

Supporting *the* Love *for* Tennis

Since 2003, our community has been fortunate to experience the Pro-Circuit Men's Futures Tennis tournament hosted by the McAllen Country Club, (MCC). Many of the MCC members have taken great interest in promoting the growth of the sport.

For the past six years, one particular member, Dr. Rosario Parra, has been responsible for the title sponsorships of our local pro-circuit tournaments. In 2008 and again this year, Dr. Parra and her husband, Dr. Raul Marquez, have been the proud Title Sponsors. Rio Grande Regional Hospital held the Title Sponsorship from 2004 to 2007, with Dr. Parra's influence. "Six years ago, the MCC tennis coordinator at that time, submitted a request to host the USTA Pro Circuit Men's Futures Tennis Tournament, and it was granted," commented Dr. Parra. "I was so excited when I heard the news. I immediately went out in search for sponsorship and convinced Rio Grande Regional Hospital to support the tournament. Gratefully they agreed and confirmed to be the Title Sponsors through 2007."

Dr. Parra has been instrumental in the growth of the professional circuit in our community. "I believed then as I do now," says Dr. Parra, "that bringing professional tennis players to our city has a positive influence on our community and more so, on our children. For a week our community enjoys a professional tennis tournament. It's a privilege to have the opportunity to interact with some of the best tennis players in the world."

Dr. Parra's love for tennis began as an adult. She received a tennis racquet as a present on her fortieth birthday, "I didn't have much interest for tennis," says Dr. Parra. "I was skeptical to try the sport, but I took a class and from the moment my racquet hit the ball, I fell in love with it. That was 7 years ago. Soon after that, I got involved with the USTA ladies team at the McAllen Country Club.

I realize that tennis is a great sport. It keeps me young and healthy and not to mention I have a lot fun in the process," she says joyfully. "Through the sport I have been able to meet wonderful people and have made great friends."

Dr. Parra's love for tennis has great influence on

her family and the people that surround her. She introduced the sport to Dr. Marquez when they first started dating. "At first, Dr. Marquez was hesitant to play, like I was; he thought it was a boring sport," she says laughing. "Eventually I challenged him to give it a try. He did, and like me, he fell in love with it the moment his racquet hit the ball. And now the whole family plays tennis. His daughter, Jessica, who had never partaken in any sport has been taking lessons for about a year now."

As his love for tennis grew, Dr. Raul Marquez, an Orthopedic Surgeon, felt the need to be more involved. He believes in supporting and encouraging the growth of tennis. "You never know, one of these tennis players walking on our courts may soon be walking into the U.S. Open courts," says Dr. Marquez. "We need to educate and encourage our local talents to dream big; all is possible."

Dr. Parra and Dr. Marquez continue to enjoy the sport, at times playing mixed doubles, but mostly playing singles against each other.

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