

Tennis enriches lives of children with autism

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Morgan Brady leads the Tulane University Aceing Autism program of tennis for children with autism. (Photo by Alex Huggan)

Tulane University student Morgan Brady, a sophomore majoring in neuroscience and psychology, is leading a team of 18 volunteers who are helping to enrich the lives of New Orleans children with autism through a tennis program for children on the autism spectrum.

Using a dedicated nationwide volunteer force, the nonprofit [Aceing Autism](#) reaches more than 500 children every week with 30 programs in 10 states.

The new program in New Orleans is held each Sunday at the Reily Student Recreational Center on the Tulane uptown campus with two sessions ? one for 4- to 10-year-olds, and the second for youth up to 20. The children don't need any tennis experience or equipment. The first sessions were on March 23.

“We are really encouraged by Morgan, our new program director in New Orleans,” says Richard Spurling, founder of Aceing Autism. “There is a desperate need for recreational opportunities for children with autism, and our organization provides a recreational tennis program for this population.”

The tennis program was created to meet the needs of children with autism with a variety of cognitive, social and physical abilities. Based on individual needs, each child is paired with one or two volunteers.

The program provides a place where families and children with autism can be together to socialize, exchange stories and support, and have fun. Aceing Autism also encourages children of a similar age to be peer role models.

“It was heartwarming to see these kids on the autism spectrum outside, running around, interacting so enthusiastically,” Brady says. “One child happily shouted to his mother, 'Look mom! I did it!'”

[Registration](#) is required for the program. The cost for five weeks is \$75, however special arrangements for low-income families may be made through Aceing Autism's head office by calling 617-901-7153.