

# THE DTP CONNECTION

THE DENVER TENNIS PARK NEWSLETTER

## GIVING THE GIFT OF TENNIS

GABRIEL GUILLAUME



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The Denver Tennis Park (DTP) is more than a facility; **we are a community** committed to creating opportunities for all youth regardless of financial resources, race, geography and/or ability. We deliver programming in schools, neighborhood courts, in partnership with community-based organizations, and at **your** 13-court facility. Our programming is **much more** than tennis. It builds character by challenging youth to identify goals, overcome challenges, build trust in themselves and their peers, establish discipline, and simply find joy in movement and accomplishment. These developmental attributes that tennis advances so effectively have been proven to improve academic performance, physical and mental health, and even professional development. The DTP is about **youth development and tennis is our tool**; what a tool it is!



However, bringing tennis to everyone can be a challenge.

Many people don't feel welcomed in tennis and think that it is out of reach for them socially and economically. At the Denver Tennis Park, we don't subscribe to that, and it is up to the us and our supporters to ensure that we overcome those barriers by **inviting** and **sustaining** diverse perspectives, experiences, interests, and expectations **on our courts and in our communities**.

One way we accomplish this is through our scholarship program. We believe it is important not only to provide financial support for those who cannot afford both programming and equipment, but to also have a strategy that addresses the stigma that tennis is *only for some*.

Today, thanks to a combined effort of our community-based strategies and direct financial scholarships, we are serving well over a thousand youth who would otherwise not have been introduced to tennis, and we have **40 youth receiving scholarships** to participate in our after school programs on-site at the DTP.

**Our goal in 2023 is to be able to provide 60 youth with full-year scholarships in addition to reaching about 2,500 youth in under invested communities.**

To make our scholarship goal possible, we need to raise **\$150,000** (average \$2,500 per youth). This would allow us to provide **60 scholarship participants** with **46 weeks** of tennis programming annually, and ensure they have racquets and shoes. For our advanced scholarship youth who are playing at high levels and looking to transform their love of tennis into greater academic and professional opportunities, we also include tournament fees, individual lessons, and nearly unlimited access to our courts.

With **Colorado Gives Day coming up on December 6th**, we are asking you, your family, and/or your employer to help us accomplish this goal and ensure our collective investment in Denver's youth and future.



All kids deserve to play.

The Denver Tennis Park helps kids from under-resourced communities play, learn and grow. Support our youth tennis programs & scholarships with a donation today.



[CLICK HERE TO DONATE VIA COLORADO GIVES!](#)

# A WEEKEND OF COLLABORATION, CELEBRATION

## LEARNING COMMUNITY SPEAKER SERIES: GREG PATTON



*Coach Greg Patton,  
DTP Learning Community Guest Speaker*



*Coach Greg Patton speaking to local coaches,  
families, and volunteers at the DTP.*



*DTP players (left to right) Andrew Rettig, David  
Tran, Cale Brush, Lorena Cedeno, and Eileen  
Tran at the Colorado Tennis Hall of Fame Gala  
& Awards Celebration*



*DTP Community Outreach Liaison  
Sonia Schwartz receiving the Arthur Ashe  
Contributions to Under-Served Populations Award  
at the Colorado Tennis Hall of Fame Gala &  
Awards Celebration*

One of the Denver Tennis Park's key strategic goals is to contribute to a stronger community of tennis providers and outreach. The DTP Learning Community is a new initiative designed to provide educational resources and opportunities for coaches, parents, and volunteers in the Denver-Area.

On November 12th & 13th, the DTP, USTA Colorado, USTA Intermountain, and USPTA collaborated to host Greg Patton at the Denver Tennis Park to share his experience, approach, and dedication to the advancement of tennis instruction and youth development. Greg Patton is the most winningest coach in Division-1 College tennis and brings a level of expertise and enthusiasm that few can match. We had over 70 high school & college coaches, tennis instructors, youth, parents, sports psychologists, and more in attendance. Collectively, we discussed everything from drills to building buy-in and supporting confidence within youth tennis environments. It was an extraordinary weekend capped with an opportunity for some of the youth we support here at the DTP learning and interacting directly with Greg.

The DTP will continue to host different Learning Community opportunities and is always looking for ideas from our partners, parents, and supporters. If you have an idea for a Learning Community topic and/or speaker, please reach out to Gabriel Guillaume.

## COLORADO TENNIS HALL OF FAME GALA & USTA COLORADO ANNUAL AWARDS CELEBRATION

Also on November 12th, USTA Colorado held its annual Colorado Tennis Hall of Fame Gala and Awards Celebration. With more than 350 tennis and community partners gathered together, we celebrated the role tennis has in strengthening lives, futures, and legacies. Among the award recipients were several youth and adults connected to the Denver Tennis Park. Cale Brush and Lorena Cedeno, who primarily train with, and are supported by, the DTP were both acknowledged with Junior Sportsmanship Awards. In addition, Sonia Schwartz, the DTP Community Outreach Liaison, was awarded the Arthur Ashe Contributions to Under-Served Populations award for her lifetime in bringing tennis to under invested communities. Congratulations Cale, Lorena, and Sonia! We are grateful to USTA Colorado for their support and acknowledgement in advancing inclusive and equitable youth development through tennis.

# YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

## SAMANTHA GARCIA-LUCERO

Montbello native Samantha Garcia-Lucero started playing tennis at the age of 4; her dad, Manuel, was interested in the sport and took it upon himself to teach his daughter. Early lessons consisted of learning how to toss and catch, and it wasn't long before Samantha received her first racquet and her first coach in her dad. Now 11 years old, she loves the competition of tennis and the growth that comes with each practice and match. Samantha is an active player in the Middle School Intermediate program and was just as active at the Montbello Colorado SERVES camps this past summer - on top of being in the DTP Summer League! She credits her family's love and encouragement for keeping her motivated on the court and in her tennis journey. Tennis has become quite the family sport in the Garcia-Lucero family circle - her cousin Brooke also plays at the Denver Tennis Park, and her younger sister and brother are starting to show interest in the sport, too. Samantha has a love for connecting to kids and motivating them to be the best they can be... all while having fun! Within her family, community, and at the DTP, Samantha has proven to be a bright leader with a positive attitude and big heart for helping others rise to their own potential. We are so incredibly lucky to work with such an inspiring player and family!



*Samantha (right) pictured with her dad, Manuel.*

**FAVORITE TENNIS PLAYER:** Rafael Nadal

**FAVORITE SHOT:** Backhand

**SINGLES OR DOUBLES:** Singles

**GOALS FOR 2023:** Improve overall and play more tournaments

**HOBBIES OUTSIDE OF TENNIS:**

Loves chemistry and science experiments, reading fantasy and science fiction books, and drawing



# COACH SPOTLIGHT

## KACEY WALISUNDARA

Meet Kacey Walisundara, a Denver native who has been coaching at the Denver Tennis Park (DTP) since 2020. The son of Sri Lankan immigrants, he found tennis by accident at the age of 9; while out with his mom and sister, the trio came across a free tennis clinic near Montbello High School and he joined in on the fun with no hesitation. Kacey developed his tennis skills on the courts of City Park through summer camps and USTA Star Search, now known as USTA Colorado SERVES. Like many kids learning tennis at that

age, competition is what drew him in, and it's what has kept him active in the sport to this day. As a student at DSST: Green Valley Ranch, Kacey played high school tennis at Montbello High School due to his school not having a tennis team. He would go on to play college tennis at Metro State University, where he graduated this past May with a double major in Finance and Accounting. Kacey has found a home on the courts of the DTP, where he inspires others with his tennis journey as a youth instructor for players of all ages and levels, including those in the Colorado SERVES program. Despite starting a full-time position in his field at the start of the upcoming new year, he still plans on being active in the tennis community as a member of the Colorado Youth Tennis Foundation board of trustees and with the DTP as much as possible. For youth players, Kacey shares this one piece of advice: "Find your own passion and enjoyment for the game before focusing on getting better. If the passion is there, you'll find everything else comes a lot easier and naturally!"

# DTP WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Denver Tennis Park is thrilled to announce the addition of two board members: Brandon Lloyd and Rocío Portela-Berríos.

## BRANDON LLOYD



Brandon Lloyd, a former All-Pro NFL wide receiver, completed 11 seasons of professional football. Brandon is passionate about business and youth development. While playing in the NFL, he founded a private music publishing entity, spent his off-seasons working in aerospace sales, and mobilized a regional chapter of Blessings in a Backpack in his hometown of Blue Springs, Missouri, to feed youth who might otherwise go hungry. In addition, Brandon serves as a Brand Ambassador at CareerWise Colorado, a registered youth apprenticeship model, bridging the gap between education and career opportunities. Brandon is now a Health and

Health and Benefits Consultant at Mercer and will graduate from the University of Denver, Daniels School of Business, in Fall 2022. Brandon is delighted to bring his energy and experience to the board and the community of the Denver Tennis Park.

## ROCÍO PORTELA-BERRÍOS



Rocío Portela-Berríos is an attorney at Holland & Hart LLP's Denver office and a member of the firm's Project Development and Project Finance group. At Holland & Hart, Rocío focuses on the representation of a variety of renewable energy clients, such as renewable energy project developers, investors and utilities. Rocío also dedicates a significant amount of her attorney time to pro bono work. Her pro bono work is mainly focused on immigration matters, such as unaccompanied minors seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status in the United States. Rocío is also an active volunteer for CASA Denver's Older Youth Program. Rocío was born and

raised in Puerto Rico and visits as much as possible. She played tennis from the age of 5 and played on the Puerto Rico national team every year from the age of 12 through the age of 18. She debuted as a member Puerto Rico's Fed Cup team at 16. Rocío also competed internationally in ITF tournaments and went on to play for Seton Hall University's Women's tennis team on a full athletic scholarship, where she played at the #2 and #3 singles spot and #1 doubles spot and was team captain her senior year.

## DTP CALENDAR

**NOV. 28 - DEC. 4:**

**REGISTRATION REQUEST WEEK FOR SESSION III OF  
YOUTH PROGRAMS - ONLINE ONLY AT  
[DTP.CLUBAUTOMATION.COM](http://DTP.CLUBAUTOMATION.COM)**

**DEC. 6:** COLORADO GIVES DAY

**DEC. 12:** ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS AT 1PM FOR  
ADULT DRILLS SESSION III-A

**DEC. 12-18:** LAST WEEK OF SESS. II YOUTH  
PROGRAMS

**JAN. 2 - FEB. 3:** ADULT DRILLS SESSION III-A

**JAN. 4:** SESSION III OF YOUTH PROGRAMS BEGINS

**JAN. 16: MLK, JR. DAY - PROGRAMS RUNNING AS  
SCHEDULED**

## HOLIDAY HOURS

**NOV. 24: CLOSED FOR THANKSGIVING**

**NOV. 25:** 7AM - 2PM

**DEC. 24:** 8AM - 12PM

**DEC. 25: CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS**

**DEC. 31:** 8AM - 12PM

**JAN. 1: CLOSED FOR NEW YEARS DAY**

**JAN. 2:** 7AM - 9:30PM

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