

# Youth Tennis Advantage



YOUTH TENNIS ADVANTAGE

## Youth Tennis Advantage Saves Time, Increases Donor Options and Keeps Programs Full with Solutions from Active Network, Sports

### Background

For more than 25 years, Youth Tennis Advantage (YTA) has inspired children and teens to reach their highest potential academically and through the sport of tennis. Located in Oakland, California, YTA is a 501(c)3 dedicated to enhancing the lives of children and teens age 18 and younger whose families are living within some of the lowest socioeconomic conditions in the San Francisco Bay area, yet who have the tenacity to work hard and achieve great results. As one of the most recognized and highly respected youth development organizations in the country, YTA programs include tennis instruction, life skills training, academic enrichment and support, and a myriad of collaborations with private and public tennis facilities and organizations, all of whom share YTA's passion for serving underprivileged youth.

Serving over 1,000 children and teens each year through various programs and events, the YTA needed the capability to not only streamline registrations and sign-ups, but also keep its Website updated with the latest event news, updates, photos and dates. Furthermore, as a non-profit organization, the YTA also needed to find ways to improve the donation process for its constituents and continue raising awareness and creating fundraising opportunities. In early 2008, the YTA turned to online technology and marketing solutions provider, Active Network, to put the solutions in place to streamline its operations and grow its visibility in the community.

### Challenge

Prior to working with Active Network, YTA registrations and donations were either mailed in or accepted over the phone. Loretta Conway, executive director for the YTA, notes, **"Following some internal changes, we just didn't have the manpower to keep up with mail registrations. We hired an event manager that works remotely, but our process for mailing in registrations and donations was extremely inefficient. The checks and forms were mailed to her, and then she would have to turn**



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[www.youthtennis.org](http://www.youthtennis.org)

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**around and mail the documents to us. We needed a way for our customers to register and pay online so that we could all log in and view reports in a timely manner.”**

The challenges with the YTA’s Website were also due to an equally inefficient, archaic process. The previous Website had been static for years. The developer who deployed the YTA’s site had left the organization and no one knew how to upload photos or new event information.

Conway began researching options. The YTA needed to offer more conveniences to its customers, organize operations on the back-end, and offer a more user-friendly Website to its constituents. After discovering the United States Tennis Association utilizes software technology from Active Network, and after speaking with several colleagues who also recommended Active, Conway was convinced.

## Solutions

The YTA selected and implemented several technology solutions from Active. To centralize and automate registrations, the YTA selected Active’s integrated, Web-based registration and data management tools. To promote the new online registration system, the YTA included information in its bi-monthly e-newsletter, on flyers, and in its annual summary report mailed out to hundreds of donors.

For online donations and giving, the non-profit selected Active’s online donation tools that enable Website visitors to make a secure online gift and receive an immediate tax-deductible receipt. “Every time a visitor lands on our Website, they see a “Donate Now” button. It’s consistent and convenient, and it enables us to continue expanding our opportunities to engage more donors. Once a visitor makes a donation, he or she receives an immediate thank you confirmation email. Because we can get bogged down with a lot of different projects, it used to take a couple of weeks for our donors to receive a thank you letter. But that immediate response is very important.”

For the Website, YTA tapped Active’s design team to create a fresh, updated site. To manage ongoing content and photo updates, YTA also implemented Active’s easy-to-use content management solution that enables staff to make immediate updates, without any knowledge of HTML or help from a Web developer.

“Starting a new Website can be very intimidating to those inexperienced in that area, but Active’s staff was very patient and helpful with the entire process. I find our new Website to be very user-friendly and I really enjoy the updated site with photos and stories.”

## Results

Conway notes that the benefits of Active’s solutions are numerous. “First, the technology solutions have increased our exposure. We’re now getting our brand and image out into the public through a fresh and continuously updated Website, and a bi-monthly newsletter that drives community members to our Website. Second, the online donation/registration option has helped us grow our support and participant base, as each of our locations are constantly filling up. Third, Active’s solutions have helped us centralize our information. Now when customers call, we can almost always direct them to our Website, as all of our information is updated and accessible on our



site. Fourth, we're saving staff time on manual, paper-based processes. We still do mailings, but we really save time on collecting information, ensuring the data is accurate, and accessing reports online."

The YTA used input data into Excel spreadsheets, and then enter the information into its software to track donor information. "It was all time-consuming, manual data entry. With Active's system, I especially like the 24/7 access to the reports that tell me exactly who has donated online, complete with all of their information."

As for the future, Conway expects the online registration system and online donation tool will continue to grow in popularity. "Right now, we're really just using the online registration system for our events and fundraisers, since our programs are site-specific. However, as we continue to expand, possibly into fee-based programs, and as we cultivate a younger donor base, which is one of our priorities, we'll undoubtedly see more activity online. In fact, we recently partnered with a private tennis club as the designated charity for an event and when the tennis club asked if we had the capability to host the online registration and collect the money, we were proud to tell them that we do with Active!"

### **YTA's Advice for Organizations Considering New Technology Solutions:**

- 1. Make Your Website a Priority.** If I meet a prospective partner, sponsor or donor, the first place he or she will inevitably go is to my Website. If it interests that person, he or she will meet and talk further. It's an absolute must to have an updated, informative Website, and Active offers an economical design and hosting solution.
- 2. Find a Solution to Grow with Your Organization.** Active has been great because I have access to a menu of options. I don't have to buy everything right away, but instead, can grow into new solutions as needed.
- 3. Go Online with Donations.** As younger generations are becoming more involved in giving, online donations are quickly becoming a must-have option.