



The next season of the Special Aces Junior Development Program begins November 8.

## ‘Special Aces’ tennis

Starting in early November, the tennis bubbles at the Prospect Park Tennis Center will be filled with happy laughter and cheers of encouragement as children in the Special Aces Junior Development Tennis Program take to the courts.

Qualified physical and occupational therapists join the Center’s tennis professionals to offer group exercise and tennis instruction to children with varying degrees of physical and cognitive challenges. Thanks to generous donors, tuition for each child is below \$100 for the seven session program and scholarships are available to families in need of financial assistance.

The approximately 32 children at each of the two Sunday sessions are grouped together according to age and ability. Tennis pros, therapists and volunteers provide close supervision and attention to every child. At the beginning of the season, children are assessed to determine factors such as flexibility, strength and general coordination. Therapists participating in the program, now in its third year, report improvement in the children’s hand/eye coordination, physical strength and attention span.

Thanks to the support of The Joseph Leroy and Ann C. Warner Fund, the Prospect Park Tennis Center recently purchased four Top End Transformer All

Sport wheelchairs for use by children in the Special Aces Program. These chairs, manufactured by Invacare Corporation, are extremely adjustable, and will help many children participate more fully in the activities of the Special Aces Program.

Parents of children who have participated in the Special Aces Program report that even those with severe cognitive problems, are better able to interact socially with their peers and adults during the tennis sessions. The Special Aces Program also helps ameliorate the isolation families of special needs children sometimes feel, by giving them a place to join other parents to watch their child play a sport.

The next season of the Special Aces Junior Development Program begins November 8. Players 6-18 years old will be grouped according to age and ability. The one hour program is available on seven Sundays, in two time slots: 1-2 p.m. and 2-3 p.m. The cost is \$84 for seven sessions, with some scholarships available. Space is limited. Registration material is available at [www.prospect-park.org/tennis](http://www.prospect-park.org/tennis) or call 718-436-2500. The Tennis Center is located at the Parade Ground on the corner of Coney Island and Parkside Avenues (Park Circle). Street parking is available on Parkside Avenue.