



Jolie Allen has played in the West Houston Ladies Tennis Association for over four years

# Katy Loves Tennis

## Players of All Levels Take to the Court

Written by Heather Lowrie    Photos by Marisa Hugonnett

**D**Driving through neighborhoods in the Katy area, it is easy to find tennis enthusiasts swinging racquets, volleying balls, and practicing their form. An abundance of tennis groups can be found scattered between the community associations and country clubs. There are even select leagues for the more competitive spirit. Katy resident Jolie Allen gives the best advice to anyone interested in the sport. “Just try it!” She has been playing in the West Houston Ladies Tennis Association (WHLTA) for over four years and has enjoyed every minute. Even if you’ve never touched a racquet, there are programs throughout Katy to help take you from novice to pro.

### Finding the Right Set

Select leagues in the Katy area are made up of individuals who range in age and ability. One of the more popular leagues is the WHLTA, which often attracts long-term members like April Dishaw, who has played with the group for more than three years. “There are five different divisions of play and several levels within each division – from very beginner to very advanced,” she says. Along with improving your skill set, building life-long friendships is another benefit of league play. “I am blessed to be on a team of amazing women,” says Dishaw. “We have formed great friendships on our team, as well as made many other friends from different teams that we probably never would have had the chance to meet.”

Leagues usually correspond with the school calendar. They are off in December and during the summer, but there are countless opportunities to play the rest of the year. There are also leagues that meet in the evenings in addition to the usual daytime schedule. If a league seems too intimidating, then private lessons may be more your style. With lessons, players get individualized, one-on-one attention and a chance to perfect their swing before competing on court.

### Matching Fitness with Fun

Anderson Kelly is a local tennis pro who moved to Katy seven years ago and currently teaches lessons at the Mason Creek Community Center. As both a player and teacher, Kelly knows how tennis can change your life - he met both his wife and best man on the tennis court. “The value of tennis goes way beyond the racquet, ball, and court,” he says. “The ripple effect is great for family and friends. It’s a fun, physically engaging way to get involved with others.”

To get started, talk to a neighbor, mom, friend, or teacher, and chances are, someone plays tennis. If they don’t, they’re bound to know someone who does play in Katy’s exceptional tennis community. If a neighborhood has a tennis court, it is likely that a pro will practice on it. In Grand Lakes, David Imonitie is that pro and if you are a resident, he offers an open drill at 10 a.m. every Friday for a nominal fee.

### Serving up Success

Practice makes perfect, but having a love for the game is key. “Have the passion for it and make sure no matter how hard you work, that

Linda Cheta enjoys playing tennis for fitness and fun



you have fun,” says Andy Brunner, Falcon Point’s tennis pro. “You have to have fun to improve.” From once a week to four or more times a week, the amount of time you spend practicing on the court is up to you. The more time you put into it, though, the more you will get out of it. “Find a pro you really like and take some lessons,” says Allen. “If you’ve never played, it will help you know if this is for you. If you haven’t played in a while, it will help you get back into the groove, both mentally and physically.”

### An Ace for All Ages

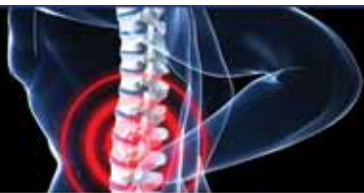
Tennis isn’t just for adults, either. The local YMCA also offers a tennis program for kids age 6-12. They practice once a week and have matches on Sunday afternoons between 1-3 and 4-6. The season is from April 25 to May 23 and is \$75 for members and \$150 for non-members. The fee includes a tennis racquet, shirt, and trophy at the end of the season.

There is no age limit when it comes to the game of tennis. A willing heart, competitive spirit, and love for the game are valuable characteristics that will create life-long players. If you want to play tennis in Katy, the opportunities are limitless. From local country clubs to neighborhood teams and leagues, the tennis community in Katy is solid and wants you to be a part of it. **KM**

*HEATHER LOWRIE is a kindergarten teacher and mother of two. She is married to her high school sweetheart, James. She is a freelance writer and author of The Inspired Wife, who enjoys the opportunity to encourage people through her writing.*



Amy Keal practices tennis regularly to improve on the court

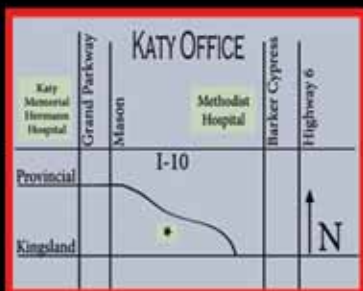


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April Dishaw has formed life-long friendships through her tennis league



To be a good tennis player, it's important to have fun



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players of all levels



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281-392-7888

**Grand Lakes  
Tennis Courts**  
Grand Vista Lane and N.  
Pavilion Park Cir.  
832-646-2079

**Katy Family YMCA**  
22807 Westheimer Pkwy.  
281-392-5055

**Pine Forest  
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281-463-0900

**Weston Lakes  
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**U.S. Tennis Association**  
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