



KC

2022
Impact Report

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BROOKLYN WHERE WE PLAY





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The origin of Kings County Tennis League (KCTL) is rooted in tearing down barriers—barriers to participating in play and sport, to meeting new people, and to accessing new experiences and opportunities, in areas of our Brooklyn community that continue to be under resourced.

Amidst the surge in inflation and the additional financial stress that places on a household, KCTL expanded programming in the increasingly-gentrified neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant and Fort Greene to serve nearly 700 children living in and around six NYCHA housing developments: Brevoort [Jackie Robinson], Ingersoll, Lafayette Gardens, Marcy, Sumner and Tompkins Houses. Most importantly, during this expansion, KCTL continued to realize and grow its educational offerings.

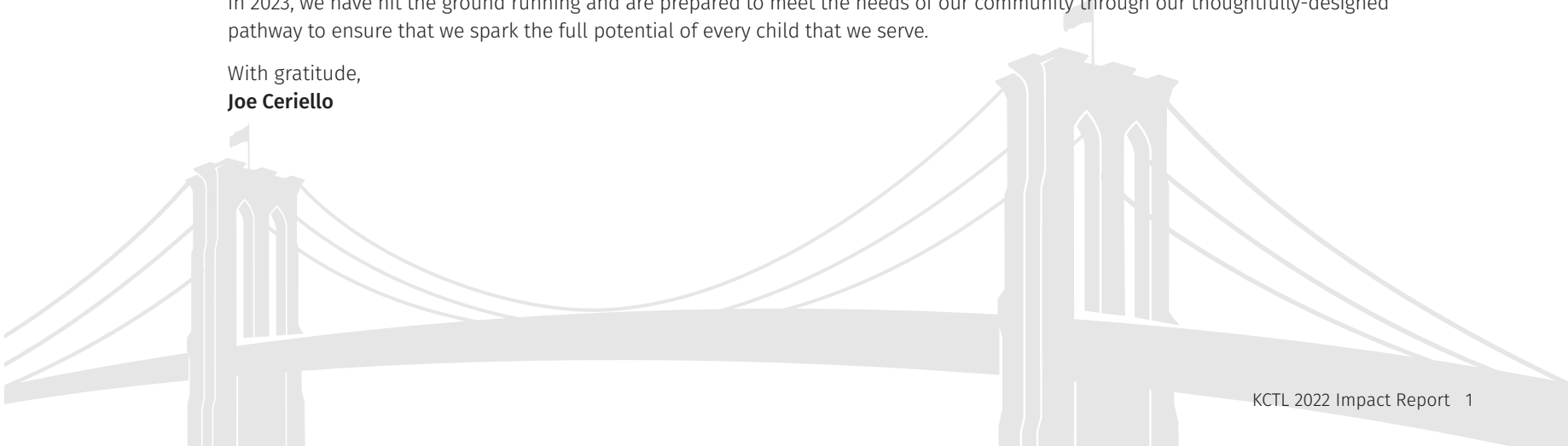
Children entering the KCTL pathway, through our partnership with the Brooklyn Kindergarten Society, at the age of three or four years old, can continue with us throughout the entirety of their childhood and emerging adulthood. 2022 saw the creation of the KCTL Jobs Program, where students learned professional skills, and the expansion of college-readiness support. This year, five KCTL seniors are graduating high school; four out of five will attend college next year and one will pursue a career within the tennis industry.

KCTL believes that tennis, when combined with proven positive youth development practices, offers life lessons and experiences that help youth realize their full potential and prepare them for the inevitable challenges life brings, now and in adulthood. Our programming emphasizes social and emotional learning and offers impactful educational opportunities that meet the individual needs of our children as they mature.

Volunteerism is the cornerstone of our unique community. This past year, a record 150+ volunteers gave their time on and off the court. Our volunteer coaches cultivate meaningful and long-lasting relationships with our youth and are the driving force of our community and its collective endeavors. A small but exceptionally dedicated staff, a passionate board, and loyal and strategic partners are integral in making this work possible and fulfilling our mission.

