

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Tennis lessons and competitive play provided to several CCSD schools

Division of Strategy and Communications

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Charleston, SC – Students at three Charleston County School District (CCSD) schools recently completed an eight-week tennis program designed in conjunction with the Lowcountry Youth Tennis Association (LYTA) to provide free tennis to children in the tri-county area.

Lambs, Matilda F. Dunston, and North Charleston Elementary School students participated in the afterschool program that is held at the Danny Jones Center in North Charleston.

In addition to receiving lessons and participating in competitive play, students at Danny Jones were introduced to and practiced with three professional tennis players who were playing in a Professional WTA event in Mount Pleasant. Students were also given free tickets to attend the Credit One Charleston Open on Daniel Island and watch professional matches. Also all of the players were invited to attend a Charleston RiverDogs baseball game. Some of the players will participate by going onto the field between innings and playing tennis to celebrate National Tennis Month in May.

The season culminated with an awards ceremony for players and their families, complete with ice cream, certificates, and trophies.

Dunston tennis coach John Farrelly has been a member of the LYTA for many years and has taught students the game. He said the goal is to introduce the sport to students who would otherwise not have access or means to learn the game.

“Tennis gives students the benefits of teamwork and exercise,” said Farrelly. “Additionally, it gives students the feeling of success that they can pass on into the classroom.”

Individual school programs receive equipment and lessons are free. Throughout the season, the three CCSD schools played against each other.

The offering also carries over into summer when students can attend Academic tennis camp for \$5 a day (there are no-cost options as well).

The tennis program has a K-2 team and a 3-5 team. The K-2 players use the hockey rink at the Danny Jones complex and the 3-5 players use the tennis courts. All students are taught "10 and Under Tennis" which is a United States Tennis Association (USTA) countrywide program.

"Parents have embraced the tennis programs," said Farrelly. "The goal is to expand to middle and high school so students can play in sanctioned tournaments and also develop a love for tennis which can be enjoyed for life."

Farrelly added that parents appreciated having translators on-site at each match and at the award ceremony. Not only do parents receive weekly updates from the School Parent Liaison through the Talking Points App, but parents are able to access pictures of their children playing tennis and a weekly parent letter on the LYTA's webpage.

"The parents and students are able to get to know each other," said Farrelly. "Tennis also gives the kids something to talk about that is not school-related."

Tennis is also promoted at Dunston where the school PE coach made it part of the curriculum and Farrelly also ran an introductory month-long tennis program at Dunston for students in 21st Century after-school program. Students attended once-a-week instruction. April Gift from the USTA was there on their final day to pass out prizes and certificates.

This was made possible thanks to the USTA donation of equipment. The kits include a digital curriculum, nets, 30 racquets, and more. Gift said the kits are an extension of their mission to create a better pathway to tennis for all grade levels. Kits are available by contacting Gift at gift@sctennis.com.

"I would like to give a shout out to the staff at the schools, parents, and LYTA members that are there every week helping at the facilities," added Farrelly.

"We want to give students an opportunity to learn the game and learn it affordably," said Gift. "A lot of kids don't have opportunities because there is no programming. So this type of partnership allows for expanded tennis instruction at no cost."

The Danny Jones facility is looking forward to a multimillion-dollar facelift this year. Farrelly is excited to have facilities that can be used and enjoyed by students and parents with opportunities to experience multiple sports moving forward.

For more information, contact the Division of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), music and other creative and performing arts, career and technical preparation programs, and military.