

Fair Lawn team finds perfect match with Tennis for Life

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Fair Lawn - A team working to raise funds for breast cancer awareness and a support group where survivors play tennis served as a perfect match.

The girls tennis team at **Fair Lawn** High School recently raised \$550 for Tennis for Life, a local non-profit organization that provides tennis lessons and support for cancer survivors.

"It is such a perfect fit for us as a tennis team," said head coach Matt Markman.

The team recently presented the funds it raised to Karen Coles, a staff member at **Fair Lawn** High School and borough resident who is a Tennis for Life member and two-year breast cancer survivor.

"All the money will go to tennis, court times and instruction," said Coles.

Tennis for Life is a support group for breast cancer survivors offering free tennis lessons, organized tennis matches, peer networking groups and professionally facilitated discussion groups. All levels of players are welcome. It is offered in cooperation with the Cancer Center at **Hackensack** University Medical Center.

Tennis for Life meets at the **Ridgewood** Racquet Club in Ridgewood as well as the Rockland County at the West Rock Tennis Club.

The goal is to unite and assist breast cancer survivors in their recovery. Tennis for Life provides the resources and motivation for participants to regain upper-body mobility, develop stamina and enhance morale through tennis.

"Tennis helps us get our arms moving again," said Coles.

Participants enjoy an hour of tennis followed by a one-hour support group session. The session gives participants a chance to discuss issues while sharing feelings and asking questions.

Coles said one of the benefits of taking part in the program is getting to meet other women facing a similar situation who can understand what it is like.

"It is so nice to meet other women like me," she said. "It is really a nice therapy group."

Markman said the team began raising funds before it knew where the money would be going.

"We knew we wanted to do something for breast cancer awareness," he said.

During October in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the team played with pink tennis balls at home matches. The players then used the cans the balls came it to collect funds. They stood outside CVS and asked friends and family members for donations.

"The girls are wonderful," said Coles.

When the players learned about Tennis for Life, Markman said it was a great match for the team to support.

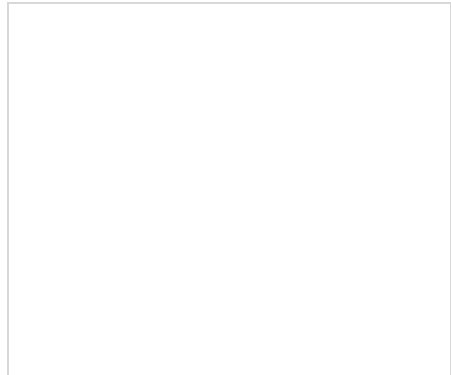
"They were thrilled," said their coach.



NICK MESSINA/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

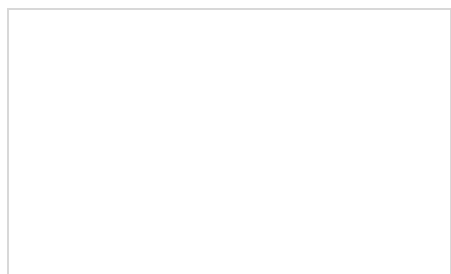
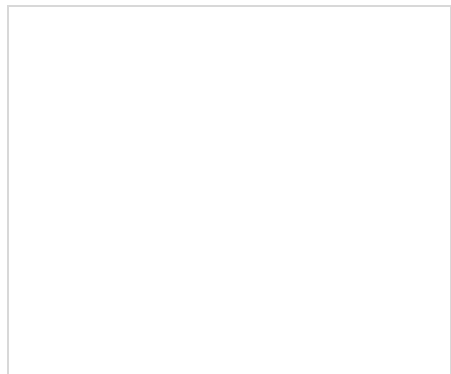
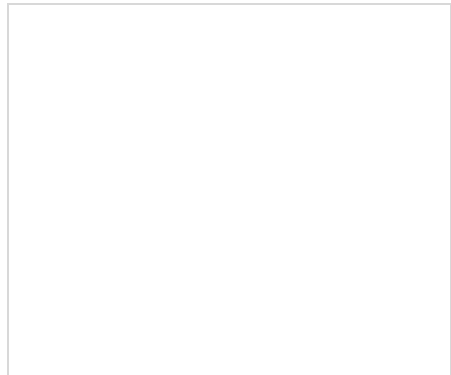
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The Fair Lawn High School tennis team presents Karen Coles (second from left), a staff member, with a check from its fund-raiser to benefit Tennis for Life. Representing the team are players Danielle Levine, Jessica Perchuk and Laura Kettell and their coach Matt Markman.



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Since many of the girls know someone impacted by cancer Markman said they feel good that they were able to something to help.

"I am just very proud of them," he said.

Markman said the team is already planning to do the fund-raiser again.

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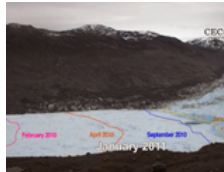
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