

**KINGS COUNTY  
TENNIS LEAGUE  
2020  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**



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# A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

Dear KCTL Friends and Families,

2020 marked the 10th Anniversary of Kings County Tennis League and it was nothing like we envisioned for this milestone. Beneath the challenges of this difficult year was a well of care and kindness. I am still in awe of the support and generosity that helped the KCTL community stay together, even when this was physically impossible.

KCTL volunteers and programming staff emerged as champions who conquered the nearly impossible: adapting our tennis programs to a virtual setting. Their agility and tireless dedication to this daunting task was truly heroic. They created an industry-leading virtual program that served as a model for other sports-based youth development organizations to follow.

This virtual pivot was driven by the generosity of both long-time and new donors whose contributions led to a record-breaking KCTL Cares campaign. Because of your support, families made a few less trips to the grocery store and students continued to practice the sport they love while staying in touch with their friends and favorite KCTL coaches. When it was deemed safe to return to the court in small numbers, your giving afforded more than 100 students the opportunity to take private and semi-private lessons.

We will continue to remove any obstacles and break down barriers, providing opportunities that enrich the lives of our students. The KCTL community is strong, bound tightly to and through the beautiful sport of tennis. It has brought so many exceptional people into our lives and I have never appreciated this more.

Thank you for believing in the power of our mission and for enabling us to deliver on it, no matter what may stand in our way.

Warm regards,  
Michael McCasland



FOUNDER  
KINGS COUNTY TENNIS LEAGUE



## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS IN BROOKLYN

2020 marked the 10th Anniversary of Kings County Tennis League. Instead of celebrations and fanfare, the KCTL community was challenged and tested, reinventing and adapting programs while prioritizing the essentials.

Over the past decade, KCTL has grown into one of Brooklyn's leading sports-based youth development organizations. In this 10th year, a year like no other, our students accomplished more than ever, on and off the tennis court, in the most trying of circumstances. Looking forward, our #1 priority is growing KCTL's enrollment of students who reside in NYCHA properties to increase the availability of play and enrichment opportunities to serve the children with the greatest need. Closing out this decade, we are filled with pride and gratitude for the people that KCTL brings into our lives. KCTL is about building meaningful relationships within a supportive community. This is the most impactful achievement of our first decade.



## KCTL MISSION

Kings County Tennis League combines tennis and education to spark the potential of children living in and around Brooklyn public housing.



2010  
TO  
2020



## CHAMPIONING ACCESS AND EQUITY

Tennis, like so many other sports, has a history of exclusion, a sport enjoyed by a privileged few. This goes to the heart of KCTL's humble beginning and our mission's continued relevance. Access to play is a social justice issue and these discrepancies erect barriers to opportunity and empowerment in under-resourced communities.

KCTL founder Michael McCasland recognized that tennis puts athleticism, strategic thinking and integrity to the test all at once and thus is uniquely suited as a medium for positive youth development. Our programs and curriculum use tennis as a vehicle for students to learn about themselves, their peers, and how their actions and choices affect those around them. Coaches help each student integrate the lessons so they may grow and achieve off the court as they do on the court.

While our size and scale has dramatically changed since Michael's first students were welcomed onto the beat-up tennis court at Marcy Playground, the intention of KCTL has remained constant: to share the magical world of tennis with children who wouldn't otherwise have access. By bringing tennis and educational programming directly to where children are living in public housing, KCTL removes the number of barriers to tennis play in Brooklyn, including access to courts, transportation, cost and coaching.

A caring and inclusive community has formed within six NYCHA developments that would never have united if not for the love of this beautiful sport. With our diversity, passion and grit, we can never lose!



# A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

WINTER 2020

- Winter 2020 season begins
- KCTL Annual Doubles Open
- 94% of students say KCTL coaches take the time to understand them and their lives outside the program  
*(Hello Insight survey, winter 2020)*

218 hours of virtual programs

SUMMER 2020

- KCTL Virtual Family Play Day
- 1st Virtual Davis Cup
- KCTL students back on court for private, semi-private and small-group lessons at Marcy Playground
- KCTL Cares raised \$113,000, most successful fundraising campaign

386 hours of on-court programs



Bleacher Report Field Trip



Raaka Chocolate Factory Field Trip



160 bags of groceries delivered to students and their families



Coach Rob teaching virtual lessons



Volunteers calling families to check in



Care packages and tennis gear sent to families



KCTL Marathon Relay Race



KCTL student with her buddies

More than 200 students served

SPRING 2020

- KCTL Cares campaign launch
- Key Foods and Wegmans grocery and essentials deliveries
- Equipment delivery for KCTL virtual programs
- KCTL goes VIRTUAL with UpSwing, Summer Core and GoGirlGo programs

