



The Director's Corner

Special Pops Tennis “and more”

Coach Matt's Tennis & More, owned by Tiffany and “Coach” Matt Grayson, provides tennis enthusiasts a retail choice with first class customer service and unequivocal expertise. The “More” involves giving back generously to the community and the pursuit of excellence in teaching and growing the sport of tennis.

The “and more” at Special Pops Tennis Program, Inc., was most noticeable at our recently completed 3rd Annual Fall Classic Adaptive Tennis Tournament, on November 1-2, at the Racquet Club of the South in Norcross, GA. The Fall Classic is the culmination of a very full program year at Special Pops.

Fifty-eight athletes, including 13 from out of state, competed in singles, traditional mixed doubles and unified doubles matches over a two-day period. Athletes enjoyed a dance Saturday night, spent the night at the tournament hotel, and returned for more tennis and an awards ceremony on Sunday. Countless numbers of volunteers assisted with the event as unified partners, umpires, ball people, and chaperones.

WOW! And that is just the tennis!

The “and more” is best explained by the following quotes from a few of the attendees:

I loved it and love being a part of Special Pops.

-----Volunteer and leader at a Special Pops year-round training sites

From a parent's perspective, [my child's] success on the court (though small to us) translates to HUGE triumphs in how she walks taller, goes to school tomorrow with a medal and picture, and feels good about herself. AND I can't wait to get other kids in the program.

-----Parent of a Special Pops athlete

It was absolutely my pleasure and joy to be a part of the awards ceremony yesterday... I love being with all the athletes and am thrilled to be a part of the Special Pops Tennis Program. I am already looking forward to the spring!

--School leader from a Special Pops spring tennis academy training site

You thought of absolutely everything: such diversity in those who coordinated the tournament, including high school tennis players who need community service hours, etc; home baked cookies; costumes; USTA Southern's involvement; great signage; welcoming baskets; great gift bags; readily identifiable persons connected with the

tournament; professional umpires (still don't know how you did that!); volunteers galore; drinks/snacks/hospitality on site; creative arts (tattoos, medieval theme, etc); a great dance; the provision of lunch and dinner. So much to appreciate and be thankful for. You treat S(pecial) O(lympic) athletes well!

-----Parent/Coach of out-of-state athlete with special needs

Thanks! I loved the entire weekend. Will we be doing it again next year?

-----Athlete with special needs

Not only was the weekend a chance to share the fun of playing the game of tennis in beautiful weather, it was also being part of how the game should be played - with enthusiasm, true sportsmanship, and remembering that the reason we play the game in the first place is to meet new friends and be part of something fun. You made that possible for these special athletes, some of whom were competing for the first time. Those of you who stood on the medals stand with your athlete now know how much your participation means to them. At Special Pops, we never fail to leave an event like this without thinking that we got far more out of it than we put into it.

-----Coordinator of Special Pops' Volunteers

I wish the players on my USTA tennis team had as good a groundstroke as my athlete!

----- Special Pops Unified Partner

After reading those comments, we feel certain you now understand that Special Pops Tennis Program, Inc. is our organization's name, and developing tennis opportunities is our game, but delivering life experiences is truly our aim!

For so many people being involved with Special Pops has become a life-changing experience. The initial attraction for our volunteers is often to give back to the game they love and to provide opportunities for these underserved and deserving athletes to play the game of tennis, but what touches us most often and keeps us coming back is the same as it is for the customers at Coach Matt's Tennis & More it is the "and more"!

To find out more about how you can get involved in the programs of Special Pops, just send an e-mail to serve@specialpopstennis.com.

We hope to see you on the courts!!!

Jim Hamm
Special Pops Tennis Program, Inc.
Executive Director