



# Annual Report '24

Building Game Changers



55 GOLF CLUB ROAD, CT 06416 • 860.882.1660 • FIRSTTEECONNECTICUT.ORG







## A Message From Ken Baldwin, Board Chair

Dear Friends of First Tee - Connecticut ,

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors of First Tee - Connecticut, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for continuing your generous support of First Tee - Connecticut and our mission to change the lives of young people throughout Connecticut. I am very happy and proud to be able to report to you all that the state of First Tee - Connecticut remains strong, and our future is bright. Through the tireless efforts of our CEO Mark Moriarty, his entire staff, all of our coaches and volunteers and the strong support of our passionate Board of Directors, donors and sponsors, our chapter has made 2024 another extraordinary year reaching 69,000 young people. Make no mistake about it... we are **Building Game Changers!**

Our mission remains steadfast. Our goal is to help young people build the strength of character that empowers them through a lifetime of challenges. Young people in Connecticut and across the nation need our support now more than ever before and we look forward to helping them face challenges throughout the coming years.

First Tee - Connecticut enjoyed another successful year running golf operations at Goodwin Park in Hartford and we continue our outreach efforts to folks in Hartford and the surrounding communities. Thanks to the continuing support of partners like Hartford HealthCare, participation in programming at Goodwin Park continues to grow. Our efforts in Hartford and across the state in 2024 continued to benefit from our strong partnerships with several key community-minded organizations including the Travelers Championship, Eversource Energy, WFSB, Camp Courant, Hartford HealthCare and many others who believe in our mission and share our goals.

Our Fairfield County Committee has been exploring opportunities for future growth of facilities and programming opportunities in Fairfield County. Stay tuned on our progress as we push this important project forward to reach more deserving children in this geographic area.

Thank you to everyone who plays a part in our success; we couldn't accomplish what we do without your support!

### Special Appreciation to our Scholarship Benefactors

Aetna Retirees Scholarship in honor of  
H. Grant Thomas and Roger Lawson  
Shepard W. Baker Memorial Scholarship  
19 Iron Scholarship (Downey Family  
Foundation)  
Andrew K. Dwyer Foundation Scholarship  
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William P. Lyons Scholarship  
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Dan Novarr Scholarship  
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### Events on the Tee!

First Tee - Connecticut Charity Classics are  
a great way to support First Tee - Connecticut  
and enjoy a great day of golf at a top venue !

PwC First Tee - Connecticut Charity Classic at  
The Country Club of Fairfield - Sold Out - May 27th

Mastercard First Tee - Connecticut Charity Classic  
at Madison Country Club - Sept. 9th

First Tee - Connecticut Charity Classic  
in Memory of Shepard W. Baker  
Presented by Beverly Buckner Baker  
at TPC River Highlands - Oct. 8th

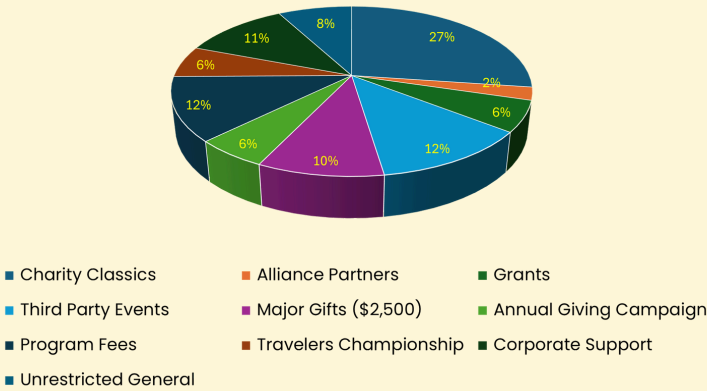
# Our 2024 Scorecard

## Facts & Figures

