

USTA Florida

Advocacy Handbook

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Dear Tennis Advocates,

We are pleased to present the USTA Florida Advocacy Toolkit which includes many tools to help you make a difference in your communities. The Toolkit includes this Handbook and many resources available on our web site.

First, we want to thank our many, many volunteers who are currently advocating in your communities for new courts in public parks and schools; renovations to existing courts; and the innovative programming that is so important to our youth, adults and seniors. Your passion for tennis brings incredible benefits of tennis to children, families and neighborhoods in your community.

In Florida, it is more important than ever that we build strong advocacy programs in order to save tennis facilities across the state. Responding to an outcry from citizens across the state, this past June the Florida Legislature enacted tax reform measures that will save Florida taxpayers nearly \$32 billion over the next five years – the largest tax cut in Florida’s history. While we will benefit from lower property taxes, we will also be impacted by reductions in city and county services.

All cities and counties are required to cut taxes in the 2007-2008 fiscal year to the 2006-2007 revenue levels. Additional reductions ranging from three percent up to nine percent are also required in future years. Many cities and counties throughout Florida are reviewing their budgets and proposing substantial cuts to public recreation services. The City of Daytona Beach proposed closing the 24 court Florida Tennis Center, home of USTA Florida and the venue for hundreds of league matches and tournaments each year for players from juniors to super seniors. The City of Tampa is considering closing the 28 court tennis complex at the Hillsborough Community College (HCC). And this is only the tip of the iceberg.

We all know what a difference an investment in community tennis can do to improve the quality of life for children and families. After-school tennis programs keep kids safe, providing a positive alternative to the streets or hanging out at home alone without parental supervision. Tennis is one of only a few sports that can be played into one’s seventies and eighties, and provides important physical-fitness benefits by promoting a healthy lifestyle while fighting obesity and heart disease.

The Florida Advocacy Toolkit contains information on how to contact your local decision makers, form relationships with city staff, get help with funding, build coalitions, and generate excitement and enthusiasm for your ideas. We hope you will use this information, along with the assistance of staff and advocacy volunteers in Florida to strengthen your current advocacy efforts and to build new programs and partnerships. Your passion for tennis will make a difference!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Celia Rehm".

Celia Rehm
USTA Florida President

If you're reading this Handbook...you are an Advocate!

We hope this Handbook will serve as a useful guide for community tennis associations and volunteers who are passionate about tennis and their communities. Our goal is to help you channel your resources and passion for tennis in the most effective way possible. Please use the full resources of the Florida Toolkit to plan and strengthen your advocacy projects.

In addition to this Handbook, the following items in USTA Florida Toolkit can be found on our web site: www.ustaflorida.com

Advocacy Presentation – A Power Point presentation you can use for planning your individual projects and when presenting a project to decision makers.

USTA Guide to Community Tennis Associations and Newsletters – Information on how to establish and govern a Community Tennis Association.

Contact Information – Names and contact information for Florida Recreation and Park Directors, Mayors, County Commissions, County Administrators, School Board Members and USTA Staff and Volunteers.

Governor Crist's Executive Order – Council on Physical Fitness.

Information on Florida Property Tax Reform.

Media – Media articles containing the latest information on Florida tennis and advocacy projects.

National Recreation & Parks Association - *A Guide to Healthy Lifestyles* – Examples of community mobilization.

USTA Tennis Programs – Detailed descriptions of all of the tennis programs offered by the USTA.

Additional resources will be available at the USTA National Advocacy Website soon:
www.usta.com/BigServe

The 1-2-3s of COMMUNITY TENNIS ADVOCACY

1. Teach your Community Tennis Associations (CTAs), National Junior Tennis Leagues (NJTL), Community Coordinators, and local volunteers to identify existing and potential projects

- ◆ Proposed closure of tennis facilities due to reduced City/County revenues.
- ◆ City/County courts in need of repair or expansion.
- ◆ Potential City/County park consolidation projects.
- ◆ Are there one or two court facilities scattered throughout your city? Make an effort to consolidate those courts into one tennis hub and 'trade' the land for other uses.
- ◆ Identify proposed tennis courts projects contained in new subdivisions in City/County Master Plans. Master Plans are available for review at City Park Departments or City Planning Departments.
- ◆ Review School District five year construction plans – make sure that every new middle school and high school includes tennis courts. If not, lobby your School Board to include them.
- ◆ Check frequently with your Planning & Zoning Department for new developments.
- ◆ Ask about larger Planned Unit Developments in your community - propose that they include at least four or more tennis courts.
- ◆ Work with your middle schools and high schools to make sure they offer tennis programs, including no-cut tennis teams and Junior Team Tennis.
- ◆ Form partnerships with community colleges and universities to offer after school tennis programs for youth.

2. Form new and revitalize existing Community Tennis Associations

- ◆ Form new CTAs where the population is growing and/or new projects are emerging.

Encourage members from the following agencies to participate on all CTA Boards:

- School or PTA Board Member
 - Local college representative or coach
 - City Parks Department
 - Local community-based organizations (YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.)
 - NJTL Coordinator
- ◆ Make sure your CTA has a current Strategic Plan and the appropriate committees to ensure successful implementation.

3. Embrace the Florida Action Plan

- ◆ Use the Florida Toolkit to formulate new advocacy efforts – remember that the staff and advocacy volunteers in Florida are available to help you get started.
- ◆ Encourage all Florida CTAs to identify a Board member responsible for coordinating local advocacy efforts.

DEVELOPING YOUR ADVOCACY PROJECT

Step 1: Identify an issue or project that resonates with your 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 community?
- Are there juvenile crime problems in your area?
- Is there a lack of access to public courts, or do old courts need to be refurbished?
- Is your City/County experiencing financial cutbacks and proposing to close courts or discontinue tennis programs?

Step 2: Develop a clear idea

- What do you want, and why?
- How will you define success?
- How does your idea/plan address the concerns of local decision-makers?
- How does your plan positively affect the local community?
- Is your mission specific and targeted?

Step 3: Do your research

- Make sure you know the structure of your City/County – your first step should be to review their web site.
- Read past City Council/County Commission meeting minutes to determine priorities of your decision-makers.
- Learn how often the Council/Commission meets, and when budget hearings are held.
- Identify City/County staff who are important to your project.
- Know when the last Master Plan was approved, and when it will be revised.
- Review your local zoning and land use regulations.
- Identify your School Board members, and learn when they meet.
- Review your School District's five-year construction plans.

Step 4: Identify potential obstacles

- Who will oppose your mission and goals, and why?
- What are the potential obstacles to getting what you want?
- What do your opponents want?
- How can you turn opponents into supporters?

Step 5: Build a strong, broad-based coalition

- Coalitions are most effective when they represent a large number of people or groups with common interests and goals.
- Make sure your coalition includes representatives from schools, civic organizations, law enforcement, churches, health care organizations, youth-serving non-profits, and other areas that are positively impacted by tennis programs.
- Coalitions have greater potential to attract media attention.
- Coalitions offer greater access to expertise from a variety of organizations and individuals.
- Coalitions can provide cost effectiveness; you can share duties and resources.
- Remember, when approaching elected officials – there is power in numbers.

Step 6: Seek out external allies

- Chamber of Commerce and tourism development members
- Hotel, restaurant and business owners
- City Council and County Commission members and staff
- School staff and parents
- Planning and Zoning Board members
- School Board members
- Parks and Recreation board members

Step 7: Meetings with decision-makers

- Times, locations, and agendas of City Council and County Commission meetings are public information and usually can be found on their web sites.
- You must sign up in advance to speak, and usually your organization will have only three to five minutes for a presentation.
- Make sure your coalition is well represented at the meetings – ask them all to wear the same color. At the beginning of your presentation, ask them to stand to show support.
- Provide any supporting documents and hand-outs to City/County staff before the meeting so that Council/Commission members will have time to review them and prepare questions.
- When meeting a Council/Commission member in his/her office, it is best that no more than two or three members of your organization attend. Have this meeting at least a week prior to the City Council/County Commission meeting.
- Follow-up immediately with a letter thanking them for their time and consideration of your request.

Step 8: Executing your advocacy plan

- Set intermediate benchmarks for measuring success.
- Focus on achieving a series of short-term wins on the way to a long-term victory.
- Remain focused, vigilant, upbeat, and positive.
- Make your priorities clear to all.
- Be prepared to answer questions about opposing views in a positive manner.
- Be polite at all times.
- Stay consistent with your communications at all levels – volunteers and coalition members, City and County staff, decision makers, and the media.

Please see the National Advocacy Workbook for an excellent Advocacy in Motion Worksheet to further help you plan and carry out a successful advocacy project.

INFLUENCING DECISION MAKERS

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

DEVELOP YOUR MESSAGE

- Develop a specific target (new courts? new programs? saving courts and programs?).
- Know the costs.
- Know your weight (be able to quote the number of people/voters in your organization).

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- Get the names of the officials you want to influence.
- Find out what roles officials play.
- See if someone in your group or an allied group knows any of the Council or Commission members and can make introductions.
- Read your City/County strategic plan and budget and determine their goals.
- Understand the local pressures and pressure points.
- Learn the budget cycle.
- Get the calendar and schedule for meetings.
- Learn about each official's interests that relate to your message (are they interested in economic development? children? crime?).

LEARN HOW TO COUNT

- You only need a majority.
- Determine someone who will act as your "sponsor" on the Council or Commission to introduce motions.
- Meet separately with each Council/Commission member pitching your message toward their areas of interest.
- Assign someone to act as your spokesperson.
- Show support with a large, visible turnout (all wear the same color t-shirt or some such method of identification).
- Have all supporters register to speak, but restrict the number of speakers to a few.
- Speakers can withdraw as means to show respect for the Council/Commission's time and so as not to repeat the message.
- Make sure when people speak that they cover different topics or aspects of the problem and do not repeat. It helps to assign topics in advance to your speakers to make sure all aspects are covered and time is well spent.

PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

- Be prepared to increase fees in order to pay for some of the services.
- Apply for grants or help local officials apply for grants to pay for some of the services.
- Raise money locally to offset public funds, it shows the level of interest and support for the program and makes the decision easier.

GET SOME ALLIES

- Cultivate staff and know that you can rarely come between the board and their staff.
- Find other organizations that share or have similar interests (parent groups, health groups, etc.).

ADVOCACY TIPS FROM A RECREATION AND PARKS DIRECTOR

Perspectives from the “Other Side”

*David Chapman, Director (Retired)
Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Department*

- ◆ Organize early (a year before you want something), and have a well-defined plan in place.
- ◆ Meet with key City staff early on in the process to understand “the big picture” and how you best fit into it. Develop a good relationship with staff.
- ◆ Be realistic in your requests, but don’t necessarily go with the status quo.
- ◆ Designate one individual or a small committee to work with City staff so that the message is consistent.
- ◆ Volunteer to help with getting specifications and information on what you want. Be informed.
- ◆ Show me the money! The City will be far more likely to fund your project if you can come up with some matching funds.
- ◆ Let staff know what you will be going after in the budget process so that they can give upper management a “heads up”. Surprises aren’t good.
- ◆ Organize a successful lobbying effort of the Commission. Several well-timed letters or e-mails are helpful, and personal visits by a designated “lobbyist” are great. There is nothing better than going into the budget hearing knowing that you have at least three votes.
- ◆ Have a representative number of supporters (10+) attend the public budget meetings, but only have one to two spokespersons. Commissioners really appreciate this.
- ◆ Populate the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (and Foundation if one exists) with informed, enthusiastic tennis folks.

Advocate from the Inside

Linda Frazier, Chair, Community Tennis Council

One of the best ways to advocate for tennis at the local level is to become an insider as a member of the city's or county's citizen advisory board for parks and recreation. These groups serve to provide feedback to local parks and recreation agencies and to elected officials on parks and recreation issues. Serving as a member allows you a formal means to learn about, discuss park policies and programs, and provide input on them.

County or City Commissions establish advisory groups for several reasons. First, they increase community input to local government, enabling the government to focus more clearly on community needs and problems, and understand where the community feels its greatest need might be. Second, the groups can themselves provide the public; in turn, with balanced and objective information to assist the public in understanding a problem, alternatives, and/or solutions under consideration by the local officials.

It is general policy of governments to limit advisory group appointments to residents of the jurisdiction, although in some cases, they might appoint non-citizens who use the services, work or own a business there, or those with a special expertise on a subject matter.

One way to decide if you want to seek appointment is to attend a meeting of the group to determine whether its purpose and goals meet your expectations. Usually, they are open to the public and listed on the government's calendar of events under scheduled meetings, but it is a good idea to call and see if you can attend before you go. Most groups also have by-laws and publish those on the government website.

Serving on a board usually requires a regular commitment to meet. In Tallahassee, the meetings are monthly during lunch on the second Tuesday of every month. Appointment to advisory boards does require individuals serving to file financial disclosures such as public election does. The appointment is also usually for a specific term and there are usually term limits for continuing appointments.

Once you decide that you wish to advocate from inside, visit the government website for an application. In many cases, you can do this online to the City Clerk or the County Manager.

Karen MacFarland and I both served two terms, six years, as members of the Tallahassee Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Successful tennis advocacy during that time resulted in the building and renovation of tennis courts, establishing a court renovation schedule as an on-going part of the budget, renovation of a comfort station at a tennis facility, and the acquisition of court amenities for all courts in the community (adding chairs, coolers, line brushes, etc.). In addition, the board was a significant force in stopping the sale of parks land with nine planned tennis courts to satisfy a short-term budget deficit.

As a member of an advisory board, you will enjoy a privileged position to provide input on public expenditures for programs and capital outlay. In these days of governmental belt-tightening, this is a great position from which to advocate for tennis.

ADVOCACY TIPS FOR SAVING TENNIS FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Take action NOW

Meet with your local Parks and Recreation Director – ask how tennis programs and facilities will be impacted by the property tax cuts – this year and in upcoming years.

- ◆ Meet with your City Manager, Mayor, and each member of your City Council and County Commission to educate them on the benefits of tennis programs to your entire community.
- ◆ Form a Coalition with other groups that may be impacted by cuts in tennis programming – schools, after school programs, health care providers, juvenile justice organizations, senior organizations, etc. Remember, there is always strength in numbers, especially when you are voters.
- ◆ Get your local businesses involved – tennis tournaments bring large revenues to hotels, restaurants, and shops in your community.
- ◆ Get the media involved – make sure that everyone in your community knows of potential court closures or program reductions.

When preparing your presentations, remember

- ◆ Strong tennis programs are investments in your community's future.
- ◆ Nearly 70 percent of all tennis is played on public park courts.
- ◆ Tennis programs boost commerce, rebuild communities, and create jobs.
- ◆ Tennis and after school programs increase kids' attachment to school, improve attendance, and help improve academic performance.
- ◆ Tennis teaches responsibility, respect, and a strong work ethic.
- ◆ Tennis and after schools programs provide a safe, positive environment for kids – making our communities safer.
- ◆ Tennis fights obesity, which is becoming epidemic among our youth. Nationwide, an estimated 9 million children between age 6 and 19 are considered obese.
- ◆ Tennis helps kids and adults by keeping both their minds and bodies healthy.
- ◆ Florida law now requires that public schools provide 150 minutes of physical education each week for students in kindergarten through 5. Schools are encouraged to provide 225 minutes for students in grades 6 through 8 (Section 1003.455, Florida Statutes).
- ◆ Participation in tennis is multicultural, multigenerational and involves people from all walks of life.
- ◆ Tennis is a lifetime sport.

USTA Florida has trained Advocacy Consultants who are available to help you with your important local advocacy efforts – if you need assistance, please call Linda Curtis, Director of Community Development, at (386)671-8934 or curtisL@florida.usta.com.

Take Heart...Take Part...Take Action.

INTEGRATING TENNIS INTO AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

An estimated 25% of high school children in Florida are currently overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. Florida law now requires that public schools provide 150 minutes of physical education each week for students in kindergarten through 5. Schools are encouraged to provide 225 minutes for students in grades 6 through 8. In March 2007, Governor Charlie Crist established *The Governor's Physical Fitness Council* to implement this new law. This is a great opportunity to introduce tennis programs into our schools.

Key Partners

- ◆ Community Based Organizations such as YMCAs, Girls & Boys Clubs
- ◆ Schools and School Board Members
- ◆ City/County Parks and Recreation Departments
- ◆ Local business leaders

Key Contacts

- ◆ Explain to these individuals why tennis should be an important part of after school and in school programming. Ask for their help and support as you move forward with your agenda.
 - Community Based Organization Directors
 - School Principals and Athletic Directors
 - School Superintendents
 - School Board Members
 - City Council Members and County Commission Members
 - Park & Recreation Board Members
 - Park & Recreation Director

Issues to Explore

- ◆ Equipment – Can the Community Tennis Association (CTA) or National Junior Tennis League (NJTL) can write grants for equipment?
- ◆ Space – Is there space for a tennis program? (i.e. a gym or parking lot to set up QuickStart Tennis)
- ◆ Funding – Can your CTA or NJTL provide funding for instructors through grants and fundraisers? Can you partner with schools & parks to provide additional funding?
- ◆ Program Frequency – Will you be able to bring tennis into the program once a week? Twice a week?
- ◆ Instructors/Supervisors – Who will coordinate your actual program?
- ◆ Transportation – If there are no facilities available at the location, can you offer an alternative site where children can be transported?
- ◆ Who will pay the transportation costs?

Resources

- ◆ The After School Alliance - www.afterschoolalliance.org
- ◆ National Recreation & Parks Association - www.nrpa.org

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLEGIATE OUTREACH

What can be done by CTAs and tennis advocates to help preserve varsity tennis on campuses and encourage outreach to the college and local community - thereby making the colleges more relevant to the community as a whole?

Become involved with your local college programs or your alma mater before there is a crisis. Making college programs stronger today helps to ensure their long term survival.

- ◆ Attend college matches.
- ◆ Call the college coaches for suggestions on how to get involved.
- ◆ Be an active sponsor in the Booster Club at the colleges near you.
- ◆ Join the efforts supported by the International Tennis Association Advocacy Network by logging onto their website at www.ITATennis.com and clicking the “Advocacy” button on their menu.

Support and promote the Tennis on Campus Club Program sponsored by the USTA.

- ◆ Advertise this program to every high school in your network **before** these kids leave for college.
- ◆ Contact the high school coaches in your area to be certain they are letting their seniors know about the program.
- ◆ Contact your local college Intramural Sports Office and make sure USTA Tennis on Campus is a part of their programming.
- ◆ Contact the USTA for promotional flyers and materials to help spread the word.

Look for ways to make your local college and community college tennis courts relevant to your community.

- ◆ Volunteer to help with programs aimed at youth, especially after-school and camps.
- ◆ Offer to help organize summer camps and after school programming using underutilized campus courts.
- ◆ Partner with Community Based Organizations that may already have programs on college campuses dedicated to youth and integrate tennis into the programs.

The Advocacy Guru's Advocacy Tipsheet

Info on the web at www.advocacyguru.com

Effective Advocacy Tip: What One Smart Dog Can Teach Us About Advocacy

Anyone who's attended one of my workshops, talked to me at a meeting, or even just met me has probably heard about my canine companion, Xena Warrior Princess Dog. For the uninitiated, Xena served for over ten years as the Advocacy Guru's official mascot and inspiration. Her wise (although silent) insights into the ways of Washington, DC have been invaluable to me over the years.

