



## **Tennis Welcome Center of the Month: Hamilton Family YMCA**

### *They Pay It Forward*

The Hamilton Family YMCA in Chattanooga, TN, is not only a family-friendly center with many sports and activities, but it is also equipped with six hard tennis courts and a full-time PTR pro to run programs for all levels of players.

“Everyone is welcome at the Hamilton Family YMCA,” says Murtala Bala Habu, the staff pro at the YMCA. “Tennis here is not just for members but for anyone in the community who wants to come in and play. I will never turn anyone away.”

Habu and the YMCA believe that everyone should have the opportunity to learn the sport, even if they cannot afford to take lessons or pay for court time.

“If someone comes in and doesn’t have the money to play, I will always find a way to squeeze them into a group lesson or give them free court time when available, because eventually that money will come back to the tennis industry, and in the meantime we are helping to grow the sport,” says Habu. “Whether it is by that person bringing a friend that can afford to play in the clinics, or that person going out and purchasing their own racquet and balls—it’s kind of like a pay-it-forward deal.”

The YMCA also runs a special program for home-school kids during the day and for families to learn how to play tennis together. “Tennis is a sport that families should be able to enjoy together,” says Habu. “So I run a class that allows families, even with very little kids, to take lessons with each other.”

Another perk at the YMCA is when you become a member, you automatically get a free 30-minute lesson whether you’re a tennis player or not. This system allows new players to be exposed to the game and become introduced to the different tennis programs they can become involved in.

“Many people who may join the YMCA would never even try tennis if it wasn’t for this free 30-minute lesson they receive,” says Habu. “I show them how fun tennis is and all the great benefits of playing the sport. It has definitely helped grow the programs offered here.”

Hamilton Family YMCA not only is the “heart of community life” in Chattanooga, but it’s also the place to learn and play the sport of a lifetime.

If you would like to be highlighted as a Tennis Welcome Center of the Month in the next newsletter please contact [Amanda@tennisindustry.org](mailto:Amanda@tennisindustry.org) and tell us how your club is leading the charge in the growth of the sport.