Our Mission

We bring people together of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds to embrace the lifelong game of tennis while serving under-resourced youth with the support of the community.

“...a very welcoming and safe place for my friends and me.”
— Junior Player

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Dear Friends of the Fort,

The year 2018 was one of many accomplishments and celebrations here at The Fort! In addition, we shared the many impending needs to help “FORTify the Future” of The Fort, and in turn, received a tremendous response from the community. That acknowledgement and support tells us that you, our beloved patrons, believe we are doing the right things in delivering our mission of bringing people together of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to embrace the lifelong game of tennis while serving under-resourced youth with the support of the community. Some of our proudest moments in 2018 included:

- Being one of only 21 entities nationwide, and the only tennis organization, named a Project Play Champion by The Aspen Institute in Washington DC. To be a Project Play Champion, organizations must take new, meaningful and specific actions to grow sports participation with a shared goal of making sports accessible to all kids, regardless of zip code or ability.
- Kicking off our $1.7 million Capital Campaign.
- Increasing the number of donors who support The Fort by 74%.
- Expanding our financial support through a number of new grants.
- Retaining and growing our TennisWorks participation at a steady pace.
- Adding seven new adult and junior tennis programs to our already robust menu of options.
- Celebrating junior player Deepti Pillai’s accomplishment winning the USTA Foundation NJTL Essay Contest for her division in the Northern Section.

We are so proud of all that we achieved in 2018, but we cannot rest on our laurels as 2019 proves to be the most crucial year yet for the future of The Fort, especially regarding the Capital Campaign. In January, we celebrated the completion of Phase I with a ribbon cutting ceremony marking the opening of our new walkway between the front and back bubbles in anticipation of Phase II.

In mid-May, we will be taking down our front bubble, resurfacing the front courts, removing the 60-foot mini court and adding an additional 78-foot court. The new court will add an additional 5,400 hours of court time annually, creating more play opportunities for adults, juniors and seniors! In the fall, we will put up a new bubble in the front with improved LED lighting and energy efficient air conditioning and other important safety enhancements! You will notice an improved playing experience immediately once stepping on the courts.

Then in 2020, we expect to replace the back bubble, offering the same features as the front, as well as upgrading the parking lot with 28 additional spots, improved lighting and better security.

You can feel the excitement within the facility, as we are over one-third of the way to our $1.7 million goal. With that said, we are still fundraising and need your support! Would you like a court named after you or your corporation? Maybe a courtside bench? Something else? Come talk to us about the many corporate and individual opportunities, as well as sponsorship packages available to support the Capital Campaign or visit www.fwtec.org/capital-campaign.

Thank you for sharing your time, talent and treasure as we “FORTify Our Future” to ensure the Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center remains a state-of-the-art facility!

With gratitude,

Esther Tsai
Executive Director

Rick Rinkoff
Board President
Capital Campaign Co-Chair
“After five years of planning and a year of construction, my dad was finally able to open the tennis center in 2002. Sadly, he passed away three years after its opening. It was his vision to make the game of tennis available to everyone regardless of age, backgrounds and resources. If he had been able to attend the opening event of the new walkway, he would have been so thrilled to see what an amazing place the tennis center has become today.

Due to the hard work of many who embraced his vision, the programs offered by the tennis center today are recognized nationally for the important impact they have within the communities they serve.

On behalf of the Wells family, I would like to extend our congratulations and gratitude.”

Wendy Wells, Daughter of Fred Wells, Trustee of Isora Wells Foundation

FORTify Our Future Capital Campaign

Since 2002, and before Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, the Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center has been the social network of the local tennis community as we have practiced, played, lived, loved and cared about tennis, the community and one another. Now, the Fort needs our help, as our current domes have reached the end of their functional life.

After much preparation, we kicked off the $1.7 million Fortify Our Future Capital Campaign to the public in December in order to finance the required capital improvements needed for the Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center to renew its lease with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board. Included in the project is replacing its two tennis domes, resurfacing and adding a ninth court, installing air conditioning and new lighting in both domes, expanding the parking facilities and constructing a new walkway and entry point between the front and back domes.

In mid-January, we celebrated the completion of Phase I for the campaign with a ribbon cutting ceremony marking the grand opening of the new walkway and entry point between the two bubbles. This space also houses court-accessible drinking fountains, an equipment storage room, a mop sink, and eventually, will boast our Capital Campaign donor recognition wall at the conclusion of the project.

“This milestone marks the overall growth and achievements of the Fort over the past 17 years,” Esther Tsai, Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center Executive Director, said. “We are very grateful to all of our patrons and the tennis community for their many years of support, as well as offer our heartfelt gratitude to the Wells family for trusting us with Fred Wells’ legacy. All of these improvements are necessary to renew our partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and to facilitate program growth.”

