

Family's Love of Tennis Leads to New Business

Hillsborough Tennis Plus will offer more than tennis lessons when it opens this month.

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Hillsborough Tennis Plus will offer room for fitness workouts, yoga and pilates classes—and tennis lessons with Gina, Jim and Derek Li and Meng Zhang.
Credit: John Patten

Jim Li was a lifelong soccer player, but when his daughter Gina took up tennis about 12 years ago, he found a new passion.

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Soon, he was coaching not only his Rutgers-bound All American daughter, but hundreds of other players as well.

"A lot of kids want to play at a very high level of competition," Li said. "Everybody is at a very serious playing level."

But it can be challenging to find courts to use for lessons in the area, especially in the winter months, so Li and his wife, Meng Zhang, a research physician at Sanofi, are preparing to open Hillsborough Tennis Plus, at 6 Dickerson Road.

The "Plus" indicates the added services patrons will find at the more-than-22,000 square foot center: three indoor, state-of-the-art tennis courts occupy most of the space but Hillsborough Tennis Plus also has two 1,000-square foot studios—one to serve as a fitness/workout center and the second as space for yoga, pilates or other classes.

A private party room and comfortable lounge overlooking the courts will also serve as space for young kids.

"We're working parents, so we understand what parents need," Meng said.

The Dickerson Road location, off Dukes Parkway East, gives Li's students from Hillsborough and Bridgewater easy access, but Meng also notes the location fills a void of fitness centers in its vicinity.

"We feel our location is ideal for many people in this area," she said.

The center aims to focus on tennis, however, with Li coaching —along with Gina and the couple's son Derek—and Meng leading

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the new US Tennis Association Quick Start tennis program for kids as young as three years of age.

"Tennis was losing out to other sports, so USTA started the Quick Start program to get younger children playing," she said.

The facility is in the final stages of construction, with a grand opening expected within a week or two.