Unfortunately, the warrior princess passed on to that great dog house in the sky recently. Wait, don't worry, this won't be a weepy newsletter about my deceased dog (although there certainly was plenty of weeping). Rather, I'm choosing to celebrate her life by sharing with you some of the important lessons she taught me about advocacy. I hope this canine perspective on how things REALLY get done will be useful to you as you go forth and advocate!

Lesson #1: People Don't Know What You Want Unless You Ask

Above all things, Xena understood the importance of "making the ask." Whether she wanted a biscuit, a belly rub or a bite of her dog dad's dinner, Xena asked for it -- frequently and without reservation. In fact, every once in a while it bordered on begging. Now I'm not suggesting that advocates resort to begging for what they want, but it is essential to "make the ask." Too many people try to "educate" elected officials about their issues. They put all their time and energy into explaining the tragedy of situation X, while assuming that support for their preferred solution of policy Y will be obvious. It's not. Believe me, Xena never tried to get me to understand the tragedy of a biscuit-less life. She just told me she wanted a biscuit.

Lesson #2 -- A Corollary: Make Sure You Ask in a Language Your Audience Understands

Although I speak some dog, I'm not fluent. Xena understood that and translated her asks into something a human would understand. For her, this usually meant sitting in front of the biscuit jar for hours and turning the big, brown puppy dog eyes on me whenever I came in the kitchen. It usually worked. For advocates, this means framing your message in a way that elected officials will understand. How? Just consider these three simple steps:

- First of all, be sure your elected officials understand how the issues you care about connect to the area they represent. They need to know how real live people in their communities are affected.
- Second, be sure you're asking for something appropriate (i.e., something that the elected official can actually do for you). This might include support for legislation, a public statement in support of a program, or even something as simple as a visit to a program or facility in the legislator's district.
- Finally, figure out how you can capture the legislator's attention. You can do this by learning what issues they care most about and tying your interests to those (for example, if they care about health care, think about how your issues might connect to health care concerns). Or, you might touch base quickly about a legislator's personal interests. I'll be honest in admitting that every once in a while I'd ask legislators about their pets – and watch them melt when they responded.

Lesson #3: Don't Take Crap From the Other Side

Squirrels lived in fear of the warrior princess. Sure, they tried to bad mouth her, but never twice. Xena's solution to the bad mouthing problem usually involved an apocalyptic level of barking accompanied by frenzied lunging and chasing (usually with me on the other end of the leash yelling "no, stop, bad dog" to no avail.) I don't suggest this in the advocacy arena. I do, however, suggest adhering to the general philosophy that if people say something bad about you or your issues, you should try to set the record straight. Sure, you don't want to give traction to a negative comment that no one's listening to. At the same time, I've seen too many advocacy organizations worry about appearing too "aggressive," self-interested or forceful on their issues. While belligerency is never a good advocacy technique, you should never feel shy about arguing strongly and passionately for your perspective. In most cases the other side has no qualms about making their case. You should do so as well.

Lesson #4: Be Persistent

On occasion, I would bring home new toys for Xena's constantly growing collection. To be honest, I did this so often that over time she came to believe everything coming into the house was fair game. Newspapers, mail, dry cleaning, groceries – you name it, she wanted it. And yet, to her horror, there were many things we would not give her. But did she give up? Never! Take the example of a small stuffed animal I had sitting on my dresser for no less than five years. It was way above dog eye-level so I have no idea how she knew it was there, but she did. Almost every morning as I got dressed she would sit and stare fixedly in its general direction. Then at me. Then at it. Then at me. This went on for FIVE YEARS. One day I just gave up and gave it to her (it lasted all of five minutes). Now, considering that it can take legislation seven years on average to get through the U.S. Congressional process, Xena's record was actually pretty good. The lesson here for the advocacy arena is that persistence is the most effective advocacy tool on the planet. Elected officials often need to be reminded of your perspective on the issues – and what you want them to do to help.

Lesson #5: Take Time to Stop and Smell the Flowers (and pee on them, if necessary)

Every morning and evening my husband or I would take Xena on her perambulation (we never used the word "walk" for obvious reasons to anyone who has ever owned or been near a dog). I'll confess that I did not always greet these times with tremendous enthusiasm, particularly when it was ridiculously cold or hot outside. But Xena loved it, and I always found by the end of the walk that I loved it as well. That's because Xena taught me to appreciate the little things such as the smell of a flower (or more likely something unmentionable), the straight ahead joy of jumping into an enormous pile of leaves and rooting around in them or the feel of the warm sun on my fur, umm, skin. Sometimes we get overwhelmed with our advocacy efforts on the issues we feel passionately about. We frequently suffer from setbacks and lack of progress and can get frustrated, irritated or downright depressed. When that happens, take time to stop and smell the flowers. Remember that there are other joys in life and take time to experience them – just don't pee on them like Xena did. There are laws against that sort of thing.

I hope you've found the lessons from the warrior princess inspiring or thought-provoking or at a minimum "not-too-weird." Printed with permission of Advocacy Associates, LLC, 1640 19th St., NW Second Floor, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 234-1353.

THE CASE FOR TENNIS

As successful advocates, we must convince decision-makers that tennis facilities and programs will help them achieve many of their community-related goals in the areas of education, fighting crime, health care, employment, and developing a health economy.

- Tennis is the only traditional sport whose participation increased in the years 2000 to 2005.
- Vibrant tennis facilities and programs boost commerce and culture, bring communities together, make them stronger and create jobs.
- Tennis programs and tournaments benefit the local economy through players and their families staying at hotels, eating at restaurants, and shopping during their stay.
- Participation in tennis is multicultural, multigenerational, and involves people from all walks of life.
- The Cleveland Clinic has called tennis “an ideal sport for a healthy heart”.
- Tennis helps fight obesity. Nationwide, an estimated 9 million children ages 6-19 (15% of the nation’s children) are considered obese. Among children 6 to 11, obesity has more than tripled since the 1970s.
- Tennis and educational after-school programs support the core mission of schools by increasing kids’ attachment to school and improving attendance, thereby helping to improve academic performance.
- Florida law now requires that public schools provide 150 minutes of physical education each week for students in kindergarten through 5. Schools are encouraged to provide 225 minutes for students in grades 6 through 8 (Section 1003.455, Florida Statutes).
- Tennis builds discipline, confidence, and independent thinking.
- Tennis teaches responsibility, respect and a strong work ethic.

USTA Florida Tennis Facilities Inventory

City _____ County _____ Region _____

Name of Facility _____

Address _____

Owner _____ Operator/Manager of Facility _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email address: _____

Tennis Coordinator _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email address: _____

Is this facility a USTA member? ____yes ____no

Facility: (Please enter a check or number as applicable, use other side if necessary for court locations)

Public: ____City ____County ____Middle School ____High School ____Community College ____University
____Community Based Organization ____ Other _____

Private: ____Tennis Club ____Country Club ____Private School ____Church ____Neighborhood Court ____
Other _____

Number of Courts: _____

Location/s of courts:

Surface of Courts: Clay ____ Hard ____ Other (specify) _____

Court Condition: Surface:	Excellent ____	Good ____	Need minimal repair ____	Need major repair ____
Nets:	Excellent ____	Good ____	Need minimal repair ____	Need major repair ____
Fencing:	Excellent ____	Good ____	Need minimal repair ____	Need major repair ____
Lights:	Excellent ____	Good ____	Need minimal repair ____	Need major repair ____

Support facilities: Restrooms ____ Locker rooms/showers ____ Meeting rooms ____ Pro shop ____ Court Monitors
Other _____

Age of facility: _____

Scheduled renovations, addition of courts, lights, etc in the next 5 years: Yes ____ No ____

If yes, specify:

Is the City/County planning on updating its Master Plan within the next 5 years? ____ Yes ____ No; If yes, when? _____

When was the Master Plan last updated? _____

Programming at Facility: (Check yes or no, use other side if necessary to list other local leagues)

USTA Leagues:

Adult: Yes ___ No ___ Senior: Yes ___ No ___ Super Senior: Yes ___ No ___ Adult Mixed: Yes ___ No ___
Senior Mixed: Yes ___ No ___ Adult Combo: Yes ___ No ___ Senior Combo: Yes ___ No ___

List Other Local Leagues:

Youth, School, College Tennis

Junior Team Tennis: Yes ___ No ___ Ralleyball: Yes ___ No ___ Middle School Tennis: Yes ___ No ___
High School Tennis: Yes ___ No ___ Community College Tennis: Yes ___ No ___
Collegiate Recreational Tennis: Yes ___ No ___ Collegiate Tennis: Yes ___ No ___

Tournament Tennis

USTA Junior Tournaments: Yes ___ No ___ USTA Tournaments: Yes ___ No ___
College Tournaments: Yes ___ No ___
Professional Tournaments: Yes ___ No ___ Other Tournaments: Yes ___ No ___

Adaptive Tennis

Tournaments: Yes ___ No ___ Leagues: Yes ___ No ___ Lessons: Yes ___ No ___ Other _____

Other Tennis:

Lessons: yes ___ no ___ Clinics: Yes ___ no ___ Other _____

Additional Information that you think is important to report for this inventory:

Date of Meeting: _____

Location of Meeting: _____

People attending meeting (with job titles):

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Position: County Representative ___ CTA Member ___ LLC ___ Other Volunteer ___

Sample Tennis Needs Survey

1. Is there a tennis facility conveniently located near your home?

_____ Yes _____ No

If Yes, which one?