Tennis & fitness equipment delivered to 160 students

FALL 2020

- Virtual Jamboree
- KCTL 5K Neighborhood Run
- Fall After-School season launch
- 10 Year Virtual Anniversary Benefit

## BIGGEST CHALLENGE TO BIGGEST VICTORY

The 2020 Winter season was abruptly canceled after the first week of March as Brooklyn emerged as the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the need for immediate action, the KCTL Board, staff and volunteers unanimously decided to not be spectators while our community was in crisis. A phone outreach campaign was initiated and staff and volunteers contacted more than 150 families to see how they were coping and get a better understanding of their lives at this moment. The findings from these calls led to KCTL Cares, the most successful fundraising campaign in KCTL's history.

KCTL Cares was established to provide extra help with the essentials and, most importantly, adapt programming for virtual settings. Staff delivered equipment, including yoga mat, poly spots and low-compression tennis balls, making sure students had everything needed by their side at home. Our three virtual programs were carefully designed to continue their development as players while cultivating the feeling of togetherness, reduce the isolation with which many children struggled and provide much needed physical and emotional relief to help our students come out of this crisis intact.

Each virtual session consisted of a warm-up as well as units to develop ball skills, footwork, stroke production and fitness. Program staff and volunteers addressed each student by name with words of encouragement and asked crafted questions that were designed to stimulate conversation so students could tell their favorite coaches about their day. Many children swung tennis rackets for the first time in the safety of their homes and in-person attendance records were broken. With the creativity and ingenuity that are KCTL hallmarks, we were able to support our students and deliver our programs as originally scheduled.



## SAFELY BACK ON COURT

When the City and State loosened social restrictions in July, tennis emerged as a safe pastime and the perfect social-distancing sport. No time was wasted and staff developed an instruction program, allowing for the safe return of our students to the court.

KCTL introduced private and semi-private lessons at Marcy Playground and Jackie Robinson Park to more than 80 students. Born out of necessity, KCTL staff welcomed the opportunity to experiment with more individualized tennis training and the unique benefits that come with smaller group lessons.

As Summer moved into Fall, and more group activities were permitted, KCTL returned to our normally scheduled programs. The enthusiasm for the return of our Fall After-School season was so overwhelming from our students, we added a third location for programming at Lafayette Gardens Club, in addition to Marcy and Jackie Robinson. The Fall After-School tennis programs were enjoyed by 116 students, our biggest Fall enrollment to date.



# LIGHTING OUR PATH TO THE FUTURE

The KCTL Board and senior staff adopted a new strategic plan in 2020 that serves as our North Star for the next five years, centered on three areas of focus:

- Expand community outreach within our NYCHA developments to draw youth with the greatest need into our programs.
- Forge partnerships with local providers to offer enrichment opportunities to our students, on and off the court.
- Further define the KCTL Pathway, promoting skills for leadership and success and supporting the needs of our growing number of high school students as they transition into adulthood. Two new programs are developing the next generation of KCTL leaders:
  - > **Volunteer in Training (VIT)** - Our oldest and most advanced students are now assisting coaches, working with younger children in our programs while also enjoying opportunities to meet tennis professionals who share their own background stories.
  - > **Buddy Program** - Matching students with volunteer mentors.

2020 also marked the beginning of a transformational partnership with Youth INC, which identified KCTL as one of the most promising youth development organizations in New York, and is working with our staff to incorporate proven social-emotional learning (SEL) research and best practices for positive youth development (PYD) into KCTL program designs.

- Inspire and support self-discovery
- Learn to deal with loss and put triumph into perspective
- Forge relationships with peers through the power of play
- Build an inclusive community, respect unique perspectives
- Provide the opportunity to lead
- Practice as a path to improvement



# FINANCIALS

## Revenues

Foundations & Corporate \$121,948	Individual Giving \$126,045	Events \$121,317	Misc + Gov't Relief \$54,008	<b>Total \$413,318</b>
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## Expenses

Program Services* \$185,865	Management, Development and General** \$240,907	<b>Total \$426,772</b>
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\*Covid-driven shift from on-site to virtual programming resulted in one-time reduction of program expenses.

\*\*First year KCTL employed a full-time Executive Director and a Director of Development.

# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

ALLINBKLYN

Amazon Smile

American Express Foundation

Aspen Institute

Bright Funds

Brooklyn Community Housing and Services

Brooklyn Equity, Inc.

Brooklyn Kindergarten Society

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# KINGS COUNTY TENNIS LEAGUE

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 Kings County Tennis League

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Help Bring Tennis to the Kids,  
Support KCTL!

