



# **Host Family Says USTA Brings the World into Their Home**

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**GODFREY** – Every year, Lewis and Clark welcomes tennis players from across the globe to campus for the Lewis and Clark Community College Men’s Pro Tennis Classic – and every year, those players need a place to stay for the week.

Host families like Byron and Linda Sutton, of Godfrey, are happy to fill that role.

The Suttons have been hosting international and American players alike for more than a decade, and don't plan on stopping anytime soon.

Linda Sutton said she wouldn't describe her family as a big tennis family, although her children played a little and they do enjoy watching.

"We're just into hosting," she said. "It's like having the world come to you. We think it's fun."

Linda said she and her husband's first experience with hosting was with Mexican exchange students from Webster University's International Business Exchange program. They participated as hosts with the program for about 10 years, and only recently stopped. USTA's program gives families like the Suttons a chance to not only meet these world-class athletes, but to welcome them into their family for a week.

Many of these players travel the circuit, where money can become tight – so players are really appreciative of their hosts, said Nancy Simpson, who coordinates the host families every year for Lewis and Clark's tournament.

"The minimum qualification for hosts is a place for players to sleep and shower," Simpson said. "Some people go all out; some are minimally involved, but I've never heard a complaint."

The first USTA player the Suttons hosted was an Australian back in 2002.

"He liked to go down to the boat and play roulette, and he was very lucky," Linda remembered.

They have hosted anywhere from one to four players a year since. Most speak English, but a few haven't. The ones who don't tend to communicate through body language and gestures, she said.

"We never know who we're getting until the day before the tournament. We have no idea where they're from," Linda said. "We're empty nesters with three empty bedrooms, so we can host up to four players at a time."