



Michael Murphy, president of the Set Point Tennis Organization in Reading, instructs a group of 9- to 12-year-olds through warm-up drills and stretches at the Amity Township courts off Weavertown Road. The first session of the Amity Quick Start program attracted 79 participants.

## Amity tennis program may bear fruit

Instructor aims to get kids ready to play at high school level

BY KEVIN DUFFY  
READING EAGLE

Michael Murphy hopes a youth tennis program he's conducting in Amity Township will be a springboard to establish tennis as a team sport at Daniel Boone High School.

Murphy, a tennis instructor and president of the Set Point Tennis Organization, Reading, began the Amity Quick Start program in June.

For a fee, kids ages 5 to 12 can participate in the eight-week program at the township courts near Daniel Boone Middle School. The first session, which attracted 79 participants, ends Monday, but a second one begins Aug. 30.

One goal, Murphy said, is to get the kids ready to participate in the Junior Team Tennis Program, made up of four statewide divisions. From there, Murphy hopes to assemble a boys team from Daniel Boone to join the Berks County Tennis League, which includes most high schools in the county.

Murphy plans to focus on a girls team at Boone once the boys program is established. He hopes that by providing instruction to youngsters, they will be ready to compete by high school.

"I told him it sounded like a good idea," said Michelle Goss,



Michael Murphy explains footwork drills to some of the participants in the Amity Quick Start program.

athletic facilitator at Daniel Boone.

Goss offered Murphy no guarantees, however, and said approval to add tennis at Boone would have to come from the administration and school board.

Daniel Boone had difficulty balancing its budget for the 2011-12 school year, which might make adding a tennis program a hard sell.

Tennis is not offered as a competitive sport at the high school, but was previously offered as a club at the middle school, Goss said.

For his program, Murphy went to several Amity Township meetings to ask supervisors for use of the township courts, located next to the

middle school off Weavertown Road.

"Amity does not have a tennis program," said Charles E. Lyon, township manager. "This program came along and didn't cost us anything. It's brought something new to the township."

The Daniel Boone Optimist Club helped Murphy obtain township approval and get kids signed up for the program.

"Mike approached me about his idea, and it just kind of fit right in," said Curtis Clifford, past president of the Daniel Boone Optimist Club. "We have the courts. All it takes is something to get it moving."

Contact Kevin Duffy: 610-371-5016 or kduffy@readingeagle.com.

## Wilson plans for schools meeting topic

Most residents at session oppose closing their neighborhood elementary buildings

BY ERIN NEGLEY  
READING EAGLE

Three weeks ago, the Wilson School District shared four options for its elementary program, including three that would close the district's oldest elementary schools: Lincoln Park and West Wyomissing.

On Tuesday, parents and residents got to ask questions about the proposals for the first time. About 100 people filled Lincoln Park's multipurpose room, which is not air conditioned, and spent two hours sharing their concerns.

The majority supported their neighborhood school and worried about where the students would go if the

school were closed.

The school board recently asked EI Associates, Harrisburg, to study its elementary facilities.

The options and costs are:  
■ Make no major changes to most of the schools, but completely renovate Lincoln Park and West Wyomissing. \$9.4 million.

■ Close the two small schools and add a total of six classrooms at three other elementary schools, one on each floor at Green Valley, Shiloh Hills and Spring Ridge. \$4 million.

■ Close the two schools and build a new elementary school at the Lincoln Park site. \$13 million.

[ See *Elementary* >>> B3 ]

## Ex-Shillington officer sentenced in plea deal

Guilty of invasion of privacy, harassment

BY JASON A. KAHL  
READING EAGLE

A former Shillington police officer charged with stalking a woman pleaded guilty Tuesday to harassment, invasion of privacy, unlawful use of a computer and related offenses.

Michael J. Leach, 53, was sentenced by Berks Judge Scott D. Keller to six to 23 months in prison followed by three years of probation.

According to his attorney, Jay Kurtz, the plea was the result of an agreement with the state attorney general's office, that leaves Leach eligible for release almost immediately. Leach could have faced 39 years in prison, Kurtz said.

Leach remains in Berks County Prison, where he has been held since February when he was picked up in Georgia on a fugitive warrant.

The Shillington resident was fired by the borough over the stalking accusations, which stemmed from a six-month string of incidents that began March 16, 2009.

State police declined to release the victim's name, but the criminal charges are echoed in a federal lawsuit filed in May on behalf of Alyssa Merkey, 34, of West

Reading. It is unclear if the criminal charges are related to that action.

According to state police: Leach entered the victim's home and, without her permission, used her computer and later accessed her email account. He also followed her more than once, placed a GPS tracking unit on her vehicle and gave her information he got from police computers.

Merkey's suit alleges that Leach invaded her privacy and stalked and harassed her and that borough officials knew about it and did nothing.

According to the suit: Merkey was involved in a traffic accident in February 2009. Leach investigated and asked Merkey to call him so he could finish the accident report.

When she called, Leach asked her to lunch. Merkey agreed, but Leach subsequently used police computers to gather information about Merkey, her co-workers, friends and family.

He also began sending flowers to Merkey's workplace one to three times a week and continued to do so after she asked him to stop.

Contact Jason A. Kahl: 610-371-5024 or jkahl@readingeagle.com.



Michael J. Leach

### About the program

**What:** Amity Quick Start tennis program.

**Where:** Amity Township tennis courts beside Daniel Boone Middle School on Weavertown Road.

**When:** Second session, held after school hours, begins Aug. 30 and runs to Oct. 18.

**Who:** Children ages 5 to 8 and 9 to 12.

**Cost:** \$75, which includes enrollment in the United States Tennis Association.

**Information:** Contact Michael Murphy at 610-621-9067, or visit [www.supremecourt-tennis.com](http://www.supremecourt-tennis.com).