

# FRED WELLS TENNIS & EDUCATION CENTER

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# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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# LETTER FROM BOARD PRESIDENT JOHN AHERN

To our FWTEC Family,

In January 2021, we had just finished the second mandated facility closure and TennisWorks students were still in full distance learning mode. We did not know what the year would hold, and it felt so good to phase back in programming throughout the year. We can pride ourselves on our steadfast dedication to our mission of bringing people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds together to embrace the lifelong game of tennis, while serving under-resourced youth with the support of the community.

We solidified our commitment to that mission with a new three-year strategic plan that kicked off in June 2021. The goals outlined will enable us to remove barriers to participation, expand our free TennisWorks programs, and continue improving our facilities operations and infrastructure. The strategic plan is our blueprint and road map ensuring that the actions we take now are guided by our mission, vision, core values, and goals for a promising future.

Tennis has seen exponential growth since the beginning of the pandemic, and you all lit up our courts with infectious passion and excitement. Adult players filled our drills, clinics, leagues, and individual court times. Our new Junior Pathway was implemented to provide clarity on which class is the best fit for junior players. We feel fortunate to host new and returning players of all ages and levels at our facility!

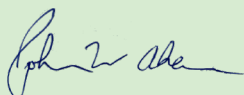
Our TennisWorks programs had 760 program registrations for distance learning, off-site tennis and life skills instruction at various parks and schools, and in our own facility. Throughout the year, students enjoyed the benefits of being physically active through tennis, built trusting relationships, and further developed skills that will benefit them in all areas of their life.

We are honored and grateful to receive financial support for this work from grant partners, including an amazing \$80,000 in grant funding from the Isora Foundation to support general operating expenses and youth scholarships. Combined with support from the greater FWTEC community, 51 unique students received scholarship assistance amounting to nearly \$50,000.

After a two-year hiatus, the CommUNITY Gala re-connected us with so many of our friends, in a little fancier attire, and brought us together for an exciting evening where we exceeded our fundraising goal for TennisWorks programs. The night reiterated the power of sports and that everyone deserves a safe, welcoming environment to connect, learn, and grow.

As we look back at the year, we celebrate returning to so many things that bring us joy and are at the core of our community. We hope you know how grateful we are for your continuous support of the Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center!

Sincerely,



John Ahern  
Board President

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2024

## MISSION

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

## VISION

To lead in building opportunity, confidence and success with the youth we serve.

## GOALS

**Grow TennisWorks program**  
to increase reach, retention and impact.

**Improve operations**  
to support all programming.

**Increase fundraising**  
to support the organization's aspirations.

## VALUES

### Community

We are a community, not a club, where generous, caring, and supportive relationships are nourished.

### Inclusivity

We are a home where every person is valued, respected, and welcomed authentically and without judgement.

### Joy

We value the happiness our work brings to the world and believe that play is a vital component of a well-lived life.

### Accountability

We commit to high standards in all we do, holding ourselves and each other accountable with compassion, honesty, and integrity.

# STAYING CONNECTED

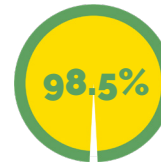
## TENNISWORKS

Our free TennisWorks programming provides access to safe and supportive environments where students can strive for personal growth both on and off the tennis court.

“While there have been many disruptions, twists and turns, the depth of our relationships with TennisWorks students and families has been such a silver lining. Together, we have stayed connected, navigated challenges, and evolved to continue to leverage the sport of tennis and our community to improve physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being.” - Christine Nickels, Director of Education and Partnerships



of students say they have fun when attending our program.

