

# Full Speed Ahead!



2006 was an amazing year for InnerCity Tennis. The program continues to grow each year. Pictured above is Olivia, a young girl from ICT's level one Kidspeed programming. She is running through an obstacle course station designed to increase kids' speed and agility.

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## ICT STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION

With financial help from the United States Tennis and Education Foundation, ICT has partnered with Lynda Enright, a licensed dietitian from Be Well Nutrition Consulting, to develop a nutritional component for ICT's programming. Enright, a 2000 graduate of the University of Minnesota, has formed an innovative approach to providing nutrition education for coaches, kids and parents in a non-intrusive, non-judgmental way.

Enright has provided menu suggestions for ICT's snack offerings. Instead of receiving chips, cookies, and pop, all level one participants now receive fruit, water and granola bars after each session. The fruits are rotated each week, so kids get a taste of something different.

At the end of each Saturday session, Executive Director Roger Boyer takes time to talk briefly with the children about the benefits of the featured "fruit of the week."

There was some initial grumbling from participants about ICT not offering the "traditional" snacks of cookies and pop. But now, after eight sessions - the new snacks have been accepted and momentum for healthy eating habits is growing. Nutrition is now an important, positive part of Saturday sessions. ICT has made a commitment to exposing young children to the healthy nutritional choices that they can make.

In addition to ICT's youngest kids, the older kids and adults involved receive nutritional education as well. Enright has already conducted two training sessions for kids and coaches on guidelines for healthy nutrition. And of course, the older kids and CMTs are encouraged to grab an apple, granola bar and bottle of water after "practice" as well.

### ICT's MENU

APPLES



BANANAS



GRANOLA BARS



BOTTLED WATER





Jadelyn Hoang, a 13 year old from Brooklyn Park, was selected as a winner of Arthur Ashe essay contest sponsored by the National Junior Tennis League and the United States Tennis Association.

### **JADELYN HOANG WINS ESSAY CONTEST**

To help commemorate the legacy of humanitarian and tennis great Arthur Ashe, the United States Tennis Association & the National Junior Tennis League sponsors an annual essay contest asking entrants to write why Arthur Ashe is a legend.

One of ICT's own - Jadelyn Hoang, a 13 year old from Brooklyn Park, has been selected as a winner of the contest. She received an all-expense paid trip to New York and was a guest at Arthur Ashe Kids' Day, a day long festival of kids' tennis activities that included interactive games, musical entertainment and free clinics.

Jadelyn has been a part of ICT since 1995, the first year ICT began its own programming. Prior to 1995, ICT did not run programming of its own - it gave support to other organizations. Jadelyn, a member of the first group of kids that joined ICT in 1995, has risen through the InnerCity Tennis program, and is currently participating in ICT's level three programming.

### **ICT TO COLLABORATE WITH URBAN VENTURES**

ICT is looking forward with anticipation and excitement to its new role as a collaborator for the new Colin Powell Youth Center that is being built in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis. Kidspeed level one programming will be delivered to the children of this community beginning in October 2007. The collaboration with Urban Ventures visions a permanent presence for ICT in the Colin Powell Youth Center facility with intensive weekly programming for children ages three to seven.

General Colin Powell laid it out nicely in his speech at the ground breaking for the Center:

"The major challenge we have in the twenty-first century is to make sure that every child is pointed in the right direction and given the character and competence they need to be successful in life. It begins in places like this where children come and see adults who are caring about them and believe in them and who give them what they need to be successful in life."

### **CHRISTMAS PARTY MAKES MANY KIDS HAPPY**

ICT concluded its 2006 programming on December 9th with another memorable Christmas party. This annual party often brings in a larger-than-normal crowd, and this year was no exception. Floods of kids came out for this year-end event.

On this day, the usual amount of time devoted to programming is cut in half to make time for ICT's "holiday store" to open. At the end of the day, the kids are allowed to purchase items with money that they earn throughout the day by modeling ICT's seven Learnings for Leadership values. CMTs issue play money to the kids at the end of each station, before the teams rotate. When the "holiday store" opens, kids are then allowed to shop for gifts with the money that they made.

Available selections for the kids to pick from this year were vast: items ranging from tennis racquets to race cars were given away. All kids that attended the party brought home three or four gifts.



Every item in ICT's holiday store was given away at the annual Christmas party. Available selection for the kids to pick from were vast: items ranging from tennis racquets to race cars were given away.