(List of community tennis facilities for check off)

2. What tennis facilities do you use most often?

(List of community tennis facilities for check off)

3. What are the main reasons for using the tennis facilities that you use?

_____ Close to home _____ Amenities present (bathrooms, clubhouse, pro shop, etc.)

_____ Close to work _____ Organized play opportunities

_____ Programs offered _____ Open courts _____ Well maintained

_____ Affordable program & court fees _____ Other: _____

4. About how many times during the last year did you visit a tennis facility?

_____ None _____ 6-10 _____ Over 15 _____ 1-5 _____ 11-15

5. How would you rank the General Maintenance of the tennis facilities that you use?

_____ Excellent _____ Fair _____ No Opinion _____ Good _____ Poor

6. In your opinion, are additional public tennis facilities needed?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ No Opinion

7. If additional tennis facilities are needed, where should they be located?

8. What types of tennis programs do you and your family currently participate in? (check all that apply)

_____ Drop in play with family or friends _____ Individual Lessons

_____ Group Lessons _____ Team or League Play _____ Competitive Tournaments

_____ Tennis Clinics _____ Other: _____

9. What types of tennis programs would you and your family like to see offered in the community?

10. Are the current court user fees:

_____ Too low _____ Too high

_____ Appropriate _____ I don't pay court user fees

11. What do you currently pay for court fees per hour?

12. Are the current tennis program participant fees:

_____ Too low _____ Too high

_____ Appropriate _____ I don't pay participant fees

13. What do you currently pay for tennis program participant fees per program?

14. Are you a resident of **NAME OF COMMUNITY**?

_____ Yes _____ No

15. How long have you resided in **NAME OF COMMUNITY**?

_____ Less than 1 yr. _____ 1-5 yrs. _____ 5-10 yrs. _____ More than 10 yrs.

16. Indicate how many members in your household fall into each age and gender group.

Male

Female

_____ 0-5 yrs.

_____ 0-5 yrs

_____ 6-11 yrs.

_____ 6-11 yrs.

_____ 12-18 yrs.

_____ 12-18 yrs.

_____ 19-24 yrs.

_____ 19-24 yrs.

_____ 25-54 yrs.

_____ 25-54 yrs.

_____ 55-64 yrs.

_____ 55-64 yrs.

_____ 65+ yrs.

_____ 65+ yrs.

17. What is the total annual income of your household?

_____ \$0—\$25,000 _____ \$25,000—\$50,000 _____ \$50,000—\$75,000

_____ \$75,000—\$100,000 _____ \$100,00—\$200,00 _____ Over \$200,000

18. Please mark which one most represents your household. (Optional)

_____ African American _____ Caucasian _____ Asian _____ Hispanic _____ Native American

_____ Other: _____

Thank you for participating in our tennis survey. Your information will help us plan for future tennis programming and facilities.

Please return survey by: **INCLUDE RETURN DATE AND HOW TO RETURN THE SURVEY**

Working with the Media

An important part of a successful advocacy campaign is positive media coverage. It is crucial that your organization cultivate relationships with your local newspaper, radio and television reporters and editors. Also, you can encourage media coverage of your issue through writing letters to the Editor, news conferences, and special events.

Get to know your local reporters

- Know the specific interests of the reporter.
- Give them a call and tell them about your issue.
- Assume they have little knowledge about the subject area.
- Stay on message – write down your main points and emphasize them.
- Tie every answer you give back to your messages.
- Let them know that you and your organization are available as resources on the subject.
- Use plain language and avoid jargon and acronyms.

Letters to the Editor

- Check your newspaper's web site for guidelines on how to submit a letter (follow the word-count limit).
- State your reason for writing.
- Limit your message to two key points.
- Take a firm and clear stand on the issues, but be reasonable.
- Writing on behalf of an organization or coalition can give your letter more weight.
- Type your letter, and send via email - this saves time for the newspaper.
- Your letter has the best chance of being published when it responds to something recently printed in the newspaper.
- Don't be afraid to ask for action. Tell readers what you want them to do – including elected officials who read these letters.

Meetings with Editorial Boards

- Call your local editorial page editor to set up an appointment.
- Prepare an information packet to pass out at the meeting.
- Bring a small group of your most influential coalition members.
- Discuss only your three most persuasive points.
- Follow up with a thank you note.

Media Events

- Host an event such as a tennis carnival for youth and families or Back to Tennis event for seniors.
- Host your event with other community organizations such as schools or health care providers.
- Send out a press release to the media several days before the event inviting them and providing information about the event.
- Provide information packets to the media about your issue.
- Have visuals such as special tee shirts, banners, posters, graphs, etc.

News Conferences

- Schedule a news conference only when you have important information that should be released to the general public.
- Send out a press release to the media several days before the conference.
- Follow up with the media the day before the news conference.
- Provide information packets to the media at the news conference.
- Have visuals such as special tee shirts, banners, posters, graphs, etc.

Petition

A petition gives the community a chance to voice their opinions and concerns if they can't attend a public hearing. By providing a petition with comments for the City Council or County Commission, you are able to share the voice of hundreds of citizens at the public meeting.

Sample petition

Dear Mayor Ritchie,

The Suncoast Tennis Foundation is a Community Tennis Association in Pinellas County. We want to express our interest in the success of the Florida Tennis Center. It is a superior tennis facility at which thousands of USTA members in our county and all over Florida have had the privilege to play. As we have visited your city to play tennis, we have stayed in your hotels, and frequented your restaurants, attractions and businesses. Daytona Beach has been a generous host and many of us have returned to enjoy vacationing there. However, should the Florida Tennis Center close, it is highly likely that the number of visitors to Daytona Beach will drop severely due to the fact that they are tennis players.

As a member of the USTA Florida Section and USTA National, the Suncoast Tennis Foundation urges you to keep this wonderful tennis facility open. It is a destination that tennis players in Florida look forward to visiting. To show our support of your city keeping the Florida Tennis Center open in its full capacity, we are sending you signatures that we have collected from tennis players in our county.

Thank you for your efforts in this matter and realizing how important your facility has become to the multitude of tennis players in Florida.

Sincerely,

Irene K. Tharin, President
Suncoast Tennis Foundation

Attachments

Signatures of tennis enthusiasts in Pinellas County who support keeping open, maintaining and operating at full capacity the Florida Tennis Center Facility at Daytona Beach:

Print Name:

Signature:

Sample email campaign letters

Dear Fellow Tennis Players:

This past weekend Florida Section hosted the North, South, East and West Sectional tournament at the Florida Tennis Center in Daytona Beach, Florida to decide the teams that would represent Florida at the USTA National competition to be held in October in Las Vegas, Nevada.

While at the tournament the players received some disturbing news and have been asked by Florida Section to write letters to the Mayor of Daytona Beach protesting the potential closing of the Florida Tennis Center effective October 1, 2007.

The Florida Tennis Center is where the Florida Section leases office space and hosts many tournaments throughout the year. The facility is owned and operated by the City of Daytona and in an effort to save money the City is contemplating closing the facility. If this potential decision is as disturbing to you as it is to me, I would ask that you write the Mayor of Daytona Beach telling him why this is not a good decision.

I am a lifetime Floridian and had never visited Daytona Beach until I began playing tennis. In the past three years I have had an opportunity to participate in four tournaments at the Florida Tennis Center. While participating in these events I rented hotel rooms, ate at local restaurants, shopped at local stores and visited some of Daytona's tourist attractions. Since I personally am not a biker or a NASCAR Fan, my purpose for visiting Daytona Beach centers around tennis. The money that tennis players bring into the Daytona Beach area has to be a positive thing for the community; therefore the closing of the tennis center makes no sense to me.

Please help us keep this facility open by letting your voice be heard. If you have ever attended a tournament at the Florida Tennis Center in Daytona Beach, please let the Mayor know. Also let him know that tennis tournaments in Daytona Beach is one, if not the only reason, you travel to Daytona.

Thanks for your support!

Write to:

Glenn Ritchey, Mayor
City of Daytona Beach
P.O. Box 2451
Daytona Beach, Florida 32115

Dear Tennis Friends and Friends of Jonesville Park

Hope you saw the “Speaking Out” column about Jonesville Park in yesterday’s Gainesville SUN. If not, you can read it on-line at www.Gainesville.com, under “News” then “Opinion” then “Guest Columns.” This is a very important piece of writing, and I hope you will join me in follow-up letters to the editor and notes to the Board of County Commissioners.

We all know there is a severe lack of public tennis facilities in this area, particularly in the southwest Gainesville/Newberry area. Scheduling USTA League matches has become a nightmare, and our seasons are very short. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to schedule some non-USTA programs evenings during the evening and some adult programming during the USTA senior seasons?

In addition, we now have USTA Junior Team Tennis that started a little over a year ago and is steadily growing. Those teams and their parent/coaches are struggling to find practice courts, and some of the matches have been scheduled at less than ideal times in the heat of the day. We also have a new USTA after-school tennis program operating in all 23 Alachua County elementary schools, and plan to expand to middle schools in the near future. This pipeline of youngsters starting (or continuing) to play tennis will place increased pressure on our existing facilities.

Please pass this note to your tennis friends, your neighbors, your church groups, and anyone who wants to see more recreational opportunities for all county citizens, young and old. We need to pressure the county government to budget just a small amount of funds so that we can realize a vibrant and active Jonesville Park, not only with a tennis center, but with walking trails, playgrounds, basketball courts, and picnic areas.

If you wish to send a letter to the SUN, do so via voice@gvillesun.com. If you wish to contact the Board of County Commissioners the address is bocc@alachuacounty.us or to individuals as follows:

Paula DeLaney: pdelaney@alachuacounty.us

Mike Byerly: byerly@alachuacounty.us

Cynthia Chestnut: cmchestnut@alachuacounty.us

Rodney Long: rjlong@alachuacounty.us

Lee Pinkoson: lpinkoson@alachuacounty.us

Please send something as soon as possible. Just a short note using your own words would be terrific. Let us not let this opportunity pass to express our thoughts. Write something today!

