

Reading Eagle

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- High school tennis players in Reading's recreation program took on the Alvernia University women's basketball team Wednesday night for a series of Quickstart Tennis matches.

The event kicked off a new partnership between the city's Recreation Department and Alvernia's athletic department, in which college athletes volunteer in city programs and serve as mentors to the high-schoolers, said Matt A. Lubas, the city's athletic director.

"The (city's) tennis program mission is to increase wellness and teach life skills that participants can carry over to their everyday lives," he said.

In more than a dozen matches, 15 to 20 recreation program kids played against the Alvernia students in singles matches, then joined them in a series of pairs matches in Alvernia's gymnasium.

For many, it likely was their first time on a college campus, Lubas said.

He said women's basketball coach Kevin Calabria had brought the team to a rec department program at the Thomas Ford Elementary School last year, and that Penn State Berks and Albright College also help with the mentoring programs.

The program provides camps/clinics, team tennis and leagues, family programming, community outreach and academic assistance in addition to exposing kids to positive role models.

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