



USTA NORTH CAROLINA

NEIGHBORHOOD TRY TENNIS

Huntersville Community Hosts
Try Tennis® Program for
Neighborhood Kids

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The COVID-19 pandemic has forced people to be flexible with parents working from home and children learning virtually. The Hamptons neighborhood in Huntersville, with 2 sets of tennis courts, used this as an opportunity to come together safely and play tennis in their own backyard.

Whitney Brown, a resident of The Hamptons, said she was looking to enroll her sons in tennis lessons but was struggling to find affordable options. She spoke to her father, Lake Norman Tennis Association (LNTA) President JD Weber, and he told her about USTA North Carolina's Try Tennis® Program. "We connected Amy Brandon, Executive Director of LNTA, with Beth Metz, the Special Events Committee Chairperson for the neighborhood, and they got busy planning the logistics."

Two sessions were created but filled up within 24 hours, so three more sessions were added and those reached capacity, too.

Offering the program at the neighborhood's own tennis courts has been an added benefit. "I think with kids learning virtually and tennis being an outdoor activity where social distancing is possible, it was too good of an opportunity for families to pass up," Brown said.

"It's fantastic that our beautiful neighborhood courts are being put to good use while instructing our youth about this great sport," Metz said. "Most of them ride their bikes to the courts, meet with friends, and then participate and enjoy the hour of excellent tennis instruction."

Another parent, Niki Deaton, said her daughter has already learned so much about the game and had fun participating in the program. "I definitely think this has been a great experience during the pandemic and it has gotten her excited about an amazing sport in our own neighborhood," Deaton said. "Being with friends and neighbors is a plus, too!"

Brown agrees that the pandemic has caused people, particularly children, to feel disconnected during this time. "This has absolutely helped kids feel connected to their neighborhood friends during the COVID-19 pandemic," Brown said. "The majority of the kids are learning virtually so they love seeing their friends and Try Tennis® allows for some social connectivity in a safe, outdoor environment."

Since the junior Try Tennis® sessions have been extremely popular, The Lake Norman Tennis Association is hoping to add adult sessions to The Hampton's courts soon. "Part of our strategic plan for 2020 was to increase Try Tennis® participation," Brandon said. "Identifying neighborhoods with tennis courts is part of that. We can provide the programming, in their backyard, and encourage families to play together safely."

Since starting the program, participants gather at the tennis courts and meet in their driveways regularly to hone their skills. It has allowed the neighbors to maintain social distance without being socially distant. The Hampton's neighborhood plans to continue offering Try Tennis® programming and offer more programs in the future.

The Try Tennis® Program takes its participants from couch to court in six hours. If you are interested in joining an upcoming session or bringing a session to your area, visit trytennis.net.