA's efforts in promoting Local Play and Competition. In advocating for tennis, the USTA—at the national level, section level and often state/district level—have resources and information available that can help local advocates when it comes to:

- **Expanding Participation**—Encouraging more players to engage in local events and activities such as tournaments, leagues, and recreational play, and spreading the word that these opportunities are available to all.
- **Developing Programs**—Supporting initiatives, based on fun and improvement such as Team Challenges, Junior Team Tennis, Junior Circuits, Red Ball Tennis Team Challenges, Pilots, and other entry-level events.
- **Improving Accessibility**—Ensuring tennis is available to diverse communities with or without tennis courts by working with local providers in partnerships, with CTAs, Parks & Recs, schools and school districts, Boys & Girls clubs, senior centers, and YWCA/YMCA.
- **Updating Regulations**—Reviewing and refining national policies for junior competition and events in the unranked space at the local level.
- **Assisting in the Alignment of the USTA Youth Pathway**—Guiding players aged 5 to 18 through a structured developmental framework that fosters growth, retention, and competitive play while emphasizing fun, teamwork, and decision-making.

The USTA also researches trends in player growth and retention, piloting new junior programs, and collaborates with USTA Staff and Sections to enhance local tennis experiences.

To find out more about resources available to help promote tennis in your community, contact your USTA Section staff.

## RESOURCES

[Net Generation Pathway Regulations](#)

[RedBallTennis](#)

### Promotional Videos

[Red Ball Tennis: RedrawtheLines](#)

[Tennis on Tap: Businesses](#)

[Tennis on Tap: Players](#)

### Provider Tool Kit

[Red Ball Tennis Poster](#)

[Red Ball Tennis Poster \(customizable\)](#)

[Red Ball Tennis Postcard](#)

### Print/Digital

[Red Ball Tennis - Adaptive Population](#)

### USTA Coaching

[Adult Red Ball Coaching Module](#)

### Curriculums

[10% skill-90% play](#)

[30% skill-70% play](#)

[50% skill, 50% play](#)

### National Contacts

Marilyn Sherman, USTA, Mgr, National Social Play (Red Ball), [sherman@usta.com](mailto:sherman@usta.com)  
(C) 678-520-5649

Robert Gorden, USTA, Mgr, Social Play (Red Ball), [robert.gorden@usta.com](mailto:robert.gorden@usta.com)  
(C) 407-725-5418

# National Junior Tennis & Learning (NJTL)

In 1969, the National Junior Tennis League was created as a way to gain and hold the attention of young people, with the hope of teaching them the importance of character, getting an education and becoming productive citizens.

Arthur Ashe, Charlie Pasarell & Sheridan Snyder, with the goal of developing the character of young people through tennis by: REACHING out to those who may not otherwise have the opportunity to learn and play tennis. INSTILLING the values of leadership and academic excellence. GIVING youngsters the opportunity to fully develop their tennis skills so they can derive a lifetime of enjoyment from the sport.

Today, the now-named National Junior Tennis and Learning network features over 275 nonprofit youth development organizations that offer free or low-cost tennis and education programming to over 130,000 under-resourced youth each year. NJTL is supported by the USTA Foundation, the national charitable organization of the USTA. The work done by its member chapters includes after-school tutoring that focuses on academic enrichment, a life-skills curriculum and, of course, tennis.

## Resources

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about how your CTA can become an NJTL chapter for the first time or for answers to commonly asked questions.

## CASE STUDY: MACH ACADEMY, INC. EDUCATION & OUTREACH | Submitted by: Michael Harden

### Introduction

MACH Academy, Inc. learned there was funding available for individuals who were interested in coaching. Level 1 Coaching requires individuals to take two online Level 1 courses, two virtual workshops and one in-person workshop. The organization had a vision of finding young college graduates, women and high school seniors. As a result, MACH Academy started recruiting prospects, knowing it would need more coaches for more outreach.

### Goals

This project had two goals: To increase the number of coaches for more outreach into the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) Community, and to motivate and inspire more people to play tennis.

- **Project Size:** Six individuals were chosen for this training
- **Location:** Central Savannah River Area (CSRA) of Georgia
- **Community Size:** Under 200,000
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** MACH Academy, Inc.
- **Length of Project:** Four months
- **Budget:** \$6,000
- **Funding Source(s):** USTA Foundation, Richmond County Parks & Recreation and MACH Academy, Inc.
- **Partnership(s):** USTA, MACH Academy, Inc. and Richmond County Parks & Recreation



## History

“MACH Academy’s goal is to bring change into the lives of participants, and in so doing, would like to reach as many participants as possible,” says Michael Harden of MACH Academy. “We want to take MACH Academy to the Boys and Girls Club, Richmond County Schools and the YMCA.”

