

RAFAEL NADAL SCORES OFF THE COURT



THE TENNIS LEGEND AND HIS FOUNDATION ARE COMMITTED TO HELPING KIDS THROUGH SPORTS

Tennis master Rafael Nadal has quite the résumé. He has won 11 French Opens, 17 Grand Slams, and an Olympic gold medal for singles, and he has been labeled the “King of Clay” for winning more than 50 matches on clay courts.

But while tennis may be Nadal’s passion, he feels his greatest achievement is the foundation bearing his name.

“The work we do via the Rafa Nadal Foundation—and everything we have achieved over the years—is very enriching for me,” Nadal, 32, says.

Born in Manacor on the island of Mallorca in Spain, Nadal still chooses to live in his hometown, where he and his family started the foundation, a private nonprofit dedicated to children in underserved communities.

Nadal and his organization believe that all young people should have equal opportunities to reach their full potential.

“Be it with vulnerable children, youth with disabilities, or talented

athletes, our objective is in all cases the same,” says Maria Francisco Perello, director of strategy for the foundation. She explains that the organization aims “to promote values and empower minors and adolescents, enabling them to face the challenges of the future.”

Sports and education are the backbones of the foundation and the projects it currently supports. “What better tool than sports to make it possible?” Perello says.

Since its creation in 2008, the foundation has assisted 3,700 children, ranging in age from 6 to 17.

In 2014, the Rafa Nadal Foundation Center—the initiative’s flagship project—opened in Palma de Mallorca. The center focuses on sports, social skills, and psychotherapy. Besides establishing productive study habits, the children learn how to communicate and deepen their respect for their colleagues. Nadal says he isn’t surprised to see “how, through sport and education, we are able to improve the lives of so many children and young people, and of their families, too.”

The foundation’s More Than Tennis program, started in 2010 in collaboration with Special Olympics Spain, reaches children in 18 schools in the country, assisting with learning disabilities and teaching the basics of tennis. Students learn playing techniques as they build self-confidence, which ultimately creates a sense of belonging and an enhanced quality of life for both them and their parents.

While much work takes place in Spain, the team also reaches children in India. Launched with the Vicente Ferrer Foundation in 2010, the Anantapur Educational Center in Andhra Pradesh is based in one of India’s poorest areas. The project, which uses tennis to integrate and socialize boys and girls from local villages, has helped more than 200 children.

“We strive to ensure that there is equality among them, regardless of gender or the caste they belong to,” Perello says. “Here, in the classroom and on the courts, such differences don’t exist.”

The second annual Rafa Nadal Golf Challenge will take place from February 14-17, 2019, in Mallorca, Spain. Participants will have the chance to network with colleagues and clients from around the world while golfing, dining, and socializing at this event, exclusive to the Sotheby’s network. Upscale accommodations will be provided by the Rafa Nadal Sports Center, and players will golf at the Vall D’Or Golf course in Balears, Spain.