Christine Shurtleff

USTA Local League Coordinator

USTA Alachua County Representative

President, Gainesville Area Community Tennis Association

A group known as "Friends of Roger Scott Tennis Center" has been working together to make major improvements at RSTC. The plans are to add 10 clay courts and improvements / additions to the clubhouse. These improvements would make a great public tennis center even better. These improvements would allow RSTC to host some major state and National tennis events and would be a great addition to our local tennis community. This increased capacity would also serve has a huge economic impact to the local Pensacola economy by enabling our city to host these major events. The Pensacola Tennis community has already been awarded the host city for the USTA-FL NW Regional Adult Championships for 2008 and beyond. Moreover, RSTC has been awarded the USTA-FL Tennis Facility of the Year. As you can see, we already have accomplished a lot of things; however, an updated facility would make a great facility even better.

With the Local Option Sales Tax revenues, the timing is right for this project to proceed forward. County Commissioner Grover Robinson is 100 % in favor and he wants to combine the city and county funds to make this happen. This is where YOU, as a member of the Pensacola Tennis community, come in. We need to create an e-mail blitz to the city council members. Simply tell the council members how you feel about Pensacola Tennis and let them know that this would benefit our community by adding quality of life recreation and economic impact for the local economy (hotel and restaurant taxes from visiting players).

Attached is a list of the e-mail addresses for the Pensacola City Council.

Please use this list to blitz the council's inboxes!

You have a great deal of power; Tennis People are passionate about our sport. I ask you to use your passion to help get this project rolling.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me and I'll answer or forward to the right person that can answer your question.

Thanks, in advance for your help and support.

See you on the courts,

Terry Thrash
USTA-FL
Escambia County Representative and
Men's Local League Coordinator

ADVOCACY WRITING TIP # 1

Use the influence of those you know in the tennis community to get your voice heard! Use every method available including partnering with other organizations that share similar concerns.

LETTERS TO DECISION MAKERS

When writing letters to decision makers, think of different ways to send the same message. Have different people write from different perspectives to make your message unified, but not completely repetitive. Reach out to those you know from different areas of the tennis community. Don't be afraid to ask! We're all in this for the same reason – our passion for tennis.

Sample letters

To: Division Chief, Recreational Tennis Activities
Liaison to the Mayor's Council on Fitness and Well-Being
City of _____

Re: Placement on the Mayor's Council's Agenda

I am writing to request a few minutes at the next meeting of the Mayor's Council on Fitness and Well-Being to inform the members of the range of benefits and life-long enjoyment that the sport of tennis provides. I am a member of the _____, a newly formed coalition group with an important goal of creating awareness on the health, fitness, and social benefits of playing tennis. Tennis is an ideal sport for education, for youth development, and for fighting obesity. It provides anaerobic and aerobic benefits that greatly contribute to the health of body and mind among children and adults. The Cleveland Clinic has called tennis "an ideal sport for a healthy heart". Participation in tennis is multicultural, multigenerational, and involves people from all walks of life....it is the fastest growing sport in the nation.

We would like the opportunity to inform the Mayor's Council on the mission and goals of our group. I believe our collective knowledge of tennis, tennis organizations and tennis programs in the community can greatly contribute to the Mayor's goal of facilitating fitness and well-being in our great community. Thank you for consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

City of Clearwater

We are members of a large community of local tennis players and residents of the City of Clearwater. We play tennis at the Henry L. McMullen Tennis Complex on Edenville Road. We have recently learned that improvements to, and expansion of, the McMullen Tennis Complex have been removed from the 2007-2008 Capital Improvements Project Budget. We also understand that all new construction projects have been postponed indefinitely due to budget issues related to ad valorem taxes, rising insurance costs throughout the State of Florida, and other budget considerations. We were disappointed to hear this news, but understand the financial challenges faced by all levels of state and local governments.

We hereby request that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee include the McMullen Tennis Complex Project in its recommendations for the 2008-2009 City of Clearwater budget. Over the past two years the McMullen Tennis Complex has seen a substantial increase in programs for all members of the community, including the revitalization of the Junior Tennis Program, tournament play for adults, juniors, and the occasional professional event. In addition to drawing people to the City, these events provide recreational opportunities for City residents throughout the year. The expansion of the Progress Energy Trail and its proximity to the facility will also increase traffic and participation in activities at McMullen. Due to the increased activity, the McMullen Tennis Complex is operating at close to maximum capacity for the number and type of courts available at the present time. It has become difficult to reserve courts for most evenings due to recreational play, while Saturdays are generally scheduled with USTA League matches from 10:00 AM until closing time at 4:00 PM. The addition of eight clay courts (including lights for evening play) would greatly alleviate the current situation relative to the courts, while increasing recreational opportunities for all residents.

We realize that the additional courts that we are proposing will represent a major commitment of City funds from an ever-growing budget. However, we have formed an advisory committee of our own with the intent to obtain funds to assist with this project. This committee will be seeking complementary funds from a combination of public and private sources affiliated with the tennis community.

We believe that the Parks and Recreation Committee will play a vital role in helping the City decide how and when to spend the funds in the recreation budget, particularly for construction projects for facilities such as the McMullen Tennis Complex. We are asking for your support to put the McMullen project back in the 2008-2009 City Budget. We would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this project with your committee and share our ideas on how we can help with outside funding to achieve this goal.

Friends of the McMullen Tennis Complex

Daytona City Commissioners,

I just read in the following article: <http://www.jaxtennismagazine.com/article/20070820/76.php> that you all are considering closing the Florida Tennis Center. This would be a sad thing for many of us in Florida. I wish you would not do this.

I am not an east coast beach fan (sorry, I prefer the gulf), I don't like car racing, and I am not into bikes so tennis is the only reason that I go to Daytona. I am either over there because my team won districts and gets to compete against sectional teams (as Daytona is the 'hub' of tennis for north Florida), or I am over your way to watch my friend's team compete (since they beat my team), or I am over there watching my son and his team play. The last time I was over there with my son, he took some surfing lessons and now wants me to plan a family vacation so that he can do some more surfing.

My point is the Florida Tennis Center draws a lot of us to Daytona, when we would not otherwise go that way.

But if you decide not to fund the Florida Tennis Center and they are looking for a new home I am sure we would LOVE to have them on our "Forgotten Coast". Some developers and hospitality groups would love to see this type of clientele drawn to the Gulf Coast.

Just my thoughts from Tallahassee.....
Susan Scarboro
Tallahassee, FL 32312

Commissioners:

This letter is sent to echo Mrs. Scarboro's comments regarding the Florida Tennis Center. This Center provides Daytona a wonderful opportunity to showcase its community. It has been a wonderful avenue to bring considerable economic resources to your area via monies spent at hotels, restaurants and shopping venues. At a time when most communities are searching for opportunities to generate current and future growth potential, it is surprising to learn that you are considering closing the Florida Tennis Center. What a great loss this would be for your community.

If you each have not yet had an opportunity to visit the Florida Tennis Center during a major tournament event, I would encourage you to do so prior to your final decision making. You will find big crowds, lots of excitement, and great tennis. What better way to let people know that the Daytona area is alive and thriving. Historically, your community has been known primarily for the Daytona Speedway and the lovely beaches. The Florida Tennis Center gives you another opportunity to generate great publicity and future investment interest in your area. Now is the time to invest the effort and resources needed to enhance the Florida Tennis Center's economic impact on your community. It is not the time to close a thriving center in the mist of a town trying to boost its economic base and tourism. Like many of our Florida cities, Daytona is on the cusp of making great strides in its future development. Sometimes decisions must be made based on long term potential and not short term gain.

The Florida Tennis Center would also give retiring baby boomers another viable option in Florida locales to consider for retirement since it would expand Daytona's appeal with an active tennis community/resource in addition to the beaches, golf courses, etc. Have you considered promoting the Florida Tennis Center in your national media campaigns to tennis enthusiasts and others? This incredible tennis resource gives you Daytona a unique marketing edge. I hope that you, Daytona's visionaries, will realize The Tennis Center's current and future value and give it an opportunity to realize its full potential.

If, however, you do choose to close this wonderful facility, please spread the word immediately. I'm sure many other cities (Tallahassee included) would welcome the opportunity to house such an outstanding tennis facility.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the Florida Tennis Center's future contributions to Daytona.

Sincerely,
Rhonda Baldock

ADVOCACY WRITING TIP # 2

It is important to emphasize facilities or programs that will benefit the community. Don't just think tennis, the most influential information could be related to issues such as multi-purpose athletic space, youth crime prevention, and physical health.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DON'T END PUBLIC TENNIS AT HCC

Subject: Stop the HCC tennis closure

The announced plan to end public tennis at Hillsborough Community College is badly timed, to say the least. Tennis is the only sport where participation is growing. One-third of new U.S. players are minorities. For kids and adults alike, tennis is a safe, healthy inexpensive sport - if public courts are open.

Tampa's public courts are crowded every weekend and every evening. Davis Islands, Himes Sports Complex, Cal Dickson, MacFarlane Park and HCC are very busy. Now, all 28 of HCC's courts are slated to be closed. That would wipe out nearly half of Tampa's tennis courts and eliminate the only feature tennis facility in Hillsborough County.

Bad move! City and HCC leaders need to keep the facility open, at least partially, by using a tiny, tiny fraction of the Community Investment Tax monies.

High schools and colleges, adults and kids, pros and rookies - 20,000 to 25,000 people per year - play tennis at HCC. Keep HCC tennis going, please!