But there was a surprise in store for MACH Academy when it came time to recruit, he adds:

“Willie Mae Pace is a 74-year-old. She is an official senior citizen. How can she be a success story? MACH Academy always recruits coaches to work for summer camp. This summer, 74-year-old Willie Mae Pace approached our president/CEO about wanting to work from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the hot sun, helping with the tennis program. We were wondering how this could possibly work out, but we said she could do it! We signed up to recruit coaches to participate in the USTA Level 1 Coaching Education. We started with six participants and ended with one eligible for the coaching stipend. Imagine our surprise when we learned it was Willie Mae Pace!

“Well, this lady is a phenom! She is a mother, grandmother, cancer survivor, tennis enthusiast, and on her way to becoming a PTR certified tennis coach at the age of 74. Willie Mae Pace was born November 16, 1947, in Louisville, Georgia. She started tennis at the age of 22, and it is her passion.

“Mrs. Pace is a cancer survivor of 12 years. With tennis being her passion, she continued to play once a week even during chemo. Her hobbies include gardening, cooking, reading and writing. Mrs. Pace serves as a Board Member for the CSRA tennis community and has completed training to become a USTA official. She is able to keep up on the court with children who are between five and 10 years old and is an inspiration to the adults who want to play.

“She has single-handedly completed the Level 1 Coaching education module and attended the virtual sessions. She has adapted to the high-level technology required to be in the virtual world. She has adapted to digital assignments. This phenom’s philosophy is simple: Believe in doing ALL the good for as many people as you can, family first. She sees MACH Academy as part of her family. Willie Mae Pace is an inspiration to the surrounding community by displaying her strong work ethic and her wisdom to the next generation of children.

“Willie Mae’s ability to complete the new USTA Level 1 Coaching Education Program, working with tennis players under the age of 10 on top of adapting to digital/virtual teaching methods is a success story and a testament to closing the generation gap. This really proves tennis is the sport of a lifetime.”

## Funding

\$2,000

Other Support/Donations: Richmond County Parks & Recreation

## Tips from the Pros

Make sure that your tennis instructor is educated, has specialized training and is on the path to certification.

## Lesson

Recruiting for coaches can come in many forms and fashions. Never overlook older and even senior-age tennis players. It’s helped us achieve a lot of stability.



## CASE STUDY: CREATING RURAL-BASED NJTL PROGRAMS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE'S MOUNT WASHINGTON VALLEY | Submitted by Robert Ronstadt

### Introduction

Over 7,500 children under the age of 18 live in Carroll County. The vast majority of these have never been introduced to tennis. Under the leadership of Kent Hemingway, Advantage Kids decided to offer free beginner and pathway programs starting in 2019. Many of these children were living in families whose income was below the poverty level. According to the U.S. Census, half lived in families where the median per capita income is well below the national average of \$53,504 versus \$42,085 for Carroll County.

### Goal

To create a self-sufficient, semi-autonomous NJTL program in a large (over 900 square miles) and sparsely populated region of northern New Hampshire, with regional tennis programs, regional funding, regional partners, operated by a regional area manager who is supported by a small stipend from Advantage Kids but volunteers the bulk of his time.

- **Project Size:** The project has been serving over 400 children from several different towns since 2019. In 2021, Mount Washington Valley ran 22 programs in multiple locations (described below). All told, the program delivered nearly 200 hours of tennis instruction and 100 hours of yoga training.
- **Location:** The Mount Washington Valley Region of New Hampshire has 18 towns in Carroll County. Programs are operated in the towns of Tamworth, Jackson, Eastern Slope, King Pine, Conway, North Conway, Cranmore and Freedom, plus Fryeburg, Maine.
- **Community Size:** There are 50,107 people living in Carroll County, according to the 2020 Census. Of these, approximately 15% or 7,500, are under the age of 18.
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** Advantage Kids
- **Length of Project:** Some programs are year-round due to partnership with after-school programs. However, most programs are approximately six months each year (May to October). Additional year-round activities are difficult because no public indoor courts exist in Carroll County. We are working to change that.