For more information about the Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center’s FORTify Our Future Capital Campaign, including renderings of the front dome, or to donate, please visit www.fwtec.org/capital-campaign, or contact Lisa Mushett at lisa@fwtec.org (612) 252-8367 ext. 109.
“The reason we gave to The Fort is because in this day and age physical community is hard to come by. The Fort is more than a place to play tennis. It is a caring, supportive and friendly community. It services disadvantaged youth, as well as the general population young and old. The staff is top notch, friendly and works with its members. It is a special place and we wanted to make sure it was around for years to come.”

Tom & Deborah Frishberg, Supporters, Long-Time Patrons, and Volunteers

“I took up tennis at The Fort after undergoing major surgery and retiring. Since then, the enthusiastic team at The Fort has provided me with a weekly source of fun, exercise, and learning. My hope is that more people can experience the many benefits of The Fort. That’s why I support them financially.”

Phil Hallaway, Supporter and Patron

“As a tennis player and educator, it was easy to decide to support The Fort and Capital Campaign. The Fort’s focus on youth development through tennis teaches them skills that can be used both on and off the court. The Capital Campaign will ensure that needed upgrades will be made to continue this important work.”

Gloria Kumagai, Supporter and Tennis Enthusiast
TennisWorks

“Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center is an example of how the USTA Foundation mission comes to life: providing quality tennis and education programming that impacts the lives of underserved youth in a community. Fred Wells has achieved the highest National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) star-level rating recognized by the USTA Foundation, a designation achieved by only 10% of our NJTL chapters.”

Dan Faber, USTA Foundation Executive Director

TennisWorks Volunteers

Greg Anderson
Ed Backstrom
Doug Benson
Brandt Berube
Sameer Bijwadia
Dan Collins
Paul Dalton
Evan Fraser
Deb Frishberg
Karen Gjerstad
Arjun Goswitz
John Hastreiter
Elizabeth Kauth
Ruth Krishnan
Santosh Krishnan
Nancy Lawrence
Pablo Levi
Liam Lynch
Eric Peterson
Molly Peterson
Elyse Rabinowitz
Katrina Reba
Adam Seifert
Mary Seifert
Luka Shaker-Check
Meg Townsend-Washenberger
Jasmine Ulven
Jim Vaughan
Gavin Webb
Mel Yasis
Sophie Youngdahl

“Alice Robey, Folwell Performing Arts Community School Coordinator

“The Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center has been a huge success for our students at Urban Academy. It has built their skill levels in team building, physical fitness and academic achievements. They also are getting tennis lessons that they would have never had access to. Thanks to The Fort and their instructors for making this happen for our students. It’s an honor to have them support our school kids!”

Dr. Mongsher Ly, Urban Academy Superintendent

“On the court and in the classroom, TennisWorks teaches leadership, relationship building, goal setting, teamwork, conflict resolution, and healthy living. We’re pleased to be investing in this holistic approach to help students find a pathway to long-term success.”

Charlotte Johnson, Otto Bremer Trust Co-CEO & Trustee

“Since 2012, Youthprise has been a proud supporter of The Fort. We value their partnership in using the lifelong game of tennis to educate, inspire and enrich the lives of children and youth in our community.”

Marcus Pope, Youthprise Vice President
Our Story

When our oldest child Jordan was 4, a friend told us about a USTA Northern supported Multicultural Outreach Tennis Program taught by Tony Stingley, Gary Clark and Tunde Abe on Saturdays at the Northwest Tennis Club in West Bloomington, before it moved to the Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center. Our children have been with the program ever since.

The Fred Wells’ staff and students have been like family to us. With any organization, things change and grow, however the family atmosphere has remained. Besides learning the game, our children have learned many life skills through tennis including following instructions, practicing to proficiency, being persistent, showing commitment, having proper perspective of winning and losing, displaying good sportsmanship, utilizing teamwork, taking personal responsibility for outcomes and realizing the importance of hard work before reaping rewards. They have had lots of fun throughout their years at The Fort and formed terrific, multigenerational friendships along the way.

We often encourage other parents to get their kids into tennis programming at Fred Wells. Tennis is a safe sport that requires strategy, as well as physical agility. Tennis is also a lifetime sport the whole family can participate in, as it promotes and fosters family togetherness both on and off the court.

