



- Navigation**
- Home
 - About YTA
 - YTA Sites
 - Events
 - Board/Staff
 - Photos
 - Honorable Mentions
 - Support YTA
 - What's New
 - FAQ
 - Contact Us

Welcome

Empowering Youth through Play: A 2008 Expansion Plan



Imagine local tennis parks active and filled with neighborhood children learning and playing tennis on teams for the first time. Imagine local college campus sites enabling youth team tennis to flourish and helping children and teens blossom from quality coaching and development. Transforming these ideas into reality is soon ahead with Empowering Youth through Play, a 2008 expansion plan initiated by Youth Tennis Advantage to significantly increase low income children's access to tennis. Empowering Youth through Play is a comprehensive effort adopted by YTA president Dr. Ron Grant, the YTA staff and board, to be rolled out over the 2008 calendar year. The expansion plan is designed to meet several key program goals:

1. Establish YTA team tennis for children with no previous tennis experience.
2. Create YTA tournament team tennis for intermediate and advanced players.
3. Provide a robust youth leadership program.
4. Incorporate the First Serve Student Athlete Competition into YTA's overall programs.

By adopting Empowering Youth through Play, YTA anticipates that the children and teens who participate in its programs will make the connection between the experiences they encounter on the tennis court, with those they experience elsewhere to cultivate lasting relationships with mentors, teachers, and coaches.

"Essentially, we're looking to Empower Youth through Play so that whether our participants are engaging with others on a tennis court, in a middle or high school, or even college, that they'll be inspired to give their best and aspire to reach their full potential," said executive director Loretta Conway.

Conway explained that Empowering Youth through Play will maintain the YTA legacy of honoring Arthur Ashe's vision of using tennis as a vehicle to profoundly enrich the lives of inner city kids who face various challenges and issues related to poverty. The benefit of expanding YTA programs, she explained, will directly impact how many more services will be offered and sites available as part of the program, and will better define the programs which are designed to meet the various needs of participants.

"We're very excited about the specific components of Empowering Youth through Play and the impact it will have in the new year," Conway said. "For example we've made a concerted effort to address our least experienced youngsters, giving them what is likely to be their first ever opportunity playing tennis. We've also addressed the notion of development and want to make sure when kids show the potential and interest to compete and develop, that they have the infrastructure in place to do so. Our relationship with First Serve will become an integral part of our program and will drive athletic competition in an organized and consistent fashion. And finally, in developing this expansion, we recognize that tennis alone is not sufficient and that we'd be remiss if we did not tap in to our participant's academic capabilities and help them succeed and shine academically so that they can reach college and become our future leaders, entrepreneurs, business people, and scientists."

Conway also said that with the roll out of the expansion plan, many more children and teens will get to participate given the nature of team tennis formats to accommodate larger numbers of children playing. Also given YTA's status as a chapter of First Serve, it will be able to better leverage its First Serve partnership by highlighting the student athlete throughout its programs in 2008. Additionally, YTA will expand the First Serve Lite curriculum to the existing YTA sites not currently delivering First Serve Life Skills.

Considering that there is a tremendous need in socio-economically disadvantaged communities for programs that provide college pathway motivation, healthy activities and community support for youth, Empowering Youth through Play will have an extremely favorable impact in the years ahead in these communities. For example, today there exists a disturbing learning and guidance gap which is likely responsible for low-income neighborhoods which fall well below the national average in college matriculation rates.

The physical, psychological, social and academic rewards of participating in YTA programs are critical counterpoints to street influences that can lead to incarceration, school dropout, drug addiction, and other negative outcomes.

YTA participants come from some of the most underserved, socially and economically disadvantaged communities in San Francisco, Oakland and East Palo Alto. Every day, these communities succumb to violence, poverty, gang activity and drug abuse. Many YTA children grow up seeing and experiencing some of the most unfathomable acts.

"It's vitally important to provide a substantive program that children and their families can rely on," said Dr. Ron Grant who cited a Stanford University's Prevention Research Center at Stanford University School of Medicine article, Building Generation Play: Addressing the Crisis of Inactivity Among America's Children, (February 2007). The report showed evidence that almost one in five children in the 2-19 year old age range in the United States was overweight in 2003-2004, because of lack of adequate physical activity of today's children, summarizes factors contributing to this lack of activity; and suggests possible strategies for reversing this trend.

The YTA's Empowering Youth through Play expansion is a comprehensive approach to help and change lives by attempting to help change the attitudes and beliefs of participants and their families.

"Through the fun and excitement of tennis, children will be engaged in reversing the trend towards inactivity and obesity. They will strive to be fit and healthy as they enjoy the play and learn to compete in a friendly and safe environment," added Dr. Grant.

Login

Username

Password

Login

Forgotten your password?
 Request a new one here.