



2025 Impact Report



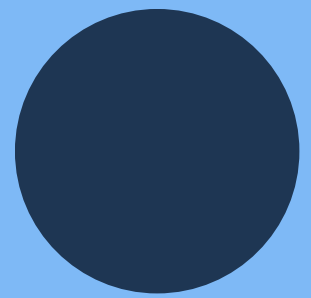


Building Game Changers

First Tee is an international youth development organization introducing the game of golf and its inherent values to kids and teens. Through after-school and in-school programs, we help shape the lives of young people from all walks of life by reinforcing values like integrity, respect, and perseverance through the game of golf. And it's making a difference.

First Tee - Greater Wilmington, a 501(c)(3) organization, is one of nearly 140 chapters located throughout the country and in multiple international locations. We believe that all kids deserve the chance to grow in a supportive environment with mentors guiding them. First Tee - Greater Wilmington is dedicated to impacting the lives of young people by providing educational programs that build character, instill life-enhancing values, and encourage healthy choices. Your contribution will help make a difference in the lives of young people by providing opportunities to engage in meaningful experiences, where kids feel excited to grow, safe to fail, and better equipped for whatever comes their way.

Staff



Brittany Zachrich, PGA

Executive Director

Team Member since 2016



Dana Shoenbach

Program Director

Team Member since 2022



Caroline Shriver

Outreach & Program Coordinator

Team Member since 2025



Jack Love

Outreach & Program Coordinator

Team Member since 2025

Our 2025 Impact



539

UNIQUE
PARTICIPANTS



6

COMMUNITY EVENTS
ATTENDED



30%

PARTICIPANTS FROM A
DIVERSE BACKGROUND



12

CERTIFIED LEAD COACHES



40%

TEEN PARTICIPATION



32%

RETURNING PARTICIPANTS



5,979

PARTICIPANT VAN MILES



319.25

HOURS AT "THE LOOP"



272

MEALS SERVED



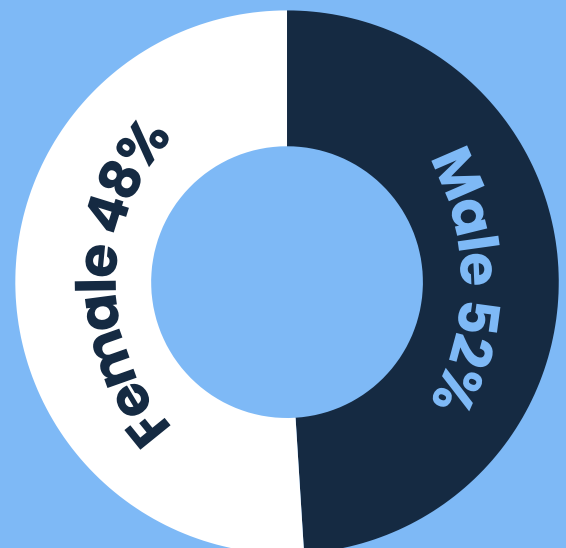
159

PARTNER PROGRAM HOURS



98

ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS





"The coaches at First Tee makes me feel supported..If I miss a shot, they will give me advice on how to make my swing better! The coaches are really great to teach us golf."

-Griffin Burnett, 11



"I love First Tee because I continue to learn something new about golf and have a lot of fun while practicing. The coaches keep me positive and confident even when it's hard. I return each season because First Tee is a place I can continue to grow and get better, plus I always leave excited to play again!"

-Rylan Corcho, 10



"First tee has impacted me by helping me grow and become a great leader. My involvement in First Tee has allowed me to take part in so many unforgettable experiences that have really shaped me."

- Chase Smith, 15



Community Outreach Partners

100 Black Men Cape Fear Chapter

[ACCESS of Wilmington](#)

Brigade Boys and Girls Club

Camp Schrieber Foundation

Coastal Horizons

Communities in Schools

Community Boys and Girls Club

Davis Center at Maides Park

DC Virgo

DREAMS Center for Arts Education

Girls Leadership Academy of
Wilmington

Habitat for Humanity Cape Fear

Kids Making It

Knights of Columbus

MLK Community Center

New Hanover County Government

Office of Civic Engagement

New Hanover County Sheriff's Office

New Hanover County Smart Start

[New Hanover County Special
Olympics](#)

[Pender County Parks and Recreation](#)

PGA Hope

Port City Golf Association

Rachel Freeman

Voyage Wilmington

Wilmington Parks and
Recreation

Young Scientist Academy

YMCA Southeastern NC

YWCA Lower Cape Fear

[*New Partners](#)

2025 Board of Directors

Mr. Dennis P. Shanahan

Mr. Neal Andrew

Mr. Jonathan Barfield

Ms. Ann Boston

Mr. Patrick Boykin

Mr. Elliott Jones

Mr. Jason Cherry

Mr. Gordon D. Dalgleish

Mr. Harrison Gould

Mr. Paul Salisbury

Mr. Clint Howell

Mr. Andy Jones

Ms. Veronica McLaurin-Brown

Mr. Chad Pearson

Mr. Jack Tierney

Mr. Jess Bolton

Our Key Differentiator

Our coaches' ability to develop impactful relationships with our participants is the backbone of our program.