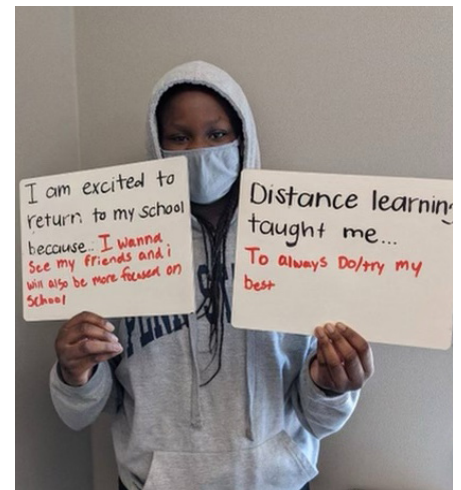
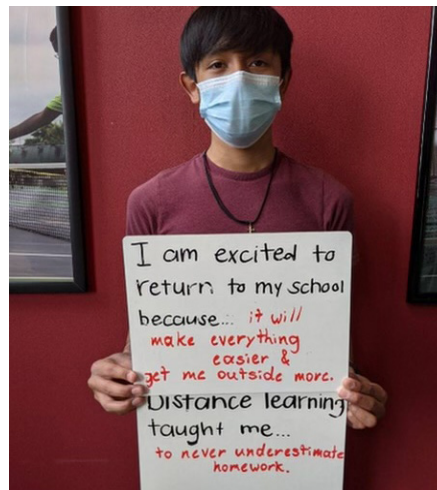
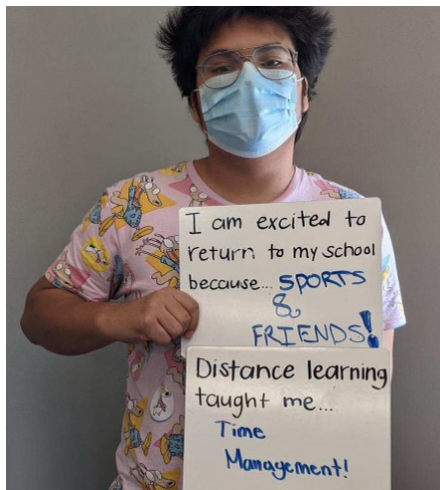


of students say there is an adult here they can trust.



of students identify as a tennis player at the end of our program.

While our TennisWorks Distance Learning Day Program was born in a time of uncertainty, it deepened our relationships with our students and their families immensely. The Distance Learning Program provided on-site, individualized distance learning support, social connection, and tennis to 30 students in grades 4-10 from nine different Minneapolis-area schools. As students prepared to return to school in-person, they took time to reflect on the distance learning experience.



We were beyond thrilled to be back in person in fall 2021 for in-school and after-school tennis with partner schools: Andersen, Bancroft, Folwell, and Urban Academy Charter School.



# FINDING JOY ON COURT

## JUNIORS

Being back on court in 2021 brought community, new opportunity, joy, and competition to an already exciting year of junior programming. New junior pathways were introduced in an effort to streamline programming and were met with a great response from our community. This year, **\$48,185** was disbursed in scholarship assistance to remove financial barriers to participation, and **1,121** unique junior players of all ages filled our courts to have fun, compete, and learn in an inclusive and safe environment.



"Getting players and coaches back on the courts was tremendous. Providing a physical outlet, and just knowing we're providing a safe enjoyable experience for our patrons that made a positive difference in their lives through a difficult time is what our community is all about."

- Isaac McBroom, Director of Junior Tennis

## ADULTS

Whether it was for drills, clinics, or leagues, our adult programs kept our courts and coaches busy. We added new beginner classes for new and returning players. More than **180** women participated in our Women's Daytime League, more than **145** people spent their evenings or Sundays playing our singles and doubles in-house leagues, and in total, **1,044** unique participants played in our various adult programs. We hope you continue to grow your game in 2022!



"What a relief it was to get back on the courts full-time in 2021! What a blast. You realize how important something is to you when you are away from it and tennis and The Fort was surely missed by our patrons and coaches. We look forward to another fantastic year of tennis!"

- Robin Coverdale, Director of Tennis



# AWARDS SPOTLIGHT

## NJTL ESSAY CONTEST



Kaleb Ngwendson and Kayla Christian were recognized in the 23rd annual USTA Foundation National Junior Tennis and Learning (NJTL) Essay Contest in 2021. Kaleb's essay was selected as the best in the country in his age group (Boys 13-14). Alongside 9 other winners, he was recognized during a virtual awards ceremony on October 21. He also received a fully paid trip for him and a guest to New York City with the USTA Foundation. Kayla was the USTA Northern Section winner for her age division (Girls 15-16). What an incredible accomplishment for Kaleb and Kayla!

## NYSS CHAMPIONS

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recognized the Fred Wells Tennis and Education Center as a National Youth Sports Strategy (NYSS) Champion in June 2021. The NYSS vision is that one day all youth will have the opportunity, motivation, and access to play sports — regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, ability, or ZIP code. NYSS Champions are recognized for working toward achieving this vision, and FWTEC has demonstrated our organization's commitment to support safe, fun, inclusive, developmentally appropriate, and accessible youth sports opportunities. We are so honored to be a NYSS Champion alongside so many other organizations partnering with HHS to improve the youth sports landscape in America!