Gary Shepherd, Tampa

Hillsborough County Tennis Association

The Future Of Tennis Now In Tampa's Court

Rec Facilities Lagging

Regarding "In Reversal, Tampa Pulls Funding For HCC Tennis Courts" (Metro, July 13):

I have been a resident of Tampa since 1967. I have seen the city's tremendous growth since then, but the recreational facilities have in no way kept up with the population increase.

The advertised reputation of the city as being a great place to live does not live up to reality when it comes to recreational facilities.

Slowly but surely the city recreational facilities are being diminished, especially for senior citizens. First, the city pool at the Manhattan Boys & Girls Club closed. This indoor heated facility was used by numerous seniors, many of whom are arthritis sufferers. Other city pools will not be heated in the winter.

Now the city-run and widely used tennis facility at Hillsborough Community College is scheduled to close. These courts, many of which have soft surfaces, are used by seniors who cannot play on hard surfaces. I can understand the city's need to reduce the budget. However, play at the HCC tennis facility is not free. Participants pay a user fee.

Hopefully, the present city administration will reconsider their budget priorities and keep our recreation at a level worthy of a great city.

LEONARD BERMAN, Tampa

A Win-Win Situation

We are losing a tennis complex at HCC where people already go and building a riverfront park downtown where nobody goes. So, it seems to me that if the city builds a new tennis complex at Riverfront Park, then people will have a place to play tennis, and people would go downtown. Now this is a win-win situation.

MARTIN KLEINER, Tampa

HCC, City Double Fault

As a long-time resident and taxpaying citizen of Tampa, I am both outraged and sickened by the decision to close the city of Tampa tennis complex at Hillsborough Community College. This facility of 12 soft and 16 hard tennis courts is used by thousands of people yearly. It is home to USTA tennis leagues, a competitive junior program and many social tennis events. It is also used for local, national and international tournaments as well as for high school tennis team matches.

HCC has decided to do away with this fine recreational facility to put in a road. Most of us tennis players will be left with no place to play unless we can afford the high membership costs of a private club. The city, county and HCC should be able to work together to keep this facility open to residents or find a way to build a new complex, which will never happen with our current mayor who has no regard for athletic facilities.

I guess we should take comfort in the fact that we can visit a new art museum and walk the Riverwalk since we will have no place to play tennis shortly.

LAURIE KLEINER, Tampa

Advocacy Writing Tip # 3

Be sure during presentations to make your points clear and concise. Use the Tennis Needs Survey to 'WOW' policymakers with numbers!

Sample Testimony before City Council

My name is Gary Shepherd, a life-long resident of Tampa. First of all, I would like to thank the City for doing what it can to help keep the HCC complex open, or finding a way to do that. That's terrific. The next few months are very important to us, as tennis players.

I have played tennis for about 40 years myself. I am a coach. I work with kids and adults teaching tennis. I'm a USTA official. I officiate matches. I'm one of those guys in or out on matches and so forth.

If there is one message I want to get across today, it's that tennis is just growing amazingly fast. I gave you a chart. Tennis is the only sport that's really growing in the United States. Baseball is losing participants, football is, soccer is. Every sport is actually losing participants except tennis. Tennis has grown by about 10% since 2000, which is surprising to me. I see it every day at all the courts around Tampa, Himes and Davis Island. They are always busy, busy all the time.

It's really interesting how tennis is in fact growing so rapidly these days. There are a couple other statistics I want to mention. About 70 or 80% of tennis is played on public courts. As far as being an amenity the city can offer, tennis really a good thing to have. One-third of new tennis players are minorities. It's not really a country club sport as it once was.

The organization I'm with is called the Hillsborough Community Tennis Association. As a newly formed association, we represent about 3,000 USTA members in Hillsborough County. Based on statistics and information, we figure there are about 90,000 tennis players in Hillsborough County with about 25,000 in the City of Tampa alone. So it's a big population that continues to grow

I will give you some other information about the number of courts in the City. There are 76 tennis courts at 12 locations in the City of Tampa. Some of them are great. Some of them terrific. The ones at Davis Island and the Cal Dickson courts are in great condition, some of them aren't so good.

If HCC does close completely or even partly, it's going to have a bad impact on tennis participation locally. The economic impact is going to be pretty significant too. I have included all the activity that goes on at HCC as far as bringing out of town participants. And the last thing I want to say is that the Hillsborough County Tennis Association is in the process of becoming a foundation, becoming a 501(c)(3). What we would like to do maybe a few months from now is participate with the City of Tampa. We are trying to build a new tennis facility to replace HCC, to bring private money, to partner with the city, because we recognize completely that there is a budget crunch going on and tough times. So what we want to do is find partners, find sponsors, and help Tampa build a large tennis complex over the next year or two.

We really appreciate you giving us the time today to address this important issue.

HCC Tournaments, Programs, and Special Events - 2007

Junior Dixie Tennis Tournament – January – USTA sanctioned tennis tournament. Attracts the top 18 and under boy and girl tennis players in Florida. Draws of 128 players plus family, friends, and coaches. ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

USTA Pro Tennis Circuit – January – Men's and Women's \$10,000.00 challenger tournaments, main draw, qualifying, and pre qualifying tournaments. About 200 to 250 players plus family, friends, and coaches. (NOTE: MOVING TO PASCO COUNTY IN 2008.) ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

High School Tennis – January through April – 4 boy's and 4 girl's teams from area high schools practice and play team matches. 200+ players per week.

Middle School Tennis – February through April – 2 boy's and 2 girl's teams from area middle schools practice and play matches. 100 players per week.

Winter Championship – February - Singles and doubles adult tournament. 50 players.

Boy and Girls 18s Nationals – February – Age 18-and-under boys and girls compete for national titles. Draws of 128 players plus family, friends, and coaches. ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

Junior Team Tennis – March to June – Beginning youth competition each Saturday in a team format. 50 players per week.

FCCAA State Tournament – April – State community colleges compete for the opportunity to vie for a national championship. ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

Spring Championships - April - Singles and doubles adult tournament. 50 players.

FHSSA District High School Tournament – April - Teams from the Tampa Bay area compete to advance to the State Championships. 180 players plus family, friends, and coaches

FHSSA State 2-A High School Tennis Championships – April – Teams and individuals from Florida High Schools compete for the State 2-A Championships. 300 players plus family, friends, and coaches. ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

Sunshine State Conference Tennis Tournament – April – Men and women tennis teams from Florida colleges compete for conference titles. 160 players plus family, friends, and coaches. ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

Hillsborough School District SACC Rallyball – July - 400 children from local elementary SACC programs compete for fun and prizes.

Summer Championships – July –Singles and Doubles adult tournament. 50 players.

Tampa Bay Junior Championships – July – USTA sanctioned tournament. Attracts Florida tournament players. 150+ players plus family, friends, and coaches. ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

University of Tampa Battle – September- USTA sanctioned tournament. Fundraiser for University of Tampa Tennis Team. Attracts local junior tournament players. 150+ players plus family, friends, and coaches.

USTA Team Tennis- September through May – 9-teams from HCC compete against other area clubs. 130 players per week.

Ladies Doubles Tennis Leagues – September to May – Interbay tennis league plays Wednesday mornings. 2-Teams from HCC compete against teams from other clubs around the Bay Area. 56 ladies per week compete.

Senior Games – October - Singles and doubles competition at the Tampa Bay Senior Games. 50 players.

Wheelchair Tennis – October to November - Instructional clinics and competition for participants in wheelchairs 15-20 participants per week.

Fall Championship – October – Singles and doubles adult tournament. 50 players.

Citrus Classic – November - GLTA sanctioned tournament attracts gay and lesbian players from all over the country. 150+ players plus family, friends, and coaches. ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

Advantage Tampa Bay Team Tennis – 30 weeks per year – Members of this organization compete in singles and doubles for team rankings. 36 players per week.

Round Robin Doubles – Year round - Adult recreational social doubles play. Open to anyone, players change partners and opponents each round. Held three times per week, up to 36 players per session.

Instructional Programs – Year round – Instructional clinics, lessons, and summer camps. Instructional programs are offered to students of all ages and skill levels. 400+ students per year.

TennisSmith Academy – Internationally recognized tennis academy has produced hundreds of excellent players, including multiple NCAA champions and professional players. ***Hotel, restaurant, etc. economic impact.***

Presentation to City of Clearwater City Council:

Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Clark Higgs and I am a City of Clearwater resident who has played tennis at the McMullen Tennis Center for about 15 years. In addition to being a local player, I am also a US Tennis Association volunteer local league coordinator for the adult men's tennis leagues for Pinellas County.

We have seen a number of changes over the years and believe that the Tennis Center is one of the City's nicest facilities, although it is not well known to many residents outside of the tennis community.

A number of years ago, the City very generously provided for renovation of the Tennis Center by replacing some of the hard courts with 8 state of the art clay courts complete with an underground watering system and the best lighting system in Pinellas County. In addition to the clay courts, the landscaping was redone with numerous palm trees, substantially improving the aesthetics of the park. Shortly thereafter, the remaining hard courts were reconfigured to include a shade canopy and water fountain between each pair of courts, all of the courts were resurfaced and all of the fences were replaced. The existing 14 courts are a tremendous and beautiful asset to the City of Clearwater, and one of the finest public court facilities in all of Florida. In 2001, the McMullen Tennis Complex received a National Facility Award from the United States Tennis Association.

Several years ago and due to the increase in player participation at the Tennis Center, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee began planning the addition of 8 new clay courts to be located on adjacent land owned by the City. With a total of 16 clay courts and the 6 hard courts, this facility would become the focal point of Clearwater parks and tennis facilities in particular, as well as a model for other public facilities nationwide.

This expansion was scheduled to be in the Capital Improvements Budget for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. We understand that the project has been taken out of the Budget due to the financial challenges that the City and all other levels of state government are facing.

