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Friday, August 20, 2010

Support the Courts serves up a facelift of Lake Hiawatha tennis complex

It's Game, Set and Match for [Lake Hiawatha Park](#) thanks to the Support the Courts Foundation. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) at its Aug. 18th meeting approved the foundation's project to restore the park's 23-year-old tennis complex. Reconstruction of the courts at 43rd St. and 27th Ave. E may begin yet this fall.

The reconstruction will enable competitive play for Roosevelt High School and Minneapolis InnerCity Tennis, as well as recreational play for the surrounding neighborhood.

Under the agreement, the MPRB will be responsible for demolition of the existing tennis courts and on-going maintenance of the new courts. The Support the Courts Foundation will be responsible for funding reconstruction and new fencing. Funding for the \$172,000 project includes a \$50,000 private contribution and a \$5,000 grant from the United States Tennis Association; fundraising efforts continue.

"It will be great to see the return of tennis to Lake Hiawatha Park and we thank Support the Courts for making that possible," said Carol Kummer, District 5 MPRB Commissioner. "It's partnerships like this that enable our park system to provide recreational opportunities and exceptional facilities for park users. By bringing tennis to the neighborhoods, people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can enjoy the game as well as lifetime health benefits."

An all-volunteer nonprofit organization, Support the Court's mission is to provide financial help to the MPRB to keep recreational tennis viable in Minneapolis. The foundation and the MPRB have partnered on four successful tennis court projects since 2007: Kenwood Park (six courts), Webber Park (five courts), Powderhorn Park (five courts) and Pershing Park (four courts).

"Tennis provides a safe haven for youth to develop positive values and attitudes. Introducing children to tennis presents an important antidote to crime and socio-economic disparity in the city," said Ellen Doll, founder of Support the Courts.

"With reduced budgets for tennis court rehabilitation, we wanted to help correct that situation and level the playing field. This initiative has likely saved tennis as a high school boys and girls sport in Minneapolis," said Ron Cornwell, a volunteer with Support the Courts. "We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our donors through the years, many of whom live outside Minneapolis. They recognize the importance of strong, vibrant parks, lakes, schools and neighborhoods in the city and the impact they have on the greater community."

The MPRB has 194 full tennis courts and 21 practice courts in Minneapolis. Tennis opportunities include lessons; and partner, team and competitive play for both youth and adults. For more information on MPRB's tennis program, visit www.minneapolisparcs.org.

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