



Pickleball With a Purpose – Making Connections on and off the Court

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Project Overview

- ❖ After-school programs can provide a variety of opportunities for elementary school students. With support from the Experiential Projects to Impact the Community (EPIC) committee, we partnered with a local elementary school in the Crowley Independent School District (CISD) to start a pickleball program.
- ❖ The Meadowcreek Pickleball Club launched in January of 2022. Students meet weekly on Mondays from 4:00 – 5:15 to participate in drills, games, and clinics. Funding from the EPIC grant and a partnership with the Selkirk Growth Program allowed us to supply the school with nets, balls, and paddles.
- ❖ The purpose of the Meadowcreek Elementary Pickleball Club is to provide a safe environment where fourth and fifth graders can build relationships, gain confidence, and learn new skills.

Background

Program Start: January 2022

Location: Meadowcreek Elementary is in South Fort Worth. It serves around 560 students from Pre-K to 5th grade in CISD. Many students come from an economically disadvantaged background and are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Our primary contacts at the school were Principal Tonya Coleman, Coach Chris Jackson, and Ms. Reta Price.

Demographics

Race and ethnicity

Total students

560

African American
269 (48%)
Crowley ISD: 46.5%
Statewide: 12.7%

American Indian
0 (0%)
Crowley ISD: 0.3%
Statewide: 0.3%

Asian
9 (1.6%)
Crowley ISD: 4.1%
Statewide: 4.7%

Hispanic
234 (41.8%)
Crowley ISD: 33.1%
Statewide: 52.9%

Pacific Islander
0 (0%)
Crowley ISD: 0.2%
Statewide: 0.2%

White
22 (3.9%)
Crowley ISD: 11.8%
Statewide: 26.5%

Two or more races
26 (4.6%)
Crowley ISD: 4%
Statewide: 2.7%

Economically disadvantaged
92%
Crowley ISD: 75.2%
Statewide: 60.3%

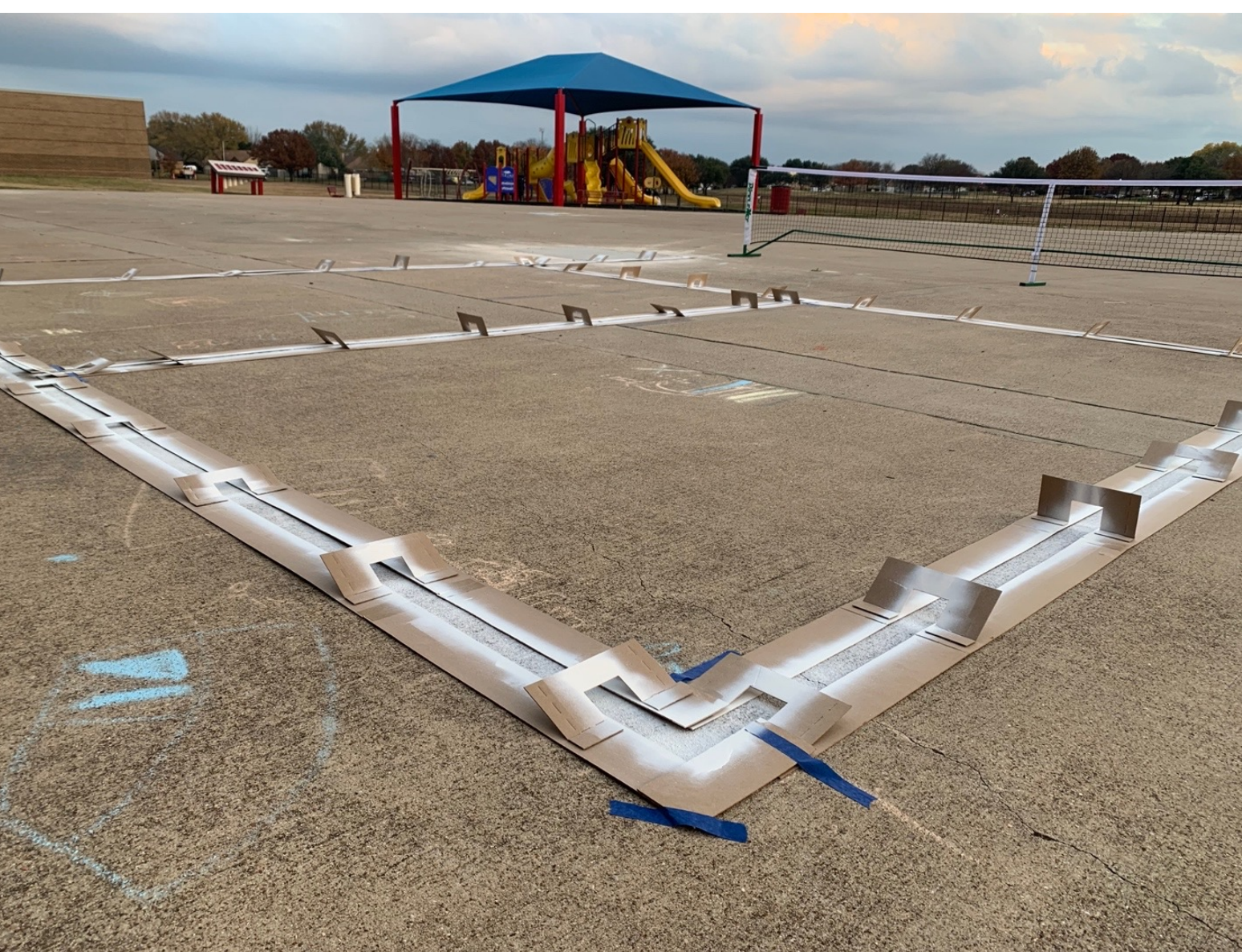
Limited English proficiency
27.7%
Crowley ISD: 17%
Statewide: 20.7%