We can **certainly understand** that decision based on what we have seen and heard about declining tax revenues, rising insurance costs, and funding cuts from the State government. We are also aware the you, as members of the City Council, are faced with **difficult decisions** to make regarding all areas of the City Budget for the upcoming fiscal year and know that you will use your best judgment in determining how to allocate the City's resources.

I came to tonight's meeting to request that the City Council consider putting the McMullen Tennis Center in the 2008-2009 fiscal budget. We have recently formed a group of local tennis players and city residents to advocate this project and assist with raising funds from outside sources to supplement the City's investment in the proposed expansion. We anticipate that we will have to work through, and closely with, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to accomplish our objective. To that end, we have requested that the Parks and Rec Advisory Committee pass a resolution to put this project in the Capital Improvements Budget for the 2008-09 fiscal year. We plan on providing assistance in obtaining matching funds from State programs and other monies from outside sources such as the US Tennis Association and perhaps corporate sponsors.

We hope and expect that we can assist with expanding a beautiful City Park facility into a tennis center that will host many junior, professional, college, and charity tournaments, attracting numerous tourists to the City, and helping to meet the recreational demands of the City residents in a manner that will **NOT** create a substantial increase in operating expenditures by the City.

I understand that the Council will not begin considering the 2008-09 budget for almost a year, but I wanted to address you to let you know that the local tennis community believes that this is an important project that will benefit a large number of Clearwater residents.

We would appreciate your consideration of this project for 2008-2009 and look forward to working with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee and the City Council to move the project forward.

Advocacy at Work - A Real Success Story

Terri Florio, Executive Director, MaliVai Washington Kids Foundation

In light of shrinking budgets, the property tax addendum and other fiscal challenges, it is hard to imagine many discretionary dollars being 'left over' for recreational programs. However, even when budgets are tight, advocacy is critically important. And advocacy is all about building and maintaining relationships, even in lean budget times.

An example of how advocacy is at work can be found at the **Youth Tennis & Education Complex in Jacksonville**, now under construction. The Center will house the programs and services of the MaliVai Washington Kids Foundation (MWKF) once the building opens next spring. MWKF first met with the prior Mayor's administration seven years ago to submit for a federal UPARR grant. With the \$500,000 and \$200,000 in matching funds secured, it seemed that the campaign was off to a great start. However, this was just the beginning. As delays beyond our control happened and construction costs escalated, our contacts and relationships to walk us through the process were more critical than ever. With advocacy, it's always about looking for the next opportunity and making it a win-win situation.

For example, with the funding coming in privately for the tennis center (including a \$200,000 Parks grant from the USTA with matching funds from USTA Florida of \$50,000), we were able to leverage additional city funds from two council persons as well as secure a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). All told, public and private funds totaling more than \$3million were made available for the project.

However, the funding wasn't the only reason for advocacy. When things got bogged down in bureaucracy and lower management (as public private ventures often do), a well timed call to key political advocates can help get the wheels turning again.

Ways to advocate? Know your city council members or county commissioners. Know your Mayor's key staff members. Appreciate them. Don't only call when you need a favor, but call to update them on your progress and activities. Make sure they are invited to appropriate activities and are aware of who else is involved in the process. Make sure that board members and volunteers are aware of their contributions so they can thank them as well.

Finally, make sure you have all of your facts. Show them WHY tennis is good for their community and their constituents. Show them how tennis can help make their community a more positive place to live. Encourage them to be involved with your programs. Many times, politicians are simply unaware of the good you are doing. Especially in these critical political times in Florida, it is important to keep the political leaders involved and informed. If not now, eventually, there will be more money available for activities and facilities. Make sure your voice will be heard!

Community Tennis Association Advocacy at Work

Harriett Bohannon, Lee County Community Tennis Association

The Problem

It was not a dark and stormy night, just the regular mid-day, monthly board meeting of the **Lee County Community Tennis Association (LCCTA)**, when the treasurer reported that bankruptcy was imminent. After a decade of offering successful youth programs throughout Lee County this organization barely had enough funds to pay the phone bill. A year later the bank balance is healthy, membership and new program implementation have exceeded expectations, and the organization has dodged a mortal bullet.

Existing Strengths

Decade of Organizational Success

The road back was founded on a decade of organizational success. Incorporated in 1997, the LCCTA had grown out of the efforts of a group of local tennis pros who wanted to provide tennis instruction to children who otherwise would never have access to the sport. This core belief in bringing tennis to underprivileged children has been and continues to be the bedrock of the LCCTA. It has resulted in after school programs in the parks, a First Serve Program, the largest Ralleyball program in the state, and a 5th grade carnival attended by over 500 students from 22 schools this spring.

Partnerships

Two formal partnerships have been essential to the recovery. The USTA provided support through funding, training, and planning support, and the Lee County Department of Parks and Recreation provided access to tennis facilities, leadership assistance, and support for grant writing and funding.

Core Group Commitment

The third great strength of the LCCTA was a core of dedicated board members and volunteers who believed in the community value of returning the organization to viability. This commitment is evidenced in the many hours of service volunteered by this group.

Strategies

The recovery plan included seven initiatives – Program Expansion, Community-wide Communication, Grant Development and Fundraising, Membership, Training for Instructors, Marketing, and Volunteer Recruitment.

Program Expansion

The first decision was to expand our audience and provide programs in the parks to 50+ players. USTA provided a detailed planning guide for a “Welcome Back to Tennis” event that was held in January 2007. This signature event exceeded all our participation goals and more importantly provided the organization with community-wide exposure. The event was used to launch a series of clinics and a two-flight mixed doubles league that will continue play in the fall.

Analysis of the structure of our youth program revealed that we had almost 800 children involved in introductory tennis instruction, but no league play or local novice tournament opportunities. On June 9th the inaugural season of a USTA Jr. Team Tennis League was launched with 10 teams in beginner and intermediate flights. This spring our first National Junior Tennis League (NJTL) Tournament was held for 63 children from the after school programs.

Community-Wide Communication

Ample anecdotal information existed showing that tennis information was virtually non-existent in Lee County. The yellow pages had 4 inches of tennis listings, the local newspaper published visitor and newcomer guides with no mention of the sport, and even long-time tennis enthusiasts struggled to find tournaments, league schedules, and facility listings. As a service, the LCCTA took the initiative to provide information through multiple media. The local tourist association now has a listing of all tennis facilities on its website, the local newspaper includes tennis information in both its Newcomers and Visitors Guides, the LCCTA hosts an improved website, publishes a quarterly e-newsletter and an annual Lee County Tennis Resource Guide.

Grant Development and Fundraising

To solve the funding shortfall required both grant development and local fundraising initiatives. As a USTA affiliate, Community Tennis Associations have access to numerous national and sectional awards. The USTA Florida site actually has a 13 page documents listing these grants. In addition, the regional staff has funds to assist with local events. Three grants to national and local foundations were written, but none were funded. This proved to be the least successful source of funding. Outreach to local businesses and tennis leagues yielded enthusiastic support of both monetary and in-kind donations.

Membership Initiative

The LCCTA had hundreds of participants, but not one member. This resulted in a situation where the small corps of board members and volunteers were the only ones who felt vested in the organization. The first work was to create a set of member benefits and align our policies to make membership valuable to our participants. In May, the Membership Chairman announced that the annual membership goal had been reached, seven months early.

Training for Instructors

Program expansion required that new instructors join the team of existing instructors. A Recreational Coach Workshop was offered in February with the support of USTA and the donation of a site by the Parks Department. Over forty participants attended and gave the activity rave reviews. A second training is planned for September, this time to include the parent captains from Jr. Team Tennis.

Marketing and Promotion

With no marketing expertise within the ranks, this work required reaching out to people in the field. The Chair of the Marketing Department of the local university, the marketing manager who provided a list of all media contacts – email, fax, phone – the volunteer who agreed to produce the 26-page Tennis Resource Guide, the local feature writers who got interested and wrote colorful stories about the programs in local publications, the monthly press releases to community newsletters, the USTA that gave permission for a one time bulk mail to all Lee County adult members, the team of volunteers who helped to build an organizational contact list – they all played a part in getting the story told.

Volunteer Recruitment

All these initiatives required an expansion of the volunteer cadre. What motivates strangers to surrender their time and talents? Since January, 135 people have chosen to volunteer as board members, committee chairs, event workers, on-court leaders, sign makers, tournament workers, you name it. Most of them came forward because they were asked. It seems to be no more complicated than that. Granted you must ask often, and be specific. People want to know what is expected before they commit. The “volunteer orientation” approach did not work, but people showed up when they were asked, when they knew exactly what was expected, and when they had ample notice.

Lessons Learned

Don't go it alone – **Partnerships yield support and credibility.**

Commit to a high-profile event and market aggressively - **In addition to the benefits of the event itself, this is the opportunity to give visibility to the organization.**

Plan, plan, plan – **If the planning guide says start 6 weeks out, and you've never done something before, start 6 months out. You'll learn as you go.**

Fundraising is not begging - **If you believe in your cause, then you are giving others the opportunity to contribute to a worthy community effort. They will be honored.**

Local fundraising has higher success rate - **That's just the reality.**

Embrace technology – **Every initiative creates more work back at the office. Mastering the technology eases the burden.**

Tennis is not just tennis – Community tennis is friendships, healthy exercise, part of an active lifestyle, social development, disciplined involvement, reliance on others, and a chance to learn a lifetime sport. These factors enrich the lives of players young and old.

