

May 2012



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#### PLEASE JOIN US!

The LI Region has many activities planned for the spring and summer months and we need your help! To volunteer, please email [ustaonlongisland@gmail.com](mailto:ustaonlongisland@gmail.com).

You don't have to be a good tennis player to help. You don't even have to play tennis!

# On The Ball: News From LI

## Long Island Region Shines at Awards Dinner

Long Island tennis players will celebrate the 2011 season on May 9th at the 22nd Annual USTA Eastern Long Island Awards Dinner, honoring the best of the local tennis community.

New this year is the event's Cinco de Mayo Mexican Fiesta theme as well as awards for PPR (Points Per Round) and NTRP (National Tennis Rating Program) achievements, along with recognition for the top junior, high school and adult players. Ed Wolfarth of Syosset, a longtime tennis player and teaching



pro, as well as a dedicated Long Island volunteer, will receive the Hy Zausner

Tennis Lifetime Achievement Award, the evening's highest honor. The Region will also honor three outstanding Long Islanders who recently were inducted into the Junior Tennis Foundation Eastern Tennis Hall of Fame: Nancy Gill McShea, Ron Rehuhn and Molly VanNostrand Rice.

Pioneering sports radio broadcaster Ann Liguori will deliver the evening's keynote address. Ms. Liguori was the first woman to host her own call-in sports show on the original all-sports radio station, WFAN-NY, where she remains the station's golf and tennis reporter.

The Long Island Region volunteer Board of Directors is pleased to acknowledge the outstanding efforts and achievements of all the awardees. Special thanks to the LI Region Dinner Committee,



headed by Event Planner Marian Morris, for putting together a fabulous party.

**CTC Update:** Good luck to the following members of the Competition Training Center program who will be representing Long Island at the Eastern Rally Day at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point: Kaitlyn Byrnes, Trinity Chow, Melissa Cooney, Ariana Fixon-Owoo, Ben Grossman, Eric Li, Madison Li, Daniel Meinster, Sujay Sharma and Sohrob Yavari.

## Kids Collect Pennies for Players

Teenaged brothers from Lloyd Harbor have been working together to help juniors less fortunate than themselves through a program they call "**Pennies for Players.**"

Conor Mullins, 15, and Sean, 13, started playing tennis at age 4, and going to tournaments by age 7. Three years ago, while traveling to tournaments nationwide, Conor realized that he and other tournament players could help less advantaged players to enjoy the sport. He registered his project with the USTA and,

with younger brother, Sean, began distributing coin-collection jars and flyers at tournament sites. Other juniors deposited their change and even dollars, and in the first year, the Mullins' raised \$500 for the Junior Tennis Foundation.

"We are proud of Conor and Sean's efforts to help those who might not otherwise be able to participate in tennis," said Daniel Burgess, president, USTA Eastern Long Island. "To support their continued success, we are asking all clubs to place coin collection jars in their

facilities in May to collect spare change." *Pennies for Players* flyers are available for download at [www.longisland.usta.com](http://www.longisland.usta.com). Please email [ustaonlongisland@gmail.com](mailto:ustaonlongisland@gmail.com) with questions and to participate.



## LI Region Supports the Community



Being involved members of our local communities across Long Island is a critical component of the USTA Eastern Long Island mission. During the past year, we have sponsored or participated in events including streets fairs and festivals, fundraisers, programs with members of our U.S. military, AED/CPR training sessions and more.

Two initiatives in which we are participating this spring are the 7th Annual Robbie's Run and the Bellmore-Merrick Relay for Life, where we'll set up

10-and-under tennis courts and provide lessons to youngsters. "We are pleased to tie into events taking place in our local communities and provide tennis exposure to kids, while also helping raise money for important causes," said Melanie Rubin, USTA Eastern LI Community Development Chair.

Please join us at these events. For information visit [www.longisland.usta.com](http://www.longisland.usta.com) or email [ustaonlongisland@gmail.com](mailto:ustaonlongisland@gmail.com).



***"...the Long Island awards dinner ... is a model for the section....it could be a model for sections across to the nation."***

## Region Spotlight: D.A. Abrams

In recognition of his six years leading the Eastern Section and his strong support for local initiatives, the LI region will present former Executive Director D.A. Abrams with the Arthur Ashe Multicultural Award at its 22nd Annual Awards Dinner.