## JTT INTERMEDIATE CHAMPIONS



At the end of July, Coach Christian Maki and his Fred Wells 18U team took home the USTA Northern Junior Team Tennis 18U intermediate title!!! In bracket play, they defeated Lakeville Pride 31-14 in the Round of 16, Sioux Falls 22-17 in the Quarterfinals, Fargo 22-21 in the semifinals, and sealed the win beating Mandan 26-20 in the championship!

*Fred Wells 18U 1:* Abby Anderson, Matthew Card, Alexina Erickson, Emme Johnson, Anders Lange, Malia Meyer, Ben Pinto, John Talghader, Clara Thoenke

# LEGENDS OF THE FORT

It was important to our founder, Fred Wells, to provide seniors with affordable access to our tennis facility. Today, the Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center is proud to honor our deserving seniors with our annual Legends of The Fort award. This award is a distinction bestowed upon seniors who have demonstrated a long passion for tennis, and who have engaged the Fort community with their enthusiasm, volunteer service and commitment to FWTEC. It is because of their efforts that tennis will continue to thrive in the decades to come.



## Deb Frishberg

Deb is a regular player at Monday drills, permanent court time, Womens' Daytime League Doubles, and has supported many of our projects, including food deliveries to our students. Deb started volunteering with TennisWorks in 2016. She asked if she could bring in homemade cookies for the students, which received a 100% approval and is a highlight every session. Deb is one of our best "celebrators" and makes sure kids know when they are on the right track, whether in the classroom or on court.

## Karen Gjerstad

Karen started playing in Womens' Daytime League in 2009 and now drills regularly while playing weekly in a permanent court time group. She started volunteering in 2010 with our younger TennisWorks students in 3rd and 4th grade. Karen's relationships are very deep with our students. When we transitioned to remote programming, Karen would include messages in our letters home to the students and supported our food drives. Whether in-person or from afar, Coach Karen is always there for the students.



## Nancy Lawrence

In 2006, Nancy came on the last day of a TennisWorks session, which included pizza, prizes and mass confusion. In spite of that confusing start, her volunteer journey began and she has consistently volunteered twice a week with school programs since. Nancy has a special relationship with a group of 14 students from Andersen United Community School who she supported in both elementary and middle school. She is also a long-standing member of our TennisWorks Advisory Committee.

# EVENTS

## SUMMER SLAM



## COMMUNITY GALA



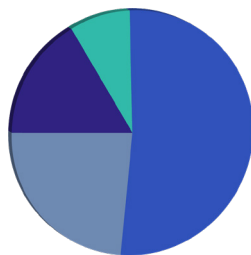


# FINANCIALS

Ending December 31, 2021

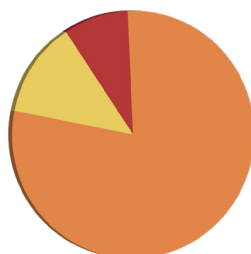
## Revenues

- Programs (52%)
- Fundraising & Contributions (27%)
- Court Time (16%)
- Other Income (5%)



## Expenses

- Program Services (79%)
- Management & General (12.5%)
- Fundraising (8.5%)



## Revenues & Other Support

	2021	2020
Program Revenues	\$ 2,102,255	\$ 1,296,125
Support	792,769	860,876
Other Revenues	77,430	8,196

## Net Assets Released From Restrictions

Restrictions satisfied by payments or time	45,000	135,500
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## Total Revenues and Other Support Without Donor Restriction

	2,972,454	2,165,197
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## Statement of Cash Flows

Cash at Beginning of Year	661,697	1,113,789
Cash at End of Year	1,011,789	661,697

## Statement of Financial Position

Total Assets	4,348,545	3,957,793
Total Liabilities	631,408	614,304
Total Net Assets	3,717,137	3,343,489

# DONORS

### \$80,000+

Isora Foundation

### \$25,000+

Tom & Michele Mingo

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### \$10,000-\$24,999

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# OUR PARTNERS

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Andersen Middle School, Bancroft Elementary, Folwell Elementary, Green Central Freedom School, Her Next Play, InnerCity Tennis, Minneapolis Community Education, Pillsbury United Communities, St. Paul Urban Tennis, Tennis and Life Camps, Urban Academy Charter School, USTA Northern, YWCA Girls Inc.

*\*Esther Tsai resigned in March 2022; Christine Nickels is the current Executive Director.*

*A special thank you to Yi Vang for providing many of the photos used in this Annual Report.*

COMMUNITY

INCLUSIVITY



JOY

ACCOUNTABILITY

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Saint Paul, MN 55111  
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fwtec.org