- **Budget:** The budget for 2021/22 was (rounded off) \$38,000. The average cost per program was approximately \$1,700 or \$95 per child across 22 programs.
- **Funding Source(s):** A principal funding source is the annual Dana Steele Mountain Tennis Tournament. Donations come to Advantage Kids from Carroll County donors, as well as from the USTA/New Hampshire, USTA/New England and USTA Foundation, plus school districts as part of their funding of after-school programs.
- **Partnership(s):** Brett School of Tamworth; Freedom Elementary School; Kennett High School; North Conway Recreation Center; Eastern Slope Inn; Fryeburg Recreation; Jackson Tennis Club, Purity Spring Resort.

## History

Robert Ronstadt notes, “Our first programs were based on the USTA Team Challenge events and were held at the Jackson Tennis Club and the now-defunct Cranmore Indoor Tennis Center. These sessions quickly filled to capacity and gave us inspiration to begin the Advantage Kids Tennis PLUS! programs in 2020.

“We were able to secure the services of former Cranmore tennis professionals twins, Justin and Chris Chaffee. We utilized local outdoor courts throughout the valley and advertised through schools and the local newspaper. The publisher is a tennis advocate and friend, offering us free advertising in high visibility placements.

“We enjoyed such success, filling sessions and reaching a capacity that necessitated getting additional instructors. The Kennett High School varsity coach, retired teachers and our certified yogi became active members of our crew.”

The program can point to any number of indicators for success, including the development of introductory tennis skills, as well as yoga skills relating to balance, flexibility, motor control, mindfulness, listening skills and collaboration. Preparation for high school tennis is another outcome. Six Advantage Kids players are currently on the Kennett High School varsity teams.

Development of tennis coaches is yet another positive result. The program’s assistant coaches have gained certification through USTA youth coach program development. The program has added at least one additional staff member each season for the past year to address gains in enrollment, all great indicators for tennis.

And, says Ronstadt, “We have been able to help repair and maintain existing outdoor courts. Four of our middle school level players have assisted with clay court installation and maintenance, spending hours learning how to drive nails in canvas tapes.

“Finally, we are helping to create an indoor tennis facility. The North Conway Tennis Association (NCTA) has purchased land to build a new indoor tennis facility as the Cranmore courts were demolished to make way for an additional tourist hotel. Advantage Kids is a partner in this process and is collaborating with NCTA to make this a reality in 2024.”

## Funding

Funding came from a variety of sources, including a local adult tennis tournament where participants donate to Advantage Kids. Funds are also earmarked for Mount Washington Valley. The Tamworth Outing Club is a local organization devoted to outdoor activities for all ages; members have agreed to sponsor the spring, summer and fall programs at the Brett School in Tamworth.

Additionally, the program received funding from the Tamworth Foundation during the COVID summer of 2021; this supported activities for children at a time when many camps, swimming and summer enrichment programs were cancelled.

Other Support/Donations: In-kind support of court/gym time has come from the North Conway Recreation Center, Jackson Tennis Club, Eastern Slope Inn, Purity Spring Resort and Project Succeed in the Conway School District; in addition, individuals voluntarily provide additional supervision of players.

### Tips from the Pros

Ronstadt says, “The best way to fund programs is through local (i.e., regional) events that incorporate adults playing tennis. Target those adults who “bleed” tennis and are willing to give back to the game they love.

“The most successful approach to growing awareness is a round robin tennis event where there are no entry fees. Instead, a small portion of the day during the awards ceremony is dedicated to educating participants about Advantage Kids. The donations that result from this approach are outstanding, with some individuals donating hundreds of dollars to see tennis reborn in Mount Washington Valley.”

### Lessons Learned

Advantage Kids Leadership has grown to understand the best instructional models are associated with small groups, coupled with offering a variety of activities, and making sure the timing for each session is optimal. Many parents and their children comment very favorably on the tie between tennis and yoga.

# Public Facilities and Parks

The USTA, as your partner in play, provides tools and resources to help park and recreation departments develop and optimize their tennis programs. We have various services, programs, digital tools and educational opportunities to help you grow the game in public parks.

Nearly 70% of all tennis is played on public park tennis courts. Parks and recreation groups are vital to the health and growth of tennis. Legends such as Billie Jean King and Arthur Ashe grew up playing on public courts, as did Serena and Venus Williams and many other U.S. standouts.

