

## Palm Beach Area Tennis Patrons (First Serve West Palm Beach) at ITC Delray Beach

The stands were filled with avid tennis fans this week at the Delray Beach International Tennis Championships...they arrived early and stayed late as Agassi, Haas and Ginepri delighted the crowds with their outstanding performances. Some came to catch a glimpse of the wild card players, the unknowns or the soon to be known players who always impress with their heart and diligence on the court.

This year, however, the tournament had a new group of spectators with talent, love and contagious enthusiasm for the game and it's athletes. The West Palm Beach First Serve kids attended each night session and helped out at the Players Registration booth and in the Stringing Room during the week. These kids are from the local chapter of a national organization that brings tennis and all it's invaluable lessons to inner city children who may not otherwise benefit from this great sport. First Serve is an organization that teaches life skills through tennis, this tried and true curriculum developed by tennis professionals, educators and child psychologists supports children throughout their lower, middle and high school years giving them the tools to be confident, strong, disciplined and successful individuals on and off the courts.

Coach Henry Guignet, WPB Head Coach and First Serve certified Life Skills Coach, accompanied kids from the program each night after school to catch the evening matches. These children ranging in ages from 6-16 also helped out in the Stringing Room where they assisted the stringers and got a chance to greet the players who stopped in. It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to see a professional tournament and meet some of their heroes. Andre Agassi made a special effort to shake hands and chat with kids as he walked into the Center on Sunday to practice with Tommy Haas, who also posed for a photo with a few of his biggest fans. Both Agassi and Haas are among a prestigious list of First Serve's supporters. For more information on First Serve visit, [www.firstserve.org](http://www.firstserve.org) or contact the local chapter for details on the program and how you can support these special children by emailing [FirstServeWPB@gmail.com](mailto:FirstServeWPB@gmail.com).