

## Hispanic Heritage Month and San Antonio Tennis



We find ourselves virtually smack dab in the middle of Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15<sup>th</sup>-October 15<sup>th</sup>). This year's theme for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is "Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation". This theme should not only represent the U.S. but delve deeper to the city level. Over 64% of San Antonio is Hispanic and/or Latino, and as this month is to recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions of others, we should also appreciate how local groups are inspiring and including their communities.

This month's focus is on Chris Alvarez, who is president of the Tennis Club of San Antonio (TCSA). TCSA is a non-profit organization that through tennis (and other social activities), promotes diversity and inclusion throughout San Antonio communities. Chris' father was a tennis star in Mexico and inspired, Chris followed in his footsteps. At the age of 16, however, Chris began losing and quit the game. At the age of 25, he picked is racquet up for the second time and has never put it back down. He states, "My favorite thing about tennis is the interaction, the socialization. I also appreciate the workout and sweating." Chris is excited about the fact that the Club encourages socialization and interaction. He says people don't just play and leave—they stay for the interaction and camaraderie. With approximately 180 members and 167 entrants at this year's Alamo City Classic, it appears he's onto something.

TCSA prides itself on its 'Social Club' atmosphere. Players can join for only \$100 a year (or \$40 quarterly) and attend weekly tennis socials. Socials are three days a week (Monday/Wednesday/Sunday) and consist of four rounds of competitive tennis. In addition to a player's membership is entry into the TCSA Club Championships. Events include singles, doubles, and team competitions. TCSA membership also includes non-tennis events such as pickleball, bowling, river tubing, and movie nights. Check out the TCSA site for more information on how to join and/or volunteer at <https://tennisclubsa.com>.

Earlier this month at the U.S. Open we celebrated history being made by Carlos Alcaraz, the 19-year-old Spaniard who was the youngest male to win at Flushing Meadows. By winning this year's last major, Alcaraz earned the #1 ranking in men's tennis, knocking fellow countryman Rafael Nadal from the number one spot to third. Nadal, arguably one of the greatest to play the game, is the All-Time major winner in the sport. Carlos Alcaraz's accomplishments,

celebrated widely in Spain, are also celebrated here in the U.S., and unequivocally in San Antonio. Hispanic Heritage month doesn't just focus on the champions, but on the up-and-comers, beginners, veterans, etc. Hispanic Heritage month celebrates those who have made (and are making) a difference, those who inspire, and who create and represent inclusivity in their communities.

As the chair for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion for San Antonio Tennis Association (SATA), I am proud to be associated with and a supporter of TCSA and its initiatives. Working together and collaborating to spread the word of tennis affords San Antonio (and surrounding communities) the ability to increase participation, fun, and exercise. The contributions by the Hispanic community are deeply rooted in the annals of our sport and deserve to be celebrated everywhere.

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