

## SERVE & CONNECT



# POTTSTOWN

## A Community Engagement Program



**T**ennis matters, and with your support Greater Pottstown Tennis and Learning (GPTL) can share the love of tennis and make a significant change in the youth culture of Pottstown. Serve & Connect is a community police engagement initiative designed to bring kids and cops together on the courts to play tennis, build trust, and make real connections. GPTL has been selected along with other National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) chapters in the Bronx, Atlanta, Chicago, Baltimore, Gainesville, and Compton to spearhead a nationwide Kick Off Event sponsored and promoted by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) Foundation. This is a tremendous opportunity for Pottstown to gain national exposure and, with the support of community partners, showcase a positive solution to build safe and healthy neighborhoods.

The Kick Off Event will be held on February 24th at The Hill School Field House. All seven sites across the country will simultaneously be celebrating their communities and law enforcement officers with a night of fun, food and games in and effort to Serve & Connect. Children, police officers, coaches and volunteers will continue to meet once a week through out the year. The goal is to utilize tennis to bring under-resourced youth and police officers together to encourage informal mentoring within the framework of a life skills curriculum.

Serve & Connect, formerly known as Volleys against Violence is an outgrowth of the police and community engagement program created, tested and refined over the past several years in Boston by the Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center. When GPTL Executive Director Kerriann Herdelin, the daughter of a retired NYPD Narcotics Detective and granddaughter of a NYPD Deputy Chief met with Chief Drumheller & Captain Thomas to see if the Pottstown Police Department was interested in participating in this initiative, she was

amazed at the positive response and helped inspire the USTA Foundation to rebrand the campaign as "Serve & Connect."

"As a kid, my father always said that the police do not make the laws but are charged with enforcing them which is where Serve and Protect comes from, and are naturally reactive to situations," says Kerriann. "As a school teacher, I was trained to be proactive when working with kids in order to connect. Serve & Connect embodied both these ideals and made sense as a way to brand this timely tennis initiative." USTA loved the name and re-branded the National Initiative Serve & Connect.

The USTA Foundation is the charitable arm of The United States Tennis Association with the mission of "Serving up Dreams." The overarching goal is to help under-resourced youth develop the skills they need to have a more productive future, not just a better game. By supporting a nationwide network of tennis organizations with start up funding, non-profit governance practices, national press and curriculum support, the USTA Foundation is leading the charge across the country to create healthy neighborhoods and spark community partnerships.

Serve & Connect is a big deal for Pottstown and community support is essential for success. The participants are part of a national conversation about bringing neighborhoods together through healthy activities in an effort to move the needle toward non-violent communication. Community partner Hobart's Run will collaborate for the success of this new program. Working together with local area youth and law enforcement, GPTL is building a bridge of respect and service through games and activities that will resonate beyond the court and into neighborhoods.



Studies show that kids who play tennis are healthier and less prone to risky behaviors. Free after-school and summer programs are a vital lifeline for kids who might otherwise be left alone at home. According to the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) students are more likely to get into trouble during the after-school hours and kids who do not attend summer camp or other engaging summer activities actually test lower at the beginning of the school year.

The mission of GPTL is to mentor life skills, healthy behaviors and learning through tennis. The vision is to improve the quality of life for both adults and children in the Greater Pottstown Area using tennis as a tool to mentor both on and off the court. The goal for the coming year is to expand the Pottstown Community School District after-school programs to include Lincoln, Franklin, Rupert and Barth Elementary Schools in partnership with the YMCA & YWCA and increase free enrollment to over 2000 kids served.

2018 will be an exciting year. In partnership with The Borough of Pottstown, Pottstown Parks & Recreation, The Pottstown Health & Wellness Foundation, the USTA Foundation and technical support from PAID (Pottstown Area Industrial Development), we are working toward revitalizing existing public courts, an

important step in establishing a tennis & education center where we will continue to offer free after-school learning opportunities for under-resourced youth. GPTL's future plans to serve and expand are dependent on community partners, business sponsors, EITC contributors and individual donors. Our hope is to transform lives and communities through tennis. Thank you in advance for helping us serve up dreams, the ball is in your court!

Contact Chrissy Chase Sinatra Development Director at [Chrissy@gptltennis.com](mailto:Chrissy@gptltennis.com) for more information about sponsorship and giving opportunities. Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning Association is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) all donations are tax deductible.

Visit our website at [www.greaterpottstowntennis.com](http://www.greaterpottstowntennis.com) to sign up for any of our programs.



Inspiring lives  
on and off  
the court!



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