



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 21, 2014

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office
312.744.3334
press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL, XS TENNIS ANNOUNCE NEW TENNIS FACILITY IN WASHINGTON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

\$9.8 Million Facility Will Allow XS Tennis Programs to Reach More than 4,000 CPS Students

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago's XS Tennis announced today a new \$9.8 million, 112,000-square-foot world class tennis facility in the Washington Park neighborhood. The state-of-the-art facility will house 8 indoor and 19 outdoor courts, a fitness center, running track, training space and classrooms. Chicago's XS Tennis is the largest, most successful minority-owned tennis organization in the nation, serving more than 2,000 Chicago Public School (CPS) students through its free in-school Tennis XSpress program and more than 2,300 Chicago youth and residents annually.

"XS Tennis has been a tremendous success and serves as an example of how athletics and education can come together within our communities to support Chicago's youth," said Mayor Emanuel. "It's important that our kids have access to safe activities and strong role models, and this new facility will provide a world-class space for young people across the Chicago to train, to dream and to discover their full potential."

The Tennis XSpress program is a mobile tennis program created by XS Tennis and Education Foundation. The program provides after-school and in-school activities while teaching the values of team work, self-confidence and sportsmanship, all while growing the game of tennis. The opening of the XS Tennis Village in the Washington Park neighborhood will double XS Tennis Foundation's investment in their CPS programming, increasing the number of participating schools from 10 to 20 and exposing more than 4,000 CPS students to the sport of tennis and the habits of an active and healthy lifestyle.

"As a graduate of the Chicago Public Schools, I know personally that the athletics programs I participated in were crucial to my development during a critical stage in my life," said Kamau Murray, President and Founder of XS Tennis and the XS Tennis and Education Foundation. "With rackets, tennis balls, and nets in tow, Tennis XSpress transforms CPS gymnasiums into a world of opportunity and introduces students to the idea that they can and should pursue bold ambitions."

In addition to doubling the Tennis XSpress program, XS Tennis will also expand its community outreach by committing \$300,000 in tennis scholarships to Chicago residents and CPS youth.

"While in addition to bringing new opportunities for residents and youth, I anticipate that the opening of this world class tennis and education facility will have a sizable ripple effect throughout the Third Ward as it grows and fosters new business in the nearby community," said Alderman Pat Dowell of the 3rd Ward.

The XS Tennis Foundation also works to provide academic and financial support to promising junior tennis players in local communities and looks to close the divide between sports and education, with twenty-one players from XS Tennis have received scholarships to play college tennis since the club was founded in 2008. The Foundation has partnered with the University of Chicago to provide student athletes with free tutoring and homework assistance.

Today's announcement comes on the heels of 18-year-old and Englewood native Taylor Townsend earning a wild card into the main draw of the 2014 French Open. The USTA provides a wild card to one female and one male American player each year. The last two Americans to reach No. 1 in the world junior rankings, Donald Young and Taylor Townsend, learned to play at XS Tennis and graduates of the program have won four of the last five Illinois high school girls' tennis championships.

With final site location approval from the Chicago Housing Authority, XS Tennis expects to break ground on the state of the art facility in September of this year; this \$9.8 million investment will be made with \$2.9 million in TIF support.

###