As we celebrate another year of impact, we thank our coaches who serve as mentors, seamlessly integrating the game of golf with a character- building life skills curriculum. They create active learning experiences that build inner strength, self-confidence, and resilience that kids can carry to everything they do.



100%
of our volunteers
are SafeSport
Trained & have
passed a
background check



98
active coaches



100+
adult staff and volunteers

Brittany Zachrich, PGA

Executive Director

As we reflect on the past nine years, I am continually moved by how profoundly First Tee – Greater Wilmington has shaped the lives of young people in our community. What began as a vision to bring character-building opportunities to local youth has grown into a vibrant, inclusive, and impactful chapter that now serves hundreds of participants each year—on the course, in schools, and across our outreach sites. Watching our kids discover confidence, develop resilience, and step boldly into new experiences has been one of the greatest privileges of my career. Their journeys remind us why this work matters and fuel our commitment to ensuring every child has access to the tools, mentorship, and support they deserve.

None of this would be possible without the people who stand beside us. I am deeply grateful for our dedicated Board of Directors, whose leadership and belief in our mission guide every step we take. To our volunteers and supporters, thank you for giving your time, resources, and heart so generously—your involvement strengthens the fabric of our chapter and expands the opportunities available to our youth. And to the families we serve, thank you for trusting us with your children and allowing us to be a part of their growth. Your partnership is the foundation of our success. Together, we have built something truly meaningful, and I am profoundly grateful for the community that makes it all possible.

“What I enjoy most about this work is watching young people discover who they are and who they can become. There’s nothing more fulfilling than seeing a child gain confidence, take on a challenge, or realize they’re capable of more than they ever imagined. Being part of those moments—and knowing our team and community helped make them possible—is truly the greatest reward.”

-Brittany Zachrich, PGA - Executive Director

Long-Term Impact



More than a Game

In 2025, participant Isaak Tschekunow earned the incredible honor of competing in the PURE Insurance Championship at Pebble Beach—an opportunity reserved for just 81 First Tee teens nationwide who exemplify strong character, golf skill, and leadership.

Isaak's journey through First Tee has shaped his confidence, discipline, and commitment both on and off the course, preparing him for this once-in-a-lifetime experience. His selection reflects the impact of our coaches, programming, and community support, and highlights how First Tee empowers young people to pursue big goals with resilience and heart.



Isaak Tschekunow competing in the PURE Insurance Championship at Pebble Beach

Isaak's week at Pebble Beach was nothing short of extraordinary. Playing alongside World Golf Hall of Famer Retief Goosen offered him a rare opportunity to learn from one of the game's greats while competing on one of the most iconic and sought-after courses in the world. The experience elevated his confidence and deepened his passion for the sport in ways that will stay with him for a lifetime.

"Watching Isaak compete at Pebble Beach was truly inspiring," said Dana Schoenbach, Program Director at First Tee – Greater Wilmington. ***"To see a young person from our chapter hold his own on such a legendary stage was a powerful reminder of the doors this program can open. It was a moment none of us will ever forget."***



"First Tee has been incredible for me because it not only teaches me golf etiquette and skills, but further, I am discovering what I am capable of."

– Isaak, 16



Dreaming into the Future

In 2025, longtime participant Lula Rivera was selected as a First Tee Scholar—one of fewer than 30 young people nationwide to earn this prestigious honor each year.

This multi-year scholarship program supports students who have demonstrated exceptional character, academic achievement, leadership, and a deep commitment to their communities.

As a First Tee Scholar, Lula will receive financial assistance toward her post-secondary education, individualized professional development, internship opportunities, and access to a national network of mentors who will guide her through college and into her early career.



Lula Rivera selected as a First Tee Scholar – Class of 2026



Lula's achievement underscores the transformative power of sustained mentorship, opportunity, and community support. As she prepares to take this next step, her story serves as a reminder of why our work matters and what becomes possible when young people are given the space and resources to grow.

"Watching Lula evolve into a confident, driven young leader has been one of the greatest joys of my career," said Brittany Zachrich, Executive Director of First Tee – Greater Wilmington. ***"Her selection as a First Tee Scholar is proof that when we invest in our kids—when we truly believe in them—they rise, they lead, and they change the world around them. We want every participant to feel that same sense of possibility."***



"I am so grateful to have been selected as a First Tee National Scholar, class of 2026. It's a privilege and an honor to be recognized by The First Tee, not only by my ten years of dedication to the program, but also by my character and how I embody a game changer in my everyday life. I am beyond thankful for this opportunity to develop my future, help set me up for college, and much more. I'm so excited to see what is in store for me next."