Kidspeed 2006, held on October 21st at Lifetime Fitness in Eden Prairie, was a wonderful success for InnerCity Tennis. From the eye-catching décor and professionalism of the volunteer crews to a remarkable tennis exhibition with Nick Bollettieri's rising tennis stars to the heartfelt words spoken on stage, the night was perfect in almost every way. The event featured a cocktail reception, silent auction and a center court exhibition with Nick Bollettieri and David Wheaton. The dinner program was hosted by KARE 11's Belinda Jensen.

## FUNDRAISER SPEAKS TO MANY

The Kidspeed 2006 event featured five keynote speakers: Peter Benson, Nick Bollettieri, Roger Boyer, Skip Gage, and Jennifer Reedy. Childhood development expert Peter Benson spoke about the importance of relationships in young people's lives. A paraphrase of his speech is listed below:

"Our purpose at Search Institute is to identify and reclaim the essential formula for growing healthy young people. The formula is in part about access to economic resources crucial for promoting adequate shelter, food, safety, and transportation. However, the formula is also about developmental resources. All kids, in order to thrive, need and deserve a vibrant network of adult relationships in which support and affirmation is abundant, boundaries are communicated and reinforced, values are modeled, and competency building is practiced. One of the major challenges in America is ensuring that all kids have these levels of relationships. As I often say, relationships are the oxygen of human development.

There are a lot of things I admire about ICT. I'm proud of its innovative programming and its international reach into all of our community. But what I value the most is the way ICT creates sustained adult relationships with each and every young person.

### stay informed monthly e-news

ICT now produces a monthly, one page, electronic newsletter. To sign up, send your e-mail address to [info@innercitytennis.org](mailto:info@innercitytennis.org).

We cannot over state how powerful this is, and how valuable this is. Relationships are how ICT works and through relationships, developmental assets are born."

The comments made by Benson and the other four speakers - Bollettieri, Boyer, Gage and Reedy - left a lasting impression on the audience of 260 people. "It was a night that was just real; InnerCity Tennis has done really well tonight," described one attendee."

## KIDSPEED 2006 CONTINUED...

The Kidspeed 2006 event was a tremendous success, totaling revenue in excess of \$140,000.

ICT sends a sincere thank you out to the generous organizations and individuals that made this event possible. Their gifts of money, time, products and professional services is much appreciated by the InnerCity Tennis organization and have helped make the Kidspeed 2006 event a unique success.

Sponsors included the following: Annheuser-Busch, Audio Visual & Video Resources Inc., Briggs and Morgan, Cargill, Carlson Companies, Carlson Hotels Worldwide, Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery, Country Inn & Suites, E. & J. Gallo Winery, Elaine Carlson, Coors, Cub Foods/Supervalu, Dairy Queen, Deloitte & Touche USA LLP, Dorsey and Whitney LLP, Evian, Gage Marketing, Gage Outdoor Expeditions, IMG/ Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy, Industrio Marketing, Lifetime Fitness, John and Sarah Lindahl, Lindquist & Venum PLLP, Michael Lynne's Tennis Shop, Marquette Financial Companies, Minute Clinic, Curtis and Margie Nelson, Dr. Glen and Marilyn Nelson, Pepsi Co., Post Script Gardens, Quality Wine and Spirits, Push Studios, Radisson Hotels, RBC Dain Rauscher, Search Institute, Starbucks, Sysco Minnesota, The Cheesecake Factory, The Itasca Project, United Health Group, USTA Northern, Wells Fargo Bank N.A., Vin de Vino and Wheelock Whitney.

Plans are already underway for Kidspeed 2007, which will be held at ICT's home, the Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center. The date has already been set for Saturday, September 22.



Dr. Peter Benson of Search Institute spoke at about the importance of sustained adult relationships in young people's lives.



Nick Bollettieri orchestrated a "live auction" giving away a trip for two to the 2007 US Open - netting \$5,000 for ICT.



save the date  
**kidspeed 2007**

This year's fundraiser will be held on September 22nd at the Reed-Sweatt Family Tennis Center.

### 2006 Key Sponsors:

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- + Radisson Hotels
- + RBC Dain Rauscher
- + United Health Group
- + Wells Fargo Bank N.A.
- + Wheelock Whitney

## ICT AND HEADSTART MAKE A GREAT TEAM

Six years ago InnerCity Tennis approached Head Start, a national program that promotes school readiness, to talk about the possibility of working together. The two entities hit it off immediately and decided to unite efforts to help kids. Since then, ICT and Head Start have built a lasting relationship that continues to benefit many young children each year.

