

## Plainfield's Cook students learning tennis in PE class



[Jay Jefferson Cooke](#), @JayJCookeCNHNT 5:37 p.m. EDT June 13, 2016

<http://www.mycentraljersey.com/story/news/education/in-our-schools/2016/06/13/plainfields-cook-students-learning-tennis-pe-class/85838720/>



Cook Elementary student Evanyeline Lema receives tennis instruction from Sandra Lindsay of the Netherwood Tennis Club as part of the physical education program at the school. (Photo: ~Courtesy of Plainfield Schools)

While tennis began as perhaps a sport mainly for the privileged and wealthy, it today is a wildly popular sport played by not only some of the world's greatest athletes but people of all ages and skill levels.

To see a perfect example of how the face of tennis has changed in the past two decades, one need look no further than current world No. 1 tennis champion Serena Williams and her older sister, former world No. 1 Venus Williams.

The Williams sisters were raised in Compton, California, where they at the ages of 3 and 5, respectively, began playing on the public courts in their working-class neighborhood under the coaching of their father, Richard Williams.

Showing great promise, the sisters moved with

their family to West Palm Beach, Florida, to attend the tennis academy of Rick Macci, who would provide additional coaching. The rest is history.

Here in Central Jersey, perhaps the next tennis legend is in the making.

### Plainfield students receive windfall

With an eye toward the goal of teaching youths good sportsmanship and developing physical fitness, the officers and the board members of the Netherwood Tennis Club Inc., in conjunction with Frederic W. Cook School Principal Caryn D. Cooper and Jennifer Sowden of the school's physical education department, on May 16 instituted tennis lessons for Cook students as an extension of the physical education program.



The program includes approximately 108 students from third through fifth grades.

There is no cost to the Plainfield Public Schools District or to Cook Elementary School. All equipment is supplied by the Netherwood Tennis Club.

The students start each lesson with brief calisthenics to warm up, then are taught the basic strokes of tennis, including forehand groundstroke, backhand groundstroke, forehand volley, backhand

volley, the overhead and the serve, according to Hollis Williams, treasurer of the Netherwood Tennis Club Board.

The Cook students are fortunate to benefit from the instruction of members of the Netherwood Tennis Club, a private club consisting of more than 100 members and a United States Tennis Association (USTA) membership organization.

“We are very happy to get this opportunity for our children,” Sowden said.

The collaboration to bring the youths to tennis can be traced to family and relationships.

“Sandra Lindsay, who is a member of Netherwood Tennis Club, has a grandchild in the third grade, Eric Lindsay,” Sowden said. “She approached Dr. Cooper and then I was consulted. I said ‘yes.’ The courts are right behind the school and very convenient. We thought it would be nice to expose the kids to a lifetime fitness activity. Tennis is considered a sport for life that improves agility, cardiovascular fitness and mental alertness.”

Janice White of the Netherwood Tennis Club gives tennis instruction to students from F.W. Cook School in Plainfield. (Photo: ~Courtesy of Plainfield Schools)

### **About the club**

The club holds the Westry G. Horne Memorial Tennis Classic every September to benefit Plainfield High School graduates in memory of former member