

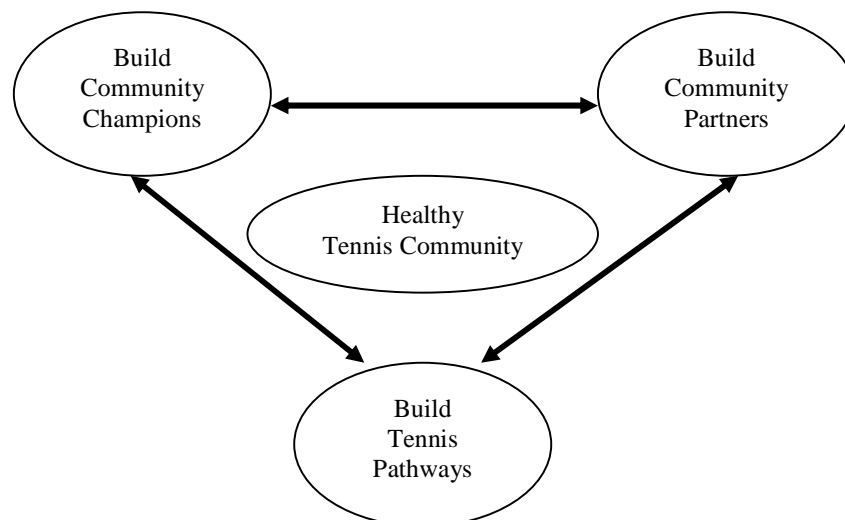
## Background

Tennis Canada first implemented its Building Tennis Communities (BTC) Strategy in 2001-2 in response to the decreasing participation in the sport over the preceding decade. The Strategy is now entering its eighth year, and has seen a total of 32 communities complete their 3 years of funding with Tennis Canada, with an additional 50 communities being funded in the 2008-2009 funding period. To date, over 255,000 people across the country have been introduced to tennis through the great work of our Community Champions and their Partners in the BTC strategy.

The purpose of the BTC Strategy is to bring more people into the game of tennis and to keep them playing the game for life....facilitating growth and sustainability. The approach is based on the philosophy that tennis has a role to play in community development and, if seen by community leaders (e.g. local business owners, doctors, school board members, service club reps, etc.) as making a valuable contribution to the health of the community, tennis activities will be supported over the long term.

The model being used to guide the implementation of this Strategy is grounded in three key components: **Community Champions, Community Partners and the Tennis Pathway.**

## Building Tennis Communities Model





A **'Community Champion'** is a person who is passionate about tennis and well connected to other community leaders in his/her city or town. Champions might be retired teachers, entrepreneurs or tennis club coaches or volunteers. The role of this pivotal individual is to ensure that strong partnerships with community leaders are established and to facilitate the offering of quality tennis pathway programming to meet the needs of the community. Tracking the actual growth of tennis in the community is a very important responsibility. Champions are supported in their efforts by the respective Provincial Tennis Association and by Tennis Canada.

**'Community Partners'** are community leaders that have been identified by the Community Champion as people who are important to maintaining the health of tennis in the community. Core partners are leaders in schools, parks and recreation, municipalities, and local tennis club(s). Other partners could be health professionals, policy, local business people, etc. The Community Champion, with the assistance of his/her Provincial Association contact, is expected to host "community tennis rallies" in the spring where community leaders are brought together to discuss how tennis might help address community needs (e.g. more activities for kids and/or seniors, bolstering of community spirit, obesity issues, etc.) and agree on an action plan that both meets the needs of the community and grows the game. Community Tennis Rallies are also held at the end of the summer to evaluate program activities and discuss next steps.

The **'Tennis Pathway'** consists of three components on a continuum: TRY, LEARN/PLAY and PLAY/COMPETE. Each of these components can be put into action through various programs and activities depending upon community needs. Moving participants from one level of programming to the next along the continuum is important to ensuring that participants stay involved.

Finally, a 'healthy tennis community' has been operationally defined as having the following elements:

- ◆ More people playing tennis
- ◆ More people moving through the Tennis Pathway
- ◆ A range of 'linked' Pathway programs
- ◆ Sufficient Certified instructors
- ◆ Passionate Community Champions
- ◆ Committed Community Partners
- ◆ Sufficient, accessible and well-maintained facilities

Tennis Canada provides grants to its Provincial Tennis Associations, which in turn select communities from within their provinces where they feel they have a strong Community Champion(s) and where there is potential to increase tennis participation. Grant monies are used to provide tennis pathway programming in the community, to support the Community Champion(s) and to build partnerships with community leaders.