ICT currently conducts programming at two Head Start locations (Fraser and McKnight) every Tuesday and Thursday morning for an hour and half each day. Approximately three hundred fifty kids, all under the age of five, are worked with each month.

And it's working. The Head Start kids are making rapid progress in their development. Many children are learning the Kidspeed concepts of taking turns, teamwork, sharing, and following instructions for the first time. Practicing hand-eye coordination, motor skills and balancing is also a new experience for many.

ICT program delivery specialist Paul Vang has noticed vast improvement in the children. "The sense of accomplishment they get from our skill development stations goes a long way.

They come in feeling shy and tentative and leave feeling confident and assertive...it's awesome."

The kids' self-confidence grows with each session. Paul continued, "When they catch a ball in the catch racquet or hit a ball into the goal, you see a humongous smile on their face and know that they are ready to do it again. Then they give you a big hug and it is like they are ready to go take on the world."

More than fifty percent of the children involved with Head Start speak only limited English. ICT's staff has had to adjust to using signals and gestures to communicate with many of the kids. Communication of this kind takes patience and plenty of hands on demonstration.

Despite the language barrier, many ICT volunteers are especially excited to work with the Head Start children. ICT assistant director Dilcia Pederson explained, "Our volunteers enjoy being able to overcome challenges with their coaching. When they cannot speak directly to the children, they have to be creative and figure out a way to communicate. It's fun to watch...a rewarding experience for everyone."



Pictured above is a class of Head Start students at the Fraser Learning Center in North Minneapolis. All under the age of five, these kids work with InnerCity Tennis weekly to develop fundamental life skills such as hand-eye coordination, balance, sharing and taking turns.



Paul Vang is the newest staff member of ICT.

### PAUL VANG ADDED TO ICT STAFF

Paul Vang is the newest staff member of InnerCity Tennis. Working as a program delivery specialist, Paul is helping ICT handle an increase in program numbers. To date, Paul has especially liked working with ICT’s outreach program and is excited to help ICT extend its work into the Hmong community. Paul, a graduate of St. Cloud State University, holds a Bachelor’s degree in social work.

### CMTs - ICT’s GREATEST RESOURCE

Coach, Mentor, Tutors (CMTs) remain ICT’s greatest resource and the single reason it is able to serve the number of children it does. They are the volunteers that deliver Kidspeed programming to our youngest and most important age group (three to seven).

The positive impact CMTs have on kids is incredible. A recent happening that occurred at a Saturday session paints the picture beautifully:

A five-year-old boy was struggling at the defender station. He was unable to catch a tennis ball in the catch racquet he was holding and grumbled, “I am no good, I can’t do it.” The CMT at the station would not let him quit. She encouraged the boy and said, “Sure you can, let me help you one time.” And sure enough with the CMTs help a catch was made and a young child’s face lit up. A new energy and enthusiasm were visible in that child for the rest of the session – all because of one CMT’s guiding hands.

A new trend has developed amongst our Coach Mentor Tutors – husband and wife teams. We now have six husband and wife teams working our Saturday and Head Start sessions. This may be ICT’s next focus for recruiting.

### NEW KIDSPEED STATIONS UPDATE

All stations are built to simulate an obstacle course requiring movement at a rate that falls within the standards for “moderate” to “intensive” as set out by the Presidents Council for Physical Fitness.

Golf - This has been the most difficult of the new stations to design. Commercial products have not been adaptable to provide the high success rate needed for young children. A small, weighted putter made from a two by four and a one-inch dowel has given kids the best experience in staying balanced and developing a pendulum-like swing.

Basketball - This station is composed of a series of three hoops without backboards in progressive heights – three, four and five feet tall. It also includes a passing station, a back-up mat and a footwork ladder. Kids move through in a circular fashion shooting and passing 12” play balls (lighter and safer).

Soccer and Baseball - These two are integrated into a single station that incorporates a catch, a ladder run, a goal kick, and a baseball hit from a tee. The baseball tee is adapted from a tall traffic cone rather than a standard tee to accommodate the over-sized foam ball needed for success for this age group.



CMT Bob Sloan works with a child on her golf swing. A special putter helps children develop balance and a pendulum like swing.

ICT continues to recruit volunteer CMTs both to grow its programs and to replace those lost to health, injuries and warmer winters. If you or someone else you know is interested in volunteering to help the children of InnerCity Tennis please contact Dilcia Pederson @ 612-824-6099 or via email at [dilcia.pederson@innercitytennis.org](mailto:dilcia.pederson@innercitytennis.org).



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