Abrams, who recently became Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer for the USTA, now focuses on developing and innovating the USTA's diversity and inclusion initiatives on both a national and grassroots level. While at Eastern, he led the Section through unprecedented growth: membership increased by over 20 percent, with more than 52,000 people of all ages and abilities joining or renewing their ties to Eastern. At the same time, the Section's recreational programs grew - with more than 15,000



players in Adult Leagues and more than 7,600 in Jr. Team Tennis, an increase of more than ten-fold.

Abrams also developed new partnerships and initiatives at USTA Eastern. In 2011, the Section established a \$1.5 million fund to help member organizations develop the sport. He led Eastern to a major partnership with the NY Sportimes of World Team Tennis.

According to Abrams, key Section initiatives include

increasing memberships, growing adult leagues, expanding the number of unique players and playing opportunities, increasing participation in Jr. Team Tennis and focusing on tournament participation. "Long Island does very well in those areas," he says. "I have worked closely with Regional board members; any group delivering tennis to the masses is a priority."

Another critical piece of Abrams' success has been his focus on USTA volunteers. "Growing the number and helping to develop volunteers and recognize them, enhancing their total experience and engaging them," are key goals, he says. "I have absolutely nothing to with this, but the Long Island awards dinner annually is a model for the section....it could be a model for sections across to the nation."

## Local Woman Shines at International Special Olympics

Last June, Sabrina Walker joined 7,500 athletes who traveled to Athens, Greece, from 170 countries around the globe to compete in the 2011 Special Olympics International World Games.

Walker was one of only 20 tennis players on Team USA, which consisted of 315 athletes with intellectual disabilities. She earned a silver medal for mixed doubles and a bronze for women's singles. "I met people from all over the world and loved trading pins. It was the experience of a lifetime," says Walker, who competed against tennis players

from such countries as Holland, Colombia and the Bahamas.

Walker has been playing tennis for more than half her life. Now 38 years old, she has practiced weekly for more than 20 years and is a founding participant in the Special Olympics New York - Long Island Region Tennis Program. Each Sunday evening, she and her teammates practice at the Bethpage State Park Tennis Center, hitting balls and playing matches against each other and the dedicated volunteers who give so much of their time to the program.

Currently the top-ranked female tennis player in Special Olympics New York, Walker is looking forward to many more years of competitive and recreational tennis playing.



## Tennis Players Support Military Families

A group of local tennis pros visited the Leo F. Giblyn Elementary School in Freeport to provide tennis clinics to the students, many of whom have family members in the U.S. Military.

The clinics, sponsored by the Long Island Region along with United Way of Long Island,

represented the successful culmination of the pair's Corporate Tennis Challenge Fundraiser, which took place last year.

"Teams of tennis players from across Long Island came to the Port Washington Tennis Academy to have fun and raise money to support the

families of our U.S. Military," said Daniel Burgess, president, USTA Eastern Long Island.

"The money raised provided the Freeport students with tennis lessons at their school as well as 'I Love LI Tennis' t-shirts and child-sized racquets to take home."

**"The students are proud of their family members in the military, so it was special for them to be recognized in this way."**



The tennis pros based their lessons on the USTA's 10-and-under format, which uses smaller racquets and courts and

soft balls to introduce kids to tennis at their level and size.

"The students are very proud of their family members in the military, so it was special for them to be recognized in this way," said Giblyn School Principal Amanda Villalba.

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LONG ISLAND**

To promote and develop the growth of tennis.

## USTA Eastern Long Island

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*We are committed to the promotion and growth of tennis, the "lifetime sport," for people of all ages and abilities to play and enjoy the game. Through the efforts of volunteers, USTA staff, and strategic partners, we are dedicated to the highest standards of integrity, honesty and ethics in developing tennis programs in local communities throughout Long Island. Our mission will be served by having our youth, our adults and corporate partners enjoy the "sport for a lifetime".*

**On The Ball: News From LI** is published quarterly by the USTA Eastern Long Island. Written and produced by Jacki Binder.

## SAVE THE DATE: MEMBER APPRECIATION DAY



**Be a Pro for the Day and Play on the U.S. Open Courts!** The First Annual Long Island Region Member Appreciation Day has been scheduled for Saturday, September 29th, 2012. Plans

are underway for a fabulous day of tennis and fun.

This event will take place at the National Tennis Center in Flushing, giving participants the unique opportunity to play on the same courts as the pros!

The day's events, which will run from 10:00am-4:00pm at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, will include four hours of play time, lunch and a behind-the-scenes tour of Arthur Ashe Stadium.

More details will be available soon, but those with questions can visit [www.longisland.usta.com](http://www.longisland.usta.com) or send an email to [ustaonlongisland@gmail.com](mailto:ustaonlongisland@gmail.com).

