

Tennis has long been known as a game of finesse and endurance, but for Rally for Tennis (RFT, rallyfortennis.com), it's become something far more significant—a driver of positive impact. Founded in 2021 by Massachusetts natives and junior tennis players Alek Karagozyan, Tait Oberg and Cole Oberg, RFT quickly became a game-changer for youth in under-resourced communities. The nonprofit aims to provide kids access to tennis by raising money and providing mentorship through a partnership with various local nonprofits that serve their communities. For their New England event, RFT partnered with Advantage Kids (advantagekids.org), an initiative to help at-risk youth by offering low-cost tennis and yoga programs. “Sports teach youth many valuable lessons that serve as guiding principles for life,” shared Tanner

Oberg, the director of RFT. “[Tennis requires] pushing through failure and discovering the resilience to come back day after day.” Since its launch, RFT has raised over \$304,000, helped more than 10,000 kids and shows no signs of slowing down. This year alone, the team has raised over \$121,000 hosting events in New England, New Jersey, Utah, and Yale University. They also added Brown University to the roster in September. “The expansion has succeeded because of the passion for the RFT mission,” said Cole Oberg. This mission is shown through the mentorships that have been created through its volunteer “captains”—passionate players who not only fundraise but also coach and build connections with kids. “Captain volunteers often deepen their connection beyond RFT and serve as mentors for the local nonprofit throughout

the year,” Cole continues. “The actual event has become a highlight of the summer for these kids.” While the numbers speak for themselves, the player-coach interactions tell a richer story. “When we are working with these athletes and seeing the smiles on their faces, there is nothing better,” Cole recounts. “Their energy and enthusiasm to learn and be a part of something bigger than themselves are contagious.” As RFT expands, so does its impact. The team’s vision for the future is ambitious, with the goal of making a tangible difference in the five RFT locations they’ve founded and to continue holding events across the country. Tanner concludes: “In the future, we hope to hold RFT events nationwide each summer, creating new friendships and mentorships for all aspiring tennis players, regardless of their communities.”

On the Court

Nonprofit organization Rally for Tennis continues to build up youth in under-resourced communities in Greater Boston and beyond. *by MELODY STOUT*



This year, Rally for Tennis raised thousands of dollars for local nonprofits like Advantage Kids.



Clockwise from top left: RFT participants Gregory and Bella Camacho who won tickets to the U.S. Open; participants who are part of the Advantage Kids program; Tanner and Cole Oberg; RFT's event at Yale University; a participant who is part of the Advantage Kids program.

