

# Save Green Lake Community Center Weekend Table Tennis

April 23, 2023

The Green Lake Community Center (GLCC) table tennis program has been a treasure in Seattle for 28 years. The program began when a group of players donated money to buy tables. The Green Lake Advisory Council (GLAC) also contributed and supported the program for years. Table tennis was originally offered only on Saturday and Sunday evenings with player volunteers collecting daily fees and paying monthly rent. The rent covered a single recreation attendant, who was required because the weekend times were outside regular operating hours. The GLCC ended the Saturday/Sunday rental arrangement 14 years ago and replaced it with a punch card system with card sales/admission fees going directly to the GLCC. Tuesday and Friday regular-hour drop-in playtimes were later added, and then made to be free due to City equity goals. These two remaining evening time slots are now drawing 40 to 65 players each. Table tennis is also offered one morning per week.

The north-end regional supervisor, Barb Wade, announced in September of 2021 during the COVID-19 shutdown that the GLCC could no longer provide weekend, off-hours table tennis because it violated City cash handling regulations. This cut has reduced our average evening hours from about 13.5 to slightly under 5 hours. Discussions and meetings have taken place since then. SPR suggested we create a Community Partnership. The players group, the GLTTC, aligned with the Seattle Parks Foundation (SPF) for fiscal sponsorship and presented a proposal in which SPF would pay the cost of the recreation attendant with funds coming from player donations. This would effectively extend SPR's free weekday drop-in table tennis to weekends. SPR has not yet responded to this proposal. *We are now asking that Parks management and our elected officials step in to help restore our weekend hours.*

We see several ways to move forward...

- SPR could fund more hours/week at GLCC. The advantage to this approach is that other activities could be held at the center and pool.
- SPR could accept our proposal with SPF to pay for the recreation attendant through donations. The advantage to this approach is there would be no incremental cost to the City.
- There may be other ideas, such as a combination of the above and solicitation of funding sources.

Table tennis is a world-wide sport. This diversity is strongly represented at the GLCC. Our players are 70% - 80% people of color or immigrants. They come from all over the greater Seattle region. We are all ages and genders, able bodied and persons with disabilities.

Below is a list of some of the table tennis program's highlights and accomplishments. All of these things have been done by player/volunteers.

- The GLTTC maintains a website, [glttc.org](http://glttc.org), and a 400 person email list to help promote the GLCC table tennis program.

- Players set up, and put away the tables and ball barriers, unlike other community centers. This has been the case for all 28 years.
- Players have repaired nets, tables, and barriers when needed.
- The GLAC purchased netting that players used to create a full gym divider system.
- Five major all-day Saturday/Sunday tournaments were held between 2008 and 2012. The 2011 tournament featured an exhibition match with Mayor McGinn, and a wheelchair event won by high school student, Eric Pattison. Eric continued to train at the GLCC, and in 2014 won the US Open wheelchair event and joined the US Paralympic Team.
- In 2010, Tom Veatch started offering his free Kids-Pong coaching class on Saturday afternoons.
- In 2016, the GLTTC collaborated with Seattle Adaptive Sports to create one of six para table tennis programs in the nation.
- We created our unique match scheduling in 2018. The system uses an app that was written specifically for the GLCC's open drop-in model. Players can come late or leave early as they choose. Everyone gets equal time to play, and the system matches players with partners at their level. Roughly 1000 hours of development time since 2018 have gone into creating and enhancing the app.
- We held a fundraiser in late 2019 to purchase new ADA tables and barriers. The \$6,876.85 raised was spent last December.