Original Layout:

- ❖ A single court was taped inside of the gym.



- ❖ As the program expanded, we increased the number of courts inside the gym to three.



Project Description and Accomplishments

- ❖ 135 students were introduced to pickleball during P.E. classes. I meet with each 4th and 5th grade class to teach them how to play and advertise the after-school pickleball club.
- ❖ The weekly pickleball club met for the first time on January 10th, 2022. For the first week there were fourteen 4th and 5th graders that stayed after-school on Monday. There have been 10 after-school meetings with group sizes ranging from 12 – 25 students.



- ❖ We purchased paddles, nets, and balls using the EPIC grant after applying for the Selkirk Growth Program. The Selkirk growth Program donated paddles and reduced the cost of purchasing additional equipment.



- ❖ When the weather is cooperative (sunny and calm winds) students have a blast playing outside.

- ❖ The image below shows a recent club meeting with all three indoor courts being used by students during the after-school program



- ❖ The TCU Pickleball Club is one of the fastest growing organizations on campus. Members have come out to Meadowcreek Elementary to spend time with 4th and 5th graders. Image courtesy of Frog.Pickle Instagram

Looking for a Permanent Solution:

- ❖ Originally, we made the lines for the pickleball court using special outdoor tape. Eventually, we used a stencil to paint permanent lines for two pickleball courts behind the school (December 4th, 2021)

Conclusion and Sustainability Plan

- ❖ An after-school program with college students exposes them to higher education at an early age. Students would ask about TCU and other colleges/universities.
- ❖ Students are excited for the after-school enrichment program. Students are starting to play pickleball with their families outside of school.
- ❖ An important partner for the Meadowcreek Pickleball Club is the TCU Pickleball Club on campus. Future endeavors include inviting elementary students to the TCU Tennis Center to meet college students and play pickleball.
- ❖ Some students have expressed interest in playing in tournaments, this can be done through AAU tournaments over the summer.
- ❖ The goal for next semester is to increase the number of TCU students that can come out to volunteer at Meadowcreek.

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