St. Petersburg Tennis Center

Goal: Save the tennis center

Program Size(# 1st year participants): 24,574 players including 9,175 youth

Program type: 20 court facility with after-school program

City/Community Size: St. Petersburg, 300,000 population

Leader/Advocate Organization: Tennis Foundation of St. Petersburg

Budget: \$252,600

Partnering organization(s): USTA, City of St. Petersburg

Funding Source: City of St. Petersburg, USTA

Introduction:

On July 28, 2001 the City of St. Petersburg announced that the tennis center would cease operations on October 1, 2001 and be bulldozed. A small group of concerned citizens and players gathered to save the 66 year old facility. Within weeks a not-for-profit organization was established and a business plan was presented to the Mayor. The new organization proposed an after-school program for inner city children and private management of the center in return for a subsidy of less than 50% of the city's expected losses. Despite great skepticism, the Tennis Foundation was granted a one year lease. Six years later the St. Petersburg Tennis Center is stronger than ever.

Program History:

Originally opened in 1928, the center is located one mile south of the downtown business district in the economically challenged and minority populated Bartlett Park neighborhood. Today the tennis center is St. Petersburg's only public soft court facility featuring 16 hard-tru clay courts and 4 hard courts. The SPTC has hosted major tournaments featuring legendary players such as Jack Kramer, Don Budge, Doris Hart, Roy Emerson, Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Margaret Court, Arthur Ashe, Billy Jean King, Martina Navratilova, and Chris Evert. It currently hosts a dozen USTA sanctioned adult and junior tournaments while also providing year round play, leagues, events, lessons and clinics for the community.

The Raymond James/Courier's Kids program started at SPTC to support the after-school program. Children of the surrounding neighborhoods receive free tennis instruction, homework assistance and First Serve Life Skills training.

Lesson 1: Create a new vision and discover your mission. Ours is for the historic St. Petersburg Tennis Center at Bartlett Park to be:

- a welcoming place of tennis learning, enjoyment and accomplishment
- a safe haven for the children of the community
- a respectful common ground for diverse cultures and generations

- a facility promoting the “game for a lifetime”
- a celebration of an historically significant site
- a financially sustainable institution

Lesson 2: The SPTC is a collaborative effort. The economics do not work without tennis play, tournaments, lesson income, and contributions from the city, the USTA, and private donors. Without a successful children’s program the donors are rarely interested. Without good management and staff the players would go elsewhere. The SPTC story is about collaboration and balancing the needs and desires of various constituencies.

Lesson 3: Maintenance counts with tennis players. The SPTC operates out of a very old and shoddy building. The locker rooms are substandard and dry rot is epidemic. We allocated the maintenance money to the courts and the players appreciate them. We require our players to brush and sweep the courts after every play. There was some initial resistance but the players now appreciate having a fresh court to play on and feel like they are contributing.

Lesson 4: Build on what you have. The SPTC is an old center and we emphasized that point with the Walk of Champions, a list of all the famous players that have played at the center. We are also planning the Tennis Museum of St. Petersburg. Every site has something to build upon, find yours.

Lesson 5: The tennis community is very supportive. The Florida Section has been a key to the success of the tennis center. Jeff Davis, our local USTA sectional representative, has been a valuable resource. The USTA and its Florida section have been financially and programmatically supportive. The CTA, NJTL and First Serve affiliations have guided us in many ways. This support peaked when we became the founding site for Raymond James/Courier’s Kids.

Lesson 6: The effort is well worth it. The SPTC has been a very rewarding experience. Tennis friends are the best of friends and being involved in a tennis center attracts the best of the best. Saving or building a CTA organization is a legacy and a gift to the game of tennis, the children you serve and the community.

Contact Information:

Mike Carroll, President (727) 821-3451 mike.carroll@tatumllc.com
 Jackie Keller, General Manager (727) 823-2225 sptckidstennis@aol.com
www.sptcfirstserve.org

Advocating for Tennis in Palm Coast/Flagler County

- ◆ Build on the past, your group's strengths and the community's resources.
- ◆ Invite research and data to your effort.
- ◆ Develop a strategic plan.
- ◆ Let the needs and goals drive the organization's structure-- minutes and planned agendas reign.
- ◆ Utilize technology and communication systems such as websites and email lists (they work).
- ◆ Sing from the same page: mission statement, goals, talking points.
- ◆ Befriend governing officials and staff using a positive attitude and affect.
 - Walk in their shoes
 - Tie their goals to your goals
 - Acknowledge your appreciation of them publicly
- ◆ Use numbers, acronyms and name cards to develop a presence and visibility.
- ◆ Keep your focus.
- ◆ Build bridges and credibility through good work, constancy, and good Judgment.
- ◆ Network with political savvy You can't control everything but you can look down the road and avoid the major potholes.
- ◆ Have fun or you'll burn out.
- ◆ Don't give up!

www.friendsoftennis.org

Palm Coast/Flagler Friends of Tennis

Sandy Siepietoski

Marie Wolf longitude81@gmail.com

386-447-7484

After-School Tennis Programs In Brevard County Public Schools

As a program development coordinator, it is my job to research opportunities such as the one offered by the USTA. Their after-school tennis program stood out as one that would fit in with our goals and could easily and inexpensively be offered to our children. So far, twenty School Age Child Care (SACC) sites have taken advantage of this opportunity with more than 800 students participating at some level. There has been nothing but positive feedback from site coordinators, parents and school administrators about this program. Listed below are the steps we took to bring tennis to our after-care programs.

- Met with the USTA state, community, and school representatives to get a full picture of the program being offered.
- Asked **A LOT** of questions!!
- Attended another after-school program during a training session to see how it worked in real life.
- Worked out a program that was tailored to our after care sites, and created a document containing all the information a site coordinator needed to start a tennis program.
- Presented the USTA program to all 55 site coordinators at our yearly programming meeting.
 - USTA state, community and school representatives explained the program and demonstrated the equipment available.
 - Coordinators and their group leaders were given the opportunity for a hands-on trial to see how easy it could be.
 - Showed a DVD of the successful program in Hillsborough County, Florida.
- Conducted a meeting to answer questions and help interested coordinators complete paperwork to apply for equipment and financial aid.
- Scheduled a USTA training with all interested coordinators, instructors, and group leaders. (More than 65 people attended this training.)
- Reviewed and submitted all applications for support to the USTA, and worked with the USTA to order and distribute the equipment provided.
- Handled paperwork for accountability to the USTA.
- Provided support, encouragement, and a positive attitude through the whole process.

It has been a wonderful experience working with the USTA and all their representatives. Best of all, the kids are having fun doing what is good for them and hopefully becoming lifelong lovers of tennis.

Jackie Francisco/School Age Child Care/Brevard County Public Schools
Email: franciscoj@brevard.k12.fl.us

Youth Village Tennis Program

Goal: To incorporate tennis as a life-long sport in the lives of the children of our program.

Program Size (# 1st year participants): 30

Program type: After school & summer program

City/Community Size: Ft. Walton Beach has approx. 21,000 residents

Leader/Advocate Organization: Nellie Bogar

Budget: \$76,000/year

Partnering organization(s): Okaloosa County School District, Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office, Okaloosa County Anti Drug Coalition, Mental Health Assoc., Okaloosa/Walton Counties, United States Tennis Association, Emerald Coast Tennis Association, Ft. Walton Beach Public Library, Okaloosa Walton College, Healthy Start Coalition, Wellington Place Asst. Living Facility, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and Striving for Perfection Ministries.

Funding Source: Our major source is a Prevention Grant from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. We also receive funding from the Builders Institute of America, the Boeing Employees Fund, First City Bank, and others. We are always searching for new funding sources to keep our program open for the children of our community.

Introduction: Youth Village is an After School & Summer Program and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located at 312 Pelham Road in Ft. Walton Beach. It was formed in 1999 for the purpose of creating a safe place to provide various educational and recreational services to the children of our community.

Program History: Our mission is to lend our individual and organized aid to support, teach, and uplift the youth of our community in an educational, spiritual and moral manner by providing them with a place to meet, fellowship and learn in a safe, adult-supervised environment.

Youth Village is solely engaged in direct services. Exposure, adherence, or conversion to any religious doctrine is not required of the programs beneficiaries. We admit all children without regard to race, color, sex, religion, or national origin.

Our after school program provides services free of charge to the children of our community in the 6-15 year old age bracket. We are open during the school year from 2:00pm-6:00pm which is the time that most juvenile delinquency occurs as determined by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice.

We are also open during the summer months beginning on the first Monday of summer vacation and concluding on the last day before school resumes in August. Our summer hours of operation are 7:30am-6:00pm.

Our objective is to provide a variety of services to help the children improve his/her grades in school and hopefully encourage enthusiasm for learning, as well as improve their social skills & social behavior, establish moral responsibility, increase student community service, develop lifelong goals and ambitions, increase conflict resolution skills, help gain respect for others and their cultures, as

well as other life skills that they will need to assist them to grow into responsible, self-sufficient adults, which tennis helps to provide.

Youth Village offers free tennis lessons to the children every Wednesday afternoon for 2 hours. We have 3 Certified Developmental Coaches (Valerie Bogar, Anthony Roberts and Ron Hills) on hand for approximately 30-35 children ages 6-15 every week.

The Bluewater Bay Tennis Center hosted the United States Tennis Association Florida -Region 1W Event "Celebrating Success!" on Oct. 14. The Youth Village after school and summer program was awarded the 2006 Non-Profit Program of the Year by the USTA Region 1 West. Youth Village was recognized as the only program in the District (Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties) that provides a tennis program as a part of their after school program.

During the week-end of September 22-23, 2007 we conducted our *Annual Youth Village Tennis Extravaganza III* at the Bluewater Bay Tennis Center in Niceville, Florida. This is a great fundraiser for our program as well as serving to give our children an additional opportunity to view tennis players up close and personal. The children serve as towel fetchers, bag carriers, and all-around cheerleaders during this event.

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 (2:00-6:00pm daily and 7:30am-6:00pm
 during the summer months)

Members of the USTA Florida Advocacy Committee are available to help with your local efforts. Please don't hesitate to contact us:

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