

KCTA 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

The fiscal year that ended September 30, 2022 was a success by virtually every measure. The return of high school sports allowed us to focus on our primary objective of enabling student athletes from low-income families to enjoy the proven physical, social, and academic benefits that result from participation. We partnered with high school coaches to help rebuild their programs and match pre-pandemic participation levels.

Providing necessary equipment to those who cannot afford their own continues to be the centerpiece of our operation. This year we supplied 290 racquets, 370 pairs of shoes, and 6000 practice balls to 26 high schools – at no cost to the students or their schools. Program totals over the past four years have reached 1200 racquets, 1000 pairs of shoes, and 25,000 practice balls ... equipment whose original retail value exceeded \$350,000. Through community donations and a partnership with Good Sports, we have been able to extend this support to include clothing. During the past year we provided over 2000 items, including 250 sports bras for the current girls' season.

Teaching is a growing element of our program. Our pre-season coaches' clinics are well attended, with about 50% of the county's high school coaches making time on their schedules. The players' drills and lunch we host each season continue to grow in popularity – we had 225 girls attend in August, 50% more than our previous record. We began sponsoring small group lessons with our local teaching professionals during the summer of 2021. Eighty student athletes from 20 teams received up to 10 hours of instruction. Those lessons continued during the school year and demand exploded with 150 players receiving up to 15 hours this past summer. To date, this program has delivered over 3000 hours of court time to those who previously had no access to this type of instruction. It is no surprise that several coaches have stated, "KCTA is raising the level of high school tennis in Kern County."

The increasing support of our community has made this all possible with our sponsor base now approaching 75 individuals and organizations. This is in addition to the dozens who donated gently-used equipment and clothing. We welcomed the SCTA Foundation as our largest donor, but we cannot overlook our Legacy Sponsor, Barber Honda, who has been our staunch supporters for many years. Our second Give Big Kern campaign qualified as a rousing success by generating over \$23,000 (double 2021) and placing 10th out of 130 organizations. The second annual Frank Thiessen Memorial Tournament was well supported, and the warm reception to this year's Ladies' Drills resulted in a second one being added to the calendar.

The coming year will bring both challenges and opportunities. Topping the former list will be the limited supply and (much) higher pricing of equipment overstocks upon which we have so heavily relied. Manufacturers upon whose generosity we have built our programs still have significant supply chain issues. We are striving to find replacement sources. Our opportunities focus on instruction. During this summer's small group lessons, we identified approximately one dozen athletes who needed greater challenges. We are sponsoring them to participate in advanced drills at the private clubs. We recently became a National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) chapter with the USTA. We will be pursuing grants that will enable us to expand our impact and funding by incorporating an educational element in our programming.

A quote from a high school coach illustrates the positive impact we are making. *"I am deeply honored and joyful to be working alongside KCTA to provide opportunities for kids who would normally fall through the cracks."* It is complemented by a testimonial from a local player, *"Playing tennis is incredibly fun. However, it starts losing its magic when running too fast on the court means exposing your big toe through an opening in your shoe. For many of my teammates, worn-out shoes were their only option."*