In 2023, we have hit the ground running and are prepared to meet the needs of our community through our thoughtfully-designed pathway to ensure that we spark the full potential of every child that we serve.

With gratitude,
Joe Ceriello





OUR MISSION

Kings County Tennis League combines tennis and education to spark the potential of children living in and around Brooklyn public housing.

OUR VISION

KCTL envisions every child in Brooklyn public housing engaged in healthy exercise and stimulating activities to develop their fullest potential.



OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

Integrate positive youth development best practices and use tennis to grow social and emotional learning (SEL) capacities for young people.

Understand the preferences and passions of each young person and support them through our programs and partnerships.

Deliver programs where there are high concentrations of children situated furthest from opportunity, to address system-induced inequities affecting access to sport.

Cultivate an environment where meaningful relationships can flourish between caring adults and young people, ones our youth can count on as they journey through life.

IT ALL STARTS WITH TENNIS

KCTL's paramount intention is to create a pathway for youth to develop their skills and capacities that will ensure their future success as healthy and prosperous adults and citizens.

Today, KCTL's staff and 150+ volunteers collaborate to provide free tennis and education programs that promote social and emotional learning (SEL) development and are offered year-round to children living in and around six public housing developments in Brooklyn. The children in each housing development form a "tennis club" (e.g. Marcy Tennis Club), and all six clubs combined make up the Kings County Tennis League.

OUR REACH

670 youth served

257 new youth registered in KCTL programming

1,443 program hours

OUR YOUTH

195 youth served reside at NYC Housing Authority developments

95% of youth served identify as BIPOC

OUR IMPACT 75% of youth grew multiple SEL capacities

96% of youth succeeded in at least 1 SEL capacity



THERE IS COMMUNITY IN COMPETITION



Davis Cup

Interclub Tournaments

The KCTL community gathers several times a year to put the tennis skills they learn into practice and experience the meritocracy of competition. **Through these events, our youth discover that losing is an opportunity to learn.** They also learn about the kindness in being a humble winner. Our youth navigate the exertion and range of emotions that unfold on court, surrounded by friends and coaches who stand right beside them, encourage them, and support them on their journey.

85%

of KCTL's young people demonstrated gains in at least one of the two sports-related SEL capacities that KCTL tracks.

Sport SEL capacities:

Self Confidence, a young person's positive sense of who they are in the world and what they have to offer

Goal Orientation, a young person's capacity to envision a positive future and set a path forward to achieve their dreams

GoGirlGo! Clinic at the Fall Classic



Davis Cup



GoGirlGo! Clinic at the Fall Classic



“You are never really playing an opponent. You are playing yourself, your own highest standards, and when you reach your limits, that is real joy.” —ARTHUR ASHE

Jamboree



Fall Classic



Davis Cup



MEET ZACH AND SUFI



“It’s never win or lose; it’s win and learn.” —Zach

My name is **ZACH**. I am in 4th grade and I live in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. I started playing with KCTL three years ago when my mom walked by the tennis court at Marcy. She talked to a coach, and decided to sign my sister Zoe and me up right there.

What I like most about tennis is getting to meet new people because we might have something in common, and maybe we can work together to improve.

I think good coaches trust the people they teach, are able to focus on someone, see what they’re good at and also what they need to work on. For some reason, I’m better at my backhand than my forehand, so I’ve been working on my forehand a lot lately, mostly the contact point and my follow-through. I am also working on learning to trust my partner. I like to just hit any ball I can get to, but even though a ball is close to me, it can be my partner’s. My coaches, Jamie and Madison, showed me that when the ball goes in the middle of the court, one of us should say, “I got it.” That helps me trust that my partner can make the shot.

Last summer, my partner Ramzi and I won all our matches at the Davis Cup [doubles tournament]. I told myself to take it one match at a time. We had to work our way to the quarters, then the semis, then the finals. By having a goal and working in steps, we won, and it felt like I really accomplished something. At the Jamboree [singles tournament], I got to the finals too and lost against Aiden, but we both played well and became friends after the match.

