



# Pickleball With a Purpose – A Game for Everyone

Michael Delgado (m.j.delgado4@tcu.edu) and Philip Dodd (philip.dodd@tcu.edu)

School of Interdisciplinary Studies, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, TX, USA



## 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 met weekly on Mondays from 4:00 – 5:45 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

**Location:** Meadowcreek Elementary is in South Fort Worth. It serves around 560 students from Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade in CISD. Many students come from economically disadvantaged background and are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Our primary contacts at the school were Principal Joseph Cato, Coach Chris Jackson, Ms. Sharon Simpson, Mrs. Kayla Tymony, and Ms. Felicia Moran.

## 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%



### Program Start: January 2022

- ❖ For the 2021 – 22 school year, 135 students were introduced to pickleball during P.E. classes. We met with each 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022. For the first week there were fourteen 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders that stayed after-school on Monday. There were 10 after-school meetings with group sizes ranging from 12 – 25 students.

## Project Description and Accomplishments

- ❖ For the 2022 – 2023 school year, 154 students were introduced to pickleball (88 4<sup>th</sup> graders and 66 5<sup>th</sup> graders).
- ❖ There were 17 club meetings after-school this year with group sizes ranging from 10 – 25 students. Students in the after-school program were from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- ❖ 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.



❖ Pictured above are TCU students leading a pickleball game with groups of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students during the after-school program.

❖ TCU students had an end of the year party at the elementary school during the last club meeting. 5<sup>th</sup> graders graduating were given going away gifts to celebrate their accomplishments for a successful school year.

❖ This program would not have been possible without the TCU students that volunteer each Monday to make this program possible. Thank you to Philip Dennis, Caitlyn Caputo, AJ Khawaja, Rhys Hershberger, Jack VanDixhorn, Caroline Durham, and Josh Caldwell.



❖ Pictured left: 200 indoor balls were purchased this year.



❖ Pictured right: 24 paddles were purchased through the Selkirk Growth Program. Selkirk is one of the leading pickleball companies that is dedicated to growing the sport in schools.

## Conclusion and Sustainability Plan

- ❖ An after-school program with college students introduces 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grade students 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.

## Acknowledgements

Funding provided by the TCU Pre-Health Professions Institute, Experiential Projects that Impact the Community (EPIC) Grant. The authors also thank the following campus and community partners for additional funding and support:

