

Private Family Foundation Offers Free Tennis Lessons for Kids in Cary

By Sonia Usatch-Kuhn 9 months, 4 weeks ago

The generosity and thoughtful acts of kindness of the Kodali family made it possible for boys and girls to be introduced to the sport of tennis and receive free lessons.

Valli Kodali said, "My wife Usha and I wanted to be able to give something back to our community. Our interests rest mainly with kids who are our future. We also wanted our sons, Aneesh, 16 and Anudeep, 10 to become involved and experience the wonderful feeling of giving back."

In 2000, the Kodali's established a private family foundation with the intent of doing something for community and/or children every year.

Aneesh came up with the idea of a tennis camp for kids who otherwise would not have the opportunity to learn the game. "I wanted to find a way to share the game I love," said Aneesh.

Anudeep, is a number one ranked tennis player in the ten-year old division in the south. He has been moved into the 12 year-old division, where he is ranked number 2 in North Carolina.

Usha Kodali explained, "We put our plan into action by advertising in the Cary News, News and Observer and on the Western Wake Tennis Association website. We posted flyers at the library, Cary YMCA and at public tennis courts. The calls came in as fast as a well served tennis ball."

Cary Tennis Center on Louis Stephen Drive provided the courts, while Western Wake Tennis Association offered guidance during each camp period in July and September.

The Kodali's hired the tennis coaches who were ably assisted by Aneesh and Anudeep. Anudeep said, "It felt good to be a coach. It was exciting and I'm looking forward to the next camp."

Along with the lessons each child received a free tennis racket and T-shirt, a can of tennis balls and water bottles.

Home schooled sisters, Rebekah and Kadie Kochis, were among the kids chosen to participate.

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"My mom told me about it. Kadie and I were so excited. I was nervous in the beginning, but after I started playing, I really liked it. Now I play tennis with our neighbors all the time," said Rebekah.

Kadie added, "It was awesome to be picked. I'm a tomboy and I love sports. I learned some of the moves, like how to make the ball bounce back and how to use the right swing. I want to say thank you to my coach and the Kodali family."

Their dad, Neal Kochis said, "So, now what I hear is 'let's go play tennis', constantly, and that's a good thing."

"I had similarly excited emotions as my brother and learned a lot about leadership. I enjoyed being an instructor," concluded Aneesh, who will receive the 2008 Education Merit Award for service from the North Carolina Tennis Association.

There are plans for two more camps, at least one more before the end of 2008.