



PREPARE CHICAGO
AN INITIATIVE OF HEALTHY CHICAGO

A Local Response is the Best Response

Prepare to Help • Prepare Together • Prepare Your Family

Ensuring Chicago's Immediate and Coordinated Response in a Public Health Emergency

- Trending [WBEZ](#) [Shiftgig](#) [J Dock](#) [Donnelley's pulse](#) [O'Halloran resigns](#) Most Popular News Alerts Mobile Apps
- [News](#) [Blogs](#) [Multimedia](#) [Lists](#) [Small Business](#) [People & Society](#) [Special Features](#) [Real Estate](#) [Health Care](#)
- [News](#) [Focus](#) [Business of Life](#) [People](#) [Columnists](#) [Opinion](#) [Connections](#)

Home > This Week's Crain's > Business of Life >

The new luxe amenity: home basketball courts

By: Rebecca Little April 29, 2013

13 9 3 1 0



Colette Kelsey's basement basketball court in Ravenswood Kendall Karmanian

Home theaters and pools? How passe. For those on the cutting edge of luxury, indoor sport courts are the new amenity. "We're not basketball fans, we just wanted a versatile space," says Colette Kelsey, a stay-at-home mom whose Ravenswood home features an indoor half-court. When she and her husband, who is retired from his own trading company, started to build their home a little more than three years ago, they spotted a similar court in architectural firm Morgante-Wilson's portfolio and decided to incorporate it into their plans.

"We're inside a lot in Chicago during the winter, and we wanted a play space where the kids could run around."

The court has a regulation hoop on a hydraulic lift, a batting cage with pitching machine and a volleyball net; the walls are covered by padded mats.

"It's indestructible," Ms. Kelsey says. "The kids use their scooters, Rollerblade, set up obstacle courses and use the mats to make forts and tunnels. They're contained, they're safe and they can be down there for hours. It's pretty easy parenting," she says jokingly.

The Kelseys' 10-year-old daughter, Peyton, and 8-year-old son, Quincy, use it every day, Ms. Kelsey says. "They come home from school, throw their book bags down and then blow off steam down there before dinner and homework."

Fred Wilson, co-principal of Evanston-based [Morgante-Wilson](#), has designed five of these half-courts in basements over the years, including Ms. Kelsey's. "We're seeing it as a new amenity," Mr. Wilson says.

WHAT ABOUT RESALE?

The Kelseys' court has a 30-foot ceiling, with more than half below grade. These courts are most often in basements. "If you put them more than 50 percent below grade, it doesn't count in your square footage" in calculating property taxes, Mr. Wilson says. "If they're in the basement, it's bonus space."

Mr. Wilson has built these courts in the suburbs and the city, but they are more challenging in Chicago because of drainage and the structural aspects of being right up against the house next door. "It adds \$100,000 to the process in the city because you have to shore up your neighbor's house and dig straight down," he says.

Colette Kelsey and her daughter, Peyton, play tennis in the family's indoor court. Photo: Kendall Karmanian

>Browse Crain's complete Topics Pages

Crain's Live Search



APRIL 29, 2013

Past Weeks

News Focus Business of Life

More from This Week's **CRAIN'S**

- Mixing Islam with medicine
A Chicago doctor wants to open a \$5.5 million outpatient surgery center in Orland Park that would cater to Muslims, including space for prayer and ritual washing.
[Read Now](#)
 - Economic development, Texas-style: What Illinois can learn
 - Foreign investors, eh?
 - Crain's to host Manufacturing Summit
 - After years of bad news, Navistar finally may be shifting gears
 - Vendors step up to pay Illinois' bills
- [View All The Stories](#)



Joe Hiltz, owner and designer of St. Charles-based [Supreme Sports Chicago](#), which installs indoor and outdoor basketball courts, putting greens and ice rinks, says he has worked on about 100 indoor courts over the past 10 years. "The new trend is to go underneath the garage," he says. "They excavate further underneath a garage and put precast concrete over the garage floor instead of foundation and dig it out and attach it to the house."

Prior to 2007, most sport courts were part of custom homes; now about half are additions, Mr. Hiltz says. Total costs are from \$80,000 to \$250,000, he says. Flooring, hoops, walls and pads range from \$12,000 to \$40,000.

Naperville resident and commercial real estate developer Tom Grace had Supreme Sports install an outdoor half-court in his backyard in 2008 as part of an addition and renovation to his house. "I'd rather have our kids play at home than be running around the neighborhood, and I thought this would be a good way to keep them close to home," Mr. Grace says.

His children, ages 10, 9, 7 and 5, use the court for basketball and hockey, and as a surface for an ice rink that Mr. Hiltz sets up each winter. "If we're going to live in this wonderful climate, it's important to embrace the winters," Mr. Grace says.

Fun though they may be, sport courts are still a rather uncommon amenity. Supreme Sports installs five to seven indoor courts and 25 to 30 outdoor ones per year.

"Because they are so unusual, I don't believe there's any real data on resale value," says Sherry Molitor, a North Shore real estate agent at Koenig & Strey.

There may not be hard data, but a truism of real estate is that out-of-the-norm amenities often are a hard sell. At least six houses in the suburbs with indoor courts are for sale. They include an 8,000-square-foot home in a gated golf community in North Barrington; a Lake Forest house with a batting cage and putting greens; new construction in Winnetka with a theater; new construction in Downers Grove; an Oak Brook house on 1.3 wooded acres that includes a regulation racquetball court (which also can be used for basketball or volleyball) with a glassed-in spectator space; and, of course, Michael Jordan's Highland Park estate—with a new, lower asking price of \$21 million. Yes, his court is regulation.

Mr. Grace, for his part, has no regrets. "We figured we'd be in our house for 20 years, so it was a worthwhile investment," he says. "It's a nice amenity, and when we ever do go to sell, a young family similar to mine will find it a beneficial part of the house."

► **Contact:** life@chicagobusiness.com

From this week's Business of Life

13 9 3 1 0



What do you think?

THE UNIVERSITY
of CHICAGO
GRAHAM SCHOOL
of CONTINUING
LIBERAL AND
PROFESSIONAL
STUDIES

Graduate Student-at-Large Business (GSALB) Program

Apply now.

Register for a
Women in Business
panel discussion
Tuesday, August 13.

**'The kids use their
scooters, rollerblade, set
up obstacle courses and
use the mats to make forts
and tunnels.'**

— Colette Kelsey