For many years, the USTA has worked with parks and recreation organizations, including the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), to promote tennis in parks around the country. Many of these organizations also have state affiliates that collaborate with the USTA's Sections, Districts/States, and other tennis organizations to help grow the sport on the local level. Local tennis providers such as CTAs and NJTLs as well as adaptive and wheelchair tennis organizations often tie into their community's parks and recreation department to promote the game and help get more people of all ages on the court.

## ADVOCACY FOR PUBLIC PARK TENNIS

There are both direct and indirect ways for the tennis community to advance public park tennis.

First, understand the broader issues with which a park and recreation system deals. That will provide insight into how a tennis advocate can effectively partner with a park and recreation department to achieve the common goal of increased participation.

Second, understand how the park and recreation system works in your community. The issues addressed by park and recreation agencies are diverse and reflect the expressed needs and interests of the community. The operative term here is "expressed." Because public policy and funding are involved, it is often the most well-organized and visible advocacy effort that benefits most directly.

One of the most important things you can do for your cause is to visit your local park and recreation department. Ask to be walked through your city/county's Park Master Plan. This plan shows where parks are located, where parks are planned, and which facilities are given priority. You can identify where tennis courts are planned and see where space exists to build more. If you are not satisfied with the number of courts in your area, you can help change this with a grassroots advocacy plan. Don't be shy—ask questions of your park and recreation staff.

Another important factor is attending public Park and Recreation Commission meetings (if your city has one). Get to know the people on public boards and committees who may eventually deal with your tennis requests. You may find like-minded individuals in the audience at these meetings who can help with your advocacy goals.

As your tennis project plans coalesce, bring allies to these public meetings. Nothing helps influence local boards more than seeing other citizens there to support projects. Also attend meetings of related commissions and boards. For instance, if a tennis project involves the Wetlands Commission or the Zoning Board, be sure to attend those meetings. At the public meetings, take the opportunity to speak up, on the record. Often, media may be covering the meeting, and they may become interested in your advocacy plan.

## RESOURCES

[USTA Parks and Recreation](#)

[National Recreation and Park Association \(NRPA\) Advocacy](#)

[USTA Southern Facility Toolkit- Working with Park &](#)

[Recreation Department](#)

[USTA North Carolina Leadership Workshop—  
How to speak to your City Council](#)

## CASE STUDY: TULSA 2.5 BEGINNER LEAGUE - NON-ADVANCING | Submitted by Michelle O'quin

### Introduction

Tulsa has offered a non-advancing beginner 2.5 women's league for the second year. The impetus was that teaching pros believed that Tulsa needed a place for its newbies to compete outside of the regular 2.5 leagues.

LaFortune Park Tennis Center has several teaching pros who focus on new tennis players by offering beginner drills and lessons. These players are excited to be part of the USTA experience on a traditional team (and deemed "skirt worthy" by Melissa McCorkle, program director at LaFortune) but their skills are not strong enough to make them comfortable in playing traditional leagues.

The teams are captained by teaching pros or experienced players and the reins are handed off mid-season to a team member. The program offers pre-season events like "Love and Tiebreaks" where experienced players and pros teach scoring.

### Goal

For brand-new players to enter USTA leagues as soon as they can keep score and serve, and to have immediate success that they would not experience in the regular 2.5 league.

- **Project Size:** In 2022, there were four teams of brand-new players, separate from the tennis center's regular 2.5 leagues
- **Location:** LaFortune Park Tennis Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma
- **Community Size:** LaFortune Tennis Center hosted approximately 225 USTA teams in 2022
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** LaFortune Tennis Center; empowering the effort were its teaching pros: Melissa McCorkle, Amanda Scroggs and Bob Kline
- **Length of Project:** Ongoing
- **Budget:** Zero-sum
- **Funding Source(s):** None
- **Partnership(s):** DLC and teaching pros

### History

Michelle O'quin says, "We started the non-advancing woman's 2.5 beginner league in 2021 because ratings were not published at year end 2020 due to COVID. We had many ladies whose ratings were near 3.0 and 3.5 after playing the 2020 season but would remain in the 2.5 league for another year.

"We decided to form a new league so our true beginners would enjoy the fun of tennis against others at their skill level. They get the same great team experience as traditional leagues in a setting with less pressure to perform.

"Because it was such a positive experience, players begged to have the league again in 2022. The tennis center will have four teams (approximately 40 players) competing. The new-to-tennis women are so enthusiastic, and really enjoy buying matching skirts and being a part of the USTA league team experience. They are so happy to have a league of their own."