“...The Fred Wells tennis program is the #1 reason why I am currently a starter on a D-III tennis team.” Jordan

“Because of the discipline I learned at Fred Wells teaching you to work on all aspects of your game, I’ve been able to apply these skills to the classroom where I have been able to maintain a 3.5+ GPA and earn a starting position on one of the top-ranked high school tennis teams in the state of Minnesota.” Ryan

“The Fort has had a great impact on me. It shows much affection for its students and does the same for me. I have improved so much in my classes and now I can now hit with my brothers. I played my first Level 8 tournament this year and placed second out of 16 kids because of my training at Fred Wells.” Lauryn

“The commitment and discipline the Fred Wells tennis program has instilled has also helped me to maintain a 3.5+ GPA at the University of Minnesota, where I am a sophomore majoring in Computer Science.” Brandon

“The Fort has helped mold me into a better person by teaching me life discipline and time management emphasized in my tennis classes, and has shaped me to become the leader I could have never been without them.” Bryson

With five kids playing tennis, we are extremely grateful. The Fort has made it possible for us to keep them in programming by providing additional scholarships and financial support when needed. The staff has mentored and coached our kids to achieve their desired goals, while always encouraging them and allowing them to grow in their tennis abilities. Seeing them participating on their high school teams and feeling confident to tryout at the college level because of what they have learned at Fred Wells has been such a dream come true for us as parents. We are so very thankful for our Fred Wells family!

Meet the Schencks

Stewart Schenck & Patricia Schenck

Jordan Schenck, 21
• University of St. Thomas junior majoring in Mechanical Engineering
• Plays tennis for The University of St. Thomas
• Plays USTA League Tennis

Brandon Schenck, 19
• University of Minnesota sophomore majoring in Computer Science
• Played High School Varsity tennis
• Plays USTA League Tennis
• Trying out for University of Minnesota Tennis on Campus team in Fall of 2019

Ryan Schenck, 17
• Plays High School Varsity Tennis

Bryson Schenck, 15
• Plays High School Junior-Varsity Tennis

Lauryn Schenck, 11
• Played her first USTA Northern Stars and Trophies Tournament in March

Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center  fwtecn.org
What Tennis Has Taught Me

By Deepti Pillai

Tennis is a sport that teaches people many lessons. Through the USTA’s National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) program, I’ve played many great tennis players. Due to this, I’ve learned how to have internal motivation. Not only has this helped me as a tennis player, it also helped me as a student and an individual.

Internal motivation helps me in tennis a lot. It helps when I’m in a match where I am not performing to my full capabilities. When this happens, I tell myself, “I can do this!” and I am able to have an epic comeback or at least give my opponent a run for their money. I’ve learned to internally motivate myself after several games where I knew I could have done better, but lost. When I use internal motivation, I can get my head back in the game and really focus on what I’m doing without letting the pressure get to me. This helps not only in tennis, but also in school.

In school, I am often unable to focus. Especially when taking a timed test, when I’m blanking on something, or when the test or assignment I am working on has a lot of impact on my grade. Using internal motivation, I can tell myself, “Come on, you know this!” or “Wait! I remember writing this down!” It helps me to handle my stress instead of letting it get to me, allowing me to slow down and focus. Not only does internal motivation help me in tennis and in school, but also just as an individual.

I think internal motivation really helps in stressful situations. When I lose something, forget something, or am late, internal motivation really helps me to slow down and let me focus on what I’m doing. It also helps me not to tear myself apart over small matters that I usually stress too much about. It helps me not overthink things.

By helping me focus and manage the pressure, having internal motivation has helped me in many aspects of my life. Because of this, I’m sure internal motivation is the most important lesson I’ve learned from being in NJTL.

“When I use internal motivation, I can get my head back in the game and really focus on what I’m doing without letting the pressure get to me. This helps not only in tennis, but also in school.”
Edward Backstrom III

The late Edward Backstrom III was a retired attorney for the City of Minneapolis. He loved the outdoors and enjoyed tennis, volleyball, biking, scuba diving, skiing, golf, and photography. Two or three times a week, Ed was a regular participant in tennis drills at The Fort, biking to the club in the Fall and Spring when the weather permitted. He also was a frequent volunteer with the TennisWorks program. He accumulated over 100 hours of volunteer service, and loved sharing his knowledge and love of life with the kids. Sadly, Ed passed away at his home in 2018 at the age of 69.

Karen Hollaus

Karen Hollaus has been a regular at The Fort since the closing of the Lilydale Club in 2004. She began taking tennis lessons from fellow Legends of the Fort Ric Yates and Jim Dixon in the late 1970s and early 1980s, respectively, at Lilydale and developed a deep friendship with both that continues today. Karen has participated in Women’s Daytime League teams in both singles and doubles at The Fort. She also plays doubles with friends regularly, and has frequently been on the court perfecting her serve or strokes with the ball machine.

