

Community Tennis Associations (CTAs)

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

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

RESOURCES

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

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

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

[USTA Southern Facility Toolkit- Advocacy Across Communities](#)

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

CASE STUDY: BILL HERMANN PALMER COURTS

| Submitted by: Susan Brunner

Introduction

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

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

Goal

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

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



History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Funding

The two local rotary clubs each donated \$10,000 to kick off the project funding. With this seed money available, MatSu Tennis Association applied for grants from various organizations and was awarded the following:

- MatSu Parks and Trails Foundation: \$90,000
- Gateway Community Grant: \$10,000
- Thrive MatSu: \$5,000
- United Way of MatSu: \$4,600
- Matanuska Electric Association: \$10,000
- Private Donations: \$4,000

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

Other donations were as follows:

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

Tips from the Pros

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

Lesson

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

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

CASE STUDY: MINGO TENNIS | Submitted by Steve Mingo

Introduction

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

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

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

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

The four major components of the Mingo Tennis program are:

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

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

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

Goal

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

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



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

History

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

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

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

Funding

\$4,200 from USTA grants

Tips from the Pros

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

Lessons

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

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

CASE STUDY: PADUCAH TENNIS ASSOCIATION, PADUCAH, KY.

Goals

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

Initial “Ask”

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

Funding

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

Other Support/Donations

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

Results

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

What Did We Learn?

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