



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 12-350

Date: December 13, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

From: Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager

**Re: PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT GRASSROOTS WHEELCHAIR
TENNIS GRANT FROM THE UNITED STATES TENNIS ASSOCIATION**

The Parks and Recreation Department strives to enhance the quality of life in Fort Lauderdale by offering a wide variety of high quality, safe, accessible, and affordable recreation activities to meet the leisure time needs of all of our neighbors. As such, and in response to requests received from the community for tennis programming for the wheelchair-bound, the Parks and Recreation Department recently applied to the United States Tennis Association (USTA) for grant funds to support the purchase of sports wheelchairs. On December 6, 2012 staff was thrilled to learn that a grant was approved in the amount of \$4,300.

The USTA awards grants to organizations promoting the growth of wheelchair tennis and the use of the sport of tennis, to build stronger and healthier communities. The USTA program targets communities that are growing wheelchair tennis wheelchair programs in their local areas. Currently, the Department does not offer opportunities for physical activity for wheelchair bound populations. In addition, there are no tennis court venues in Fort Lauderdale offering sport wheelchairs to the disabled allowing them to "sample" the sport.

The \$4,300 award will enable the City to purchase two sports wheelchairs. The Department will coordinate programs for multigenerational users at all levels of ability, providing rehabilitative, recreational, and competitive activities. The wheelchairs will be available for use free of charge. In the future, grant funding may be sought to obtain additional sports chairs.

The availability of these sports chairs will also be an added bonus to help disabled veterans re-acclimate to healthy outdoor activity. Programming will take place at the George English Tennis Center. The Center has seven newly re-surfaced hard courts, which will provide for convenient wheelchair access.

The USTA National Wheelchair Tennis Committee staff will work with the Department's tennis staff to provide wheelchair tennis training opportunities. The award, which will be made in the spring or fall of 2013, will be presented to the Commission for acceptance. Attached is a copy of the award communication received from the USTA.

Attachment:
Award Letter

cc: Stanley D. Hawthorne, Assistant City Manager
Susanne M. Torriente, Assistant City Manager
Harry A. Stewart, City Attorney
Jonda K. Joseph, City Clerk
John C. Herbst, City Auditor
Chaz Adams, Public Affairs Manager
Phil Thornburg, Director Parks & Recreation



December 6, 2012

Ft. Lauderdale Parks & Rec
1350 W. Broward Blvd
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312

Dear Gina Rivera,

Congratulations, Ft. Lauderdale Parks & Rec has received a 2012 Grassroots Wheelchair Tennis Grant from the United States Tennis Association in the amount of \$4300.

We received many worthy grant applications throughout this process and we applaud everyone's passion for the game. We were thrilled by the number of applicants this year showing the growth of wheelchair tennis and a sincere need throughout the US. It is exciting to identify a common need in communities across the country to grow wheelchair tennis. We sincerely hope that the funding you receive will help your organization toward improving your wheelchair tennis program's numbers and year round sustainability.

The USTA National Wheelchair Tennis Committee and staff want to work with you to ensure your program has every opportunity to flourish. You will hear from one of our committee members in the spring and fall of 2013. We will also expect updates on how the USTA Grassroots Grant has affected your program in numbers of participants, opportunities for participation, and other great stories that go with local programming. Please, consider us another resource for your program throughout the year.

In the coming months you will also receive a USTA wheelchair tennis banner for use by your program. We hope you will utilize this banner in promoting the sport we all love.

If your program will not be able to accomplish the goals described in your grant request due to the funding allotment outlined above, please inform us immediately so we can discuss other ways to assist you in achieving your goals.

Please keep in contact by sending updates to wheelchairinfo@usta.com.

Sincerely,

The USTA National Wheelchair Tennis Committee and National Staff