

# TENNIS COURTS IN TRENTON'S VILLA PARK GETTING \$100K FACELIFT

By Cristina Rojas | For NJ.com



National Junior Tennis & Learning of Trenton hosts groundbreaking ceremony for the revitalization of the Villa Park tennis courts. Dignitaries participate in the ceremonial groundbreaking. (Michael Mancuso | For NJ.com)

TRENTON — The cracked and worn tennis courts at Villa Park are getting a \$100,000 overhaul, thanks to public-private partnership to fund it.

Officials from the National Junior Tennis & Learning of Trenton and the city held a groundbreaking on Friday.

“This is the beginning of something that this neighborhood deserves,” said Albert Stark, president of NJTTL’s board.

The upgraded facility will include two regular 78-by-36-foot courts with blended lines for children 10 and under, and three 36-by-18-foot courts for children 8 and under. On those, the beginners use lower nets, smaller rackets and foam balls.

There will also be a pavilion for both spectators and storage. It’s expected to be complete by June 24.

The project comes three years after the nonprofit completed an ambitious four-year, \$1 million restoration of Cadwalader Park’s courts and facilities.

\$1M project to restore Cadwalader Park’s courts completed.

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National Junior Tennis & Learning of Trenton hosts groundbreaking ceremony for the revitalization of the Villa Park tennis courts. Trenton mayor Eric Jackson delivers remarks. (Michael Mancuso | For NJ.com)

NJTLT, part of the National Junior Tennis & Learning network, provides tennis, education and mentoring for children ages 5 to 18.

“Tennis is the hook, but it’s the learning that’s really the important part of the program” both on and off the court, Stark said.

“One of the things about tennis is you have to make your own decisions,” he said. “You’re out there by yourself and there’s no intermissions, no timeouts, no coaching while you’re playing and you develop an independence that you don’t in a lot of other sports.”

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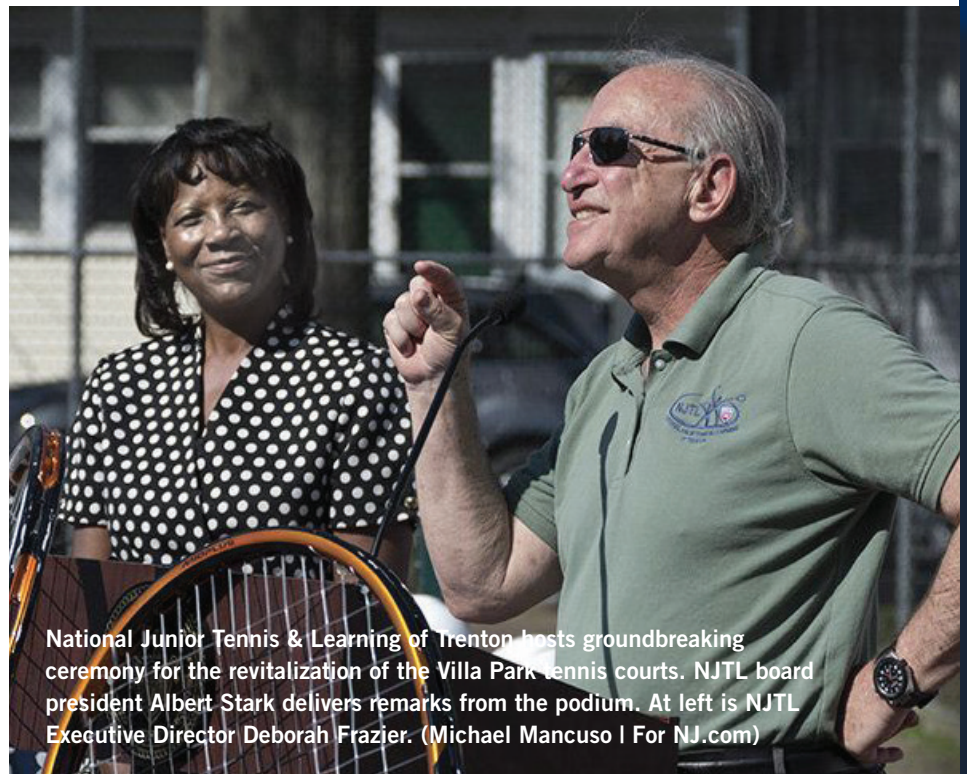
Much like that one, funding for this project came from a variety of sources. The city contributed \$25,000 and NJTLT raised the remaining amount.

“This is really the pivotal point of what happens ... when you have outstanding leadership on the board, a willing administration and city council and great sponsors,” Mayor Eric Jackson said. “Collaborations are great and we have to have them to forge progress, but it’s our sponsors that really help make this a reality.”

NJTLT Executive Director Deborah Frazier, who started on the job earlier this month, says the revamped courts will allow the nonprofit to expand its programs and reach more kids.

Its programs currently serve more than 2,700 youths, the majority of whom are from Trenton, but Frazier hopes that number doubles.

“We’d like to really make a difference because as we make a difference with the children, we make a difference with the families and we make a difference in our community, so it just keeps building,” she said.



National Junior Tennis & Learning of Trenton hosts groundbreaking ceremony for the revitalization of the Villa Park tennis courts. NJTL board president Albert Stark delivers remarks from the podium. At left is NJTL Executive Director Deborah Frazier. (Michael Mancuso | For NJ.com)