-Lula, 18



More than a Game

Coach Kathy Merlo has been part of our chapter for two years, and we couldn't be more grateful for the positive energy and dedication she brings to First Tee. Kathy consistently volunteers in our after-school programs throughout the year, steps in whenever we need a substitute, and continues to shine at events beyond regular programming. Participants and fellow coaches alike leave every session with a smile thanks to her encouraging presence. Kathy is a true mentor, supporting both participants and staff in meaningful and inspiring ways. We are fortunate to have her as part of our First Tee family.



“Being part of First Tee continues to be one of the most meaningful experiences in my life year after year. Coaching these incredible kids—watching their confidence grow, their character shine, and their excitement build with every small victory—reminds me just how powerful encouragement and connection can be. I keep coming back because this program changes lives, including my own; their resilience, joy, and determination inspire me to show up as my best self every single season.”

– Kathy Merlo, Volunteer Coach

Interested in Volunteering?





6th Annual

Tee Up for Success Gala & Tournament

Sunday, May 31st – Monday, June 1st, 2026



Canterbury Stables



Cape Fear
Country Club



3rd Annual

Taste of Golf

Thursday, October 1st, 2026
at The GFO

Taste of Golf delivers a standout experience each year, showcasing creative dishes from premier local chefs and engaging guests in a fun, interactive voting competition. The event continues to be one of our most exciting fundraisers, raising critical dollars that directly enhance opportunities for the youth we serve.





Mission:

To impact the lives of young people by providing educational programs that build character and instill life-enhancing values through the game of golf.

Investing in Youth, Together

2025 Philanthropic & Grant Support

AtoZ Rentals

Andy Jones

Ann Boston

Austin Wilson

Beth Bowers

Bill Rudisill

Billy Mills

Chad Pearson

Chase Ratliff

Dan Smith

Daniel Wilson

Dennis & Sandra

Shanahan

Eagle Point Golf Club

Gordon Dalgeish

Jack Tierney

Jeff Mays

Jerry Heidenreich

Joel Gordon

Jonathan Bornak

Jose Hernandez

Lace-Anne McNeil

Larry George

Logan Angel

Loggerhead Golf Co.

Love, Tito's

Lumina Gem

Mark Humphreville

Mark McKenna

MegaCorp Logistics

Mike & Kim Murray

Monteith Construction

nCino

Neal Andrew

Nick Dyer

Patrick Kennedy

PerryGolf

Peter Millar

Peter Sweyer

Pharmgate

Rick Lamy

Robert Parker

Rock Wells

Smile Straight Ortho

Steven Kaszak

United Bank

Veronica McLaurin-Brown

Will Pleasants

William Howell

Grants

Bruce Barclay Cameron

Foundation

Carolinas Golf Foundation

City of Wilmington

Compass Pointe Golf

Association

New Hanover County

J. Tylee Wilson Foundation

Louis J. Capelli & Virginia M.

Capelli Foundation

PGA Super Store

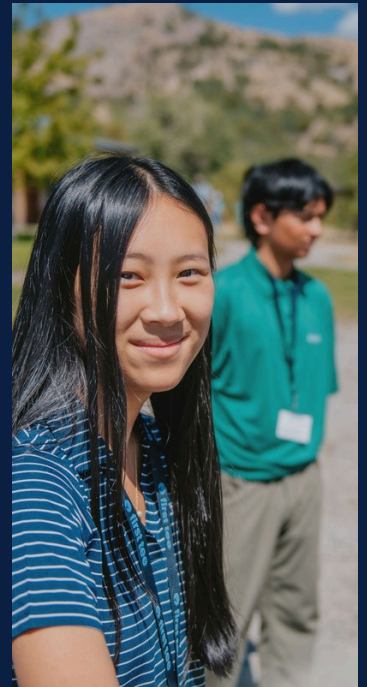
Publix Charities

Stand Out for Good, INC

Thank
you







A Letter from Our Board Chairman

Dear Friends of First Tee – Greater Wilmington,

As we reflect on ten years of impact, I am filled with deep gratitude and pride for what this chapter has accomplished—and for the community that made it possible. First Tee – Greater Wilmington was built on a belief that young people thrive when given opportunity, guidance, and a place to belong. Because of you, that belief has become a reality for thousands of youth across our region.

Over the past decade, your support has allowed our chapter to grow thoughtfully and responsibly—expanding access to the game of golf, strengthening our coaching team, and delivering life skills that extend far beyond the course. From our earliest days to the programs we operate today, each milestone has been shaped by donors who chose to invest not just in an organization, but in the potential of young people.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, I want to thank you for your trust, your partnership, and your unwavering commitment to our mission. Whether you have supported First Tee – Greater Wilmington since the beginning or joined us more recently, your generosity has helped build a strong foundation for the future.

As we celebrate this ten-year milestone, we do so with optimism and confidence—knowing that together, we are preparing the next generation with the skills, values, and resilience they need to succeed in life.

Thank you for being an essential part of our story.

With sincere appreciation,



Dennis Shanahan

Chairman, Board of Directors
First Tee Greater Wilmington





Building Game Changers

Tax-ID: 81-1220120
Greater Wilmington Youth Initiative, INC

