

For Immediate Release
September 18, 2009

Contact: Eugene Patron
Off: 718.965.8954
Cell: 917.501.5881
epatron@prospectpark.org

[Sample digital photos attached.
Hi-res photos available on request]

Champions One and All!

Children with special needs enjoy tennis program at Prospect Park

Brooklyn, NY – 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.

"The addition of a sports wheelchair component this season is going to be great," said Paul Campbell, Director of the Prospect Park Tennis Center. "The kids – all of whom arrive excited and motivated - are going to really enjoy it."

Parents of children who have participated in the Special Aces Program report that even those with sever 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.

"Special Aces is a great and extremely well run program," said Michael D. Stalonas, Executive Director of The Joseph Leroy and Ann C. Warner Fund. "The professional staff and the volunteers are warm and caring. The children truly love the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of tennis, as evidenced by the great percentage of kids that come back each year. The Warner Fund feels very privileged and proud to be able to fund such a wonderful program."

(cont.)

**The next season of the Special Aces Junior Development Program begins
Sunday, November 8, 2009.**

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.prospectpark.org/tennis For more information call (718) 436-2500

Special Aces is made possible through generous support from the Louise and Arde Bulova Fund, Translation Aces, the USTA and the Joseph LeRoy and Ann C. Warner Fund.

The Special Aces Junior Development Tennis Program at the Prospect Park Tennis Center is a program of the Prospect Park Alliance.

[The Prospect Park Tennis Center](http://www.prospectpark.org/tennis) is open daily, 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. The 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. Call (718) 436-2500 for more information.

**For more information on Prospect Park events, programs, membership
and volunteering, call the Park Hotline at (718) 965-8999
or visit www.prospectpark.org**

Dial 311 for all Parks & Recreation information

In partnership with the City of New York and the community, the Prospect Park Alliance restores, develops, and operates Prospect Park for the enjoyment of all by caring for the natural environment, preserving historic design, and serving the public through facilities and programs. Prospect Park's 585 acres of meadows, waterfalls, forest, lakes, and athletic facilities comprise a masterwork of urban green space.

#