### Tips from the Pros:

Practice scoring and the Coman Tiebreak before the first match at an event.

### Lesson

Teams need an experienced captain or teaching pro to captain alongside the new player who will take over the team.



## CASE STUDY: SHAMEL PARK YOUTH TENNIS | Submitted by Coach David

### Introduction

Coach David says, “This project developed from a belief that youth tennis in this highly diverse community was limited to private clubs and affluent neighborhoods. When I approached the USPTA, I was essentially told that the USPTA primarily served private club directors of tennis. When I requested a mentor, I was assigned one who, although being very cordial, explained that USPTA does not really have a support program for the type of project I envisioned. So, I set out to expand youth tennis access with the help of a small business loan and personal funds.

### Goal

To grow youth tennis participation.

- **Project Size:** 150-200 children
- **Location:** Riverside, California
- **Community Size:** 250,000
- **Lead Advocate Organization:** SoCal Junior Tennis Development Center
- **Length of Project:** Six months
- **Budget:** \$12,000
- **Funding Source(s):** SBA Grant
- **Partnership(s):** City of Riverside Parks and Recreation

### History

“We obtained a contract to offer a program through the Riverside City Council after four years of promoting a grassroots initiative. In six months, we have registered over 250 children and established a year-round program. We also hired three additional instructors, as well as developed an instructor training system so that consistent high-level instruction can be offered. This is more youth participation in this program than in all five private club programs combined.”

### Funding

\$10,000 small business loan

Other Support/Donations: \$2,000 in personal funds

### Tips from the Pros

Be persistent and develop a program that is fun-based and children will come back! If (and only if) they have fun, they will be receptive to formal stroke instruction.

### Lesson

Build it (and fund it and make it fun) and they will come.

# Advocacy in Motion Worksheet

**1. State your goal in one sentence.**

**2. Who can give you what you want?**

**3. What is the message that will get you what you want?**

**4. Who will spearhead and/or co-spearhead your efforts?**

Can this person effectively lead discussions and set agendas?

Does this person have the time to devote to this cause? If not, select a co-chair to help.

**5. Who will be your core leaders? (Select 4-6 dedicated individuals from varying organizations if possible).  
What key positions will they hold?**

**a. City/Town Relations:**

Is there an advocate for your cause who already serves on a town/city/school/college board who can keep the group updated on important meetings to attend?

What key municipal contacts will this person make?

What techniques will this person use to make contact?

**b. Communications:**

What communications tools will you use to communicate with your group and the public? Social media, email, newsletters, phone?

What will the frequency of updates be?

Who will information be sent to on a regular basis?

Will you develop a website? Will you have a social media manager?

**c. Media Relations:**

What vehicles will you use to get the media's attention?

Press releases, letters to the Editor, television stories, blog posts, social media?

Is there a member of the local media who is a tennis player that can serve as an ally?

**d. School Relations:**

Is there someone who already sits on a school board or PTA board that is the parent of a junior tennis player?

**e. Fundraising Coordinator:**

What methods will you use to raise funds for this effort?

Does this person have experience writing grants, or will you need a Grant Coordinator as well?

**f. Treasurer:**

If this project is not associated with a CTA, you will need someone to keep your books. Is there an accountant or CPA in your community who plays tennis?

If this project is not associated with a CTA or other nonprofit group, will you apply for nonprofit and/or 501(c)(3) status in order to accept donations and raise funds?

**g. Tennis Specialist:**

Is there someone familiar with the USTA organization that can help you obtain information and keep contact with your state or section office?

Do they feel comfortable working with municipal staff?

**6. Who will be your "lieutenants"?**

- Think in terms of group leaders who can motivate the "troops" when called to action for petitions, city council meetings, letter-writing campaigns, etc.
- Suggestions: USTA team captains, Lead Teachers, coaches, PTA liaisons, high school or college club players.

**7. Who will be your allied groups, who will have an interest in seeing your goal completed?**

- How can you convince others to help your efforts?
- What will your completed goal offer them?
- Who will engage them?

**8. Do you have opposition for any reason?**

- What can be done to win over your opponent's support?

**9. Draft a timeline for your group to get you through the next year.**

- Cite short-term goals that will move you toward your long-term goal.
- Start with your first organizational meeting and include other important meetings and/or presentations with decision-makers that will help move you forward.







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