Corrine McCarthy

Age does not bother nor stop Corrine from doing the things she loves most, and one of them is playing tennis. Celebrating her 89th birthday in 2018, Corrine plays tennis three to four times a week and there are times when she plays up to three hours a day subbing for players. Corrine started playing at The Fort in 2004 when the Lilydale Club closed and has been at The Fort ever since. Corrine is a committed friend and a senior tennis enthusiast.
Financials
(ending December 31, 2018)

Unrestricted Revenues & Other Support

<table>
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<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Program Revenues</td>
<td>1,561,740</td>
<td>1,440,235</td>
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<td>Support</td>
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<td>172,909</td>
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<td>42,192</td>
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<td>Expenses</td>
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<td>Changes in Net Assets</td>
<td>442,342</td>
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Statement of Financial Position

| Total Assets       | 3,559,311 | 3,165,956 |
| Total Liabilities  | 342,037   | 217,903   |
| Total Net Assets   | 3,217,274 | 2,948,053 |

Statement of Cash Flows

| Cash at Beginning of Year | 650,334 | 413,996 |
| Cash at End of Year       | 1,011,367 | 650,334 |

Donors

Thank you for your generous support!

Foundation Support

| $65,000   | Isora Wells Foundation Trust |
| $50,000   | Wells Family Fund of Minneapolis Foundation |
| $30,000   | Otto Bremer Trust |
| $25,000   | USTA Foundation |
| $17,400   | Youthprise |
| $15,000   | Wells Family Foundation |
| $10,000   | Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation |
| $10,000   | Sheltering Arms Foundation |
| $7,050    | USTA Northern* |
| $2,000    | USTA National |

General Support

| $50,000+  | Tom & Michele Mingo* |
| $10,000–$24,999 | David Erickson | Visala & Joe Goswitz | Ruth & Santosh Krishnan* |

| $5,000–$9,999 | Janet & Phil Hallaway | Charlotte & Paul Jacobson* | Gloria Kumagai | Thomas & Karen Laird | David Vanney & Cathy Ruther* |

| $1,000–$2,499 | Anonymous | John & Mary Bachhuber | Thomas & Michelle Bradley |

Carlson Family Foundation | Josh & Tisha Colton | Philippe & Jeni Duliere | Ken & Janis Cram | Craig-Hallum Capital Group, LLC |
| John & Kristin Tengwall | Sarah & Mark Tweed* | Mary Kay Ulness | James Vaughan | Larry & Dawn Voelkers |


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Jim Butala
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Ouliana Ryan
Gopal Sadagopan & Sandhya Joshi
Susan Sajevic
Delaney Schurhammer
Paul Settles
Mya Smith-Dennis
Diane Snodgrass
Phoukhine & Phonekoeo Soundara
Jenny & Patrice Sohnik
Amy Strabala
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Deni Svenson
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Jon Wallace
Jeremy & Carrie Webb
Karen Wele
Anne White
Terry Wilmens
Fuyi Xaykaotao
Ric Yates
Trent Ziebol
Eric Ziegler
Hilary Ziols
Jeff Zuckerman

In Kind
Anonymous
Burning Brothers
Robin Coverdale
Crayola Experience
DeGidio’s Restaurant & Bar
Emerald Greens Golf Courses
Jackson Fairley
Great Lakes Northern Outfitter
Guthrie Theatre
Ann Hahaway
Gretchen Jensen
Thomas Judd
Sharon Larkins
Lehner Law Office, LLC
Judy Long
Mike Lunka
Christian Maki
Meisinger Construction Co.
Mind’s Eye Comics

Michele and Tom Mingo
Minnesota Lynx
Minnesota Timberwolves
Minnesota Twins
Minnesota Vikings
Lisa Musnett
Tom & Christine Nickels
Viet Pham
Professional Tennis Registry (PTR)
R.J. Moeller
Science Museum of Minnesota
Clay Sollenberger
David Stingley
Tennis Clothing Co.
Albert & Esther Tsai
Nguyen Vo
Nitooli Wilkins
Wilson Sporting Goods

In Memory of Ed Backstrom
Mike Backstrom
Paul & Constance Backstrom
Gary Elledge
Deborah Irshberg
Jody Hargrove
Vonnie Lou Lowman
Mark Palmer
Kirk Vadsais
Steven Verdorn
Joe & Cindy Walz

In Memory of Lucy Gehan
Patrice Werner

In Honor of Pat Undlin
Edna Bernstein

In Memory of Mary Ellen Goswitz
Ann Hilger
Marc Johnson
Robert & Diane Reid
ZP Sawicki
Robert & Susan Wheaton
Paul Williams & Michelle Moore

Nguyen Vo Family Scholarship Fund
$1,000+
Nguyen & Emily Vo
$100–$499
Mark Duthoy
Niantong Liu & Xianzhao Zhao

*Contributor to both Annual Fund and Capital Campaign

Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center
fwtec.org
“There is a reason we are called patrons and not members—members are consumers, while patrons are active supporters of our mission.

Patrons contribute to The Fort by volunteering, giving to our Annual Fund and Capital Campaign, serving on committees, helping in some manner to make The Fort a tennis home and not just a tennis club. I feel strongly as patrons we all share the responsibility to write the next chapter in the story of The Fort and to make it a glorious one.”

Santosh Krishnan, Treasurer, Fred Wells Tennis & Education Board of Directors