

July 25, 2009

Photo: Governor Alistair Harrison with local and international coaches

Governor hosts Tennis Academy coaches and visiting coaches

ANGUILLA—Governor Alistair Harrison and Mrs Harrison on Friday evening entertained some of the visiting coaches who are on island for the Anguilla Tennis Academy Summer Camp. This is the 14th year of the camp that has successfully introduced many hundreds of children to the game. The Academy was founded by Mitchelle Lake in 1996 and the opening of the tennis facility at the end of 2007 was a milestone in achievement for the Academy.

Governor Harrison welcomed the visitors saying that it was a great pleasure to host the event at Government House. He spoke of the 2500 children who have benefitted from the Academy over the years and how he has enjoyed watching the children at the camp.

Marvin Hazell, the current Director of the Academy, introduced some of the visiting coaches. The first to speak was Bill Riddle who has supported the Tennis Camp for the past eleven years. He noted that he is pleased this year to see more involvement by the parents and that the community is growing. He said that the Academy is going from strength to strength and he can only see positive and great things happening here.

Coach B, who travels around the different islands to various camps, said that she has a sense of community developing in Anguilla. She said that she is pleased to see everyone standing behind Mitch and is proud to be a part of the Academy's development. She introduced cardio tennis to some of the players and the Academy is hoping to run these programmes.

Aaron, spoke of a new programme "Grips" that he has introduced to the island and will assist coaches in structuring the programme for the children. He said that it is educational and he hopes it will make Anguilla a leader in the Caribbean for tennis. He commented that this is his first year at the camp and it has been an unbelievable experience and he hopes to come again.

Keesha Fleming-Lake spoke about the new Parents Association of the Academy that started six months ago. She reported that the group has spearheaded activities for the parents and children and is convincing the parents that they need to be a part of the Academy.

Mitch Lake expressed pleasure in the fact that this year he had no part in organizing the Camp but was able to take a back seat and leave it in the capable hands of Marvin and Shauna. He praised Marvin for managing the Academy remarking that Marvin and several of the local coaches have "come through the ranks" as they were once members of the Camp.

Lake commented that it is important to complete the stadium court that will accommodate 2000 persons as it will showcase the talent of the players, enable the Academy to host international tennis, and encourage sports tourism to the island. He thanked all the international coaches for taking part and bringing their new ideas and techniques to help the children improve their game. He also thanked the sponsors for their continued help and urged everyone to continue to support the Academy, adding that he is very proud of everyone connected with the Academy.

The Tennis Camp continues for one more week for the 100 children taking part.