“I shouldn’t get frustrated. When something’s challenging, I should move forward.” —Sufi

My name is **SUFI** and I’m in 6th grade. So many unbelievable things happened this year. My favorite by far was meeting Venus, Serena, and Rafa Nadal! It was overwhelming and I was too nervous to speak to them. Just being in the presence of the Williams sisters, players I’ve watched on TV a lot, was so cool. My favorite tennis player of all time is Serena. She’s a legend and an inspiration to young Black girls like me.

I’ve been with KCTL for four years. I started playing at Marcy Tennis Club but now I play at Jackie Robinson. My mom wanted me to try some kind of sport, and she thought tennis was cool, and of course she was right. I liked it pretty much from the start.

I hope to get a college scholarship for tennis someday so I practice a lot. Right now, I am working on my groundstrokes and my serve, especially my toss and getting good racquet head speed. My serving is so much better but there’s still a lot of room for me to get better.

The thought that I am playing all alone in singles can be hard, so I am working on my attitude during matches too. I can get very upset when I lose one point and it ruins my game moving forward. But my KCTL coaches keep reminding me that when I lose a point, it’s not the end, it’s just one point.

Playing tennis has made me realize that things aren’t done until they’re done; you’re not finished until you get to the final point. That also intertwines with my mindset at school.

MEET COACH OBI



“It’s been a gift to unite with such an eclectic group of people!” — COACH OBI

From left to right: Coach Frances, Coach Kiel, KCTL student Ethan, and Coach Obi.

Advantage: Volunteering

During the summer of 2020, Obarima Afriyie, known affectionately by most as “Obi,” found himself in desperate need of an escape from the confines of his apartment and sheltering in place. Passing by the Jackie Robinson Park tennis courts on one of his runs that summer, Obi stopped to take in a magical spectacle before him: kids moving and laughing with masks on their faces and racquets in their hands. It was truly a sight for sore eyes. While he hadn’t picked up a tennis racquet since he was a teen, he knew he wanted in.

For Obi, KCTL offered a much needed space and welcoming community to help him pass the abundance of time he had, and a purpose. KCTL is his silver lining from the pandemic. “The friendships, the social life aspect of being a part of KCTL really helped me,” said Obi. “It’s been a gift to unite with such an eclectic group of people. The staff and my fellow volunteers come from different backgrounds, age levels, ethnicities

and cultures. I like to think of the Jackie Robinson crew as the UN – people are from everywhere. It’s so amazing.”

Almost four years later, the community organizer for the NAACP’s Legal Justice Fund continues to spend as much time as he can spare with his KCTL family. “It’s nice to have this routine on Saturday mornings. I wake up, spend time with the KCTL kids and play some tennis for a couple hours with the KCTL staff and volunteers. It’s a great way to start the day.”

Obi, a former 7th grade social studies teacher, appreciates the volunteer training he’s received, the lessons plans that the Programming team puts together every week and the debrief sessions the staff and volunteers do after every tennis session. “KCTL makes it so easy. **Watching the progression of the kids’ skills and overall growth is a blessing.** Some of the kids I first met in 2020 are now on their way to college.”

NEW PROGRAMS FOCUS ON THE FUTURE



Partnerships with Purpose

KCTL launched several new programs to meet the needs of our growing number of high school-age youth.

Through our longstanding partnership with the USTA Foundation, KCTL high school students gained access to Winward Academy's online platform, which offers a comprehensive curriculum and test preparation pathway for the college board exams.

KCTL now partners with Brooklyn-based non-profit Bottom Line, offering our high school seniors additional support and guidance for their college applications and beyond. With the commitment and generous support of the Ichigo Foundation, KCTL offered our dedicated high school youth their very first job through our Jobs Program, our most unique initiative to date. Hired for the role of Site Assistant, these trailblazing teens supported a number of our adult staff's daily responsibilities, while honing their professional skills and experiencing things that you can only learn from the workplace.



100%

of students in the Jobs Program said that they:

- Learned what was needed in order to apply for a job
- Maintained positive relationships with staff and mentors that lasted beyond the program

89%

reported that they:

- Received support to set goals for the future
- Began to envision what a successful career looks like

KCTL IN THE NEWS

EXTRA! EXTRA!



WNYC-FM

“Every summer the U.S. Open reminds New Yorkers that there’s just something about tennis. WNYC’s Amy Pearl met with some kids in Brooklyn to find out what that something is.”

Sep 7, 2022

Brooklyn Daily Eagle

“Brooklyn Nonprofit Brings Tennis Skills to Housing Projects.”

Sep 2, 2022



BKReader

Local News for Brooklyn, by Brooklyn

“Brooklyn’s Road to the U.S. Open: Local Tennis League is Preparing BK’s Youth for Competition on and off the Court.”

Sep 2, 2022



CBS NEW YORK



“Kings County Tennis League trains kids in public housing: A Brooklyn nonprofit is working to make tennis more accessible in underserved communities.”

Sep 22, 2022



“Tennis and life skills go hand in hand in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn.”

Jun 8, 2022



MEET COACH EFI



“How could I not be a part of this?”

— EFI DA SILVA

In the summer of 2013 a friend approached me to join her in volunteering at a grassroots youth tennis program in my neighborhood. Having no tennis experience whatsoever, I initially declined. Reflecting later on **my personal experience participating in free community-based programming as a child that provided access and opportunity to spaces and mindsets that I wouldn't have otherwise unlocked**—and being reassured that I could learn with the kids—I reconsidered.

That first summer, I became a volunteer, and began learning about the **skills and traits that tennis teaches that remain outside of the sport itself: patience, focus, accountability.** Over time, I witnessed the irrefutable impact that tennis and this endeavor had on the kids and their community. I was hooked.

In the years since, **I transitioned from volunteer to staff member, seeing students grow in ways that I wouldn't have imagined ten years ago.** I've met families, volunteers, staff, students, and community advocates who are invested in KCTL's mission because they know that though our tagline is “Bringing Tennis to the Kids,” our purpose goes far beyond that.

Tennis is the ligament that gives stability to the extraordinary opportunities that KCTL provides: creating safe play spaces for kids, cultivating self confidence, promoting a growth mindset, exploring unfamiliar areas, expanding social networks, affording once-in-a-lifetime chances to meet the top tennis players around the globe through a longstanding partnership with the USTA, giving college prep help and even job opportunities to KCTL's older students.

I've remained committed to KCTL for so long because **this program is based on an ecosystem of inclusion, care and consideration while tending to the needs of our students and community.** KCTL has created a habitat that fosters connection and growth physically and mentally that may not have existed otherwise. This is the energy that I desire to see in the world, and KCTL is the generator of it.

Efi da Silva



From the bottom of our ball hoppers and racquet bags, we thank the USTA Foundation for their unwavering support and so many incredible experiences that our youth will never forget!



FINANCIALS, PARTNERS AND TEAM

2022 KCTL Revenue and Expenses

	2022	2021
Individuals/Family Foundations	\$ 554,475	\$ 320,438
Corporations/Matching Gifts	\$ 23,810	\$ 29,208
Grants	\$ 198,025	\$ 194,566
Government Funding	\$ 9,550	\$ 9,475
Contractual Services	\$ 20,340	\$ 11,175
Total Revenue	\$ 806,200	\$ 575,302
Payments and Fees	\$ 17,964	\$ 13,355
Total Revenue minus fees	\$ 788,236	\$ 561,947
Total Tennis Operations	\$ 357,144	\$ 179,709
Total Development	\$ 311,496	\$ 197,444
Total Management	\$ 48,188	\$ 153,516
Total Expenses	\$ 716,828	\$ 530,669
Operating Gain	\$ 71,408	\$ 31,278

Board of Directors

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 David Baxter
 Will Benesh
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 Joe Ceriello
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Thank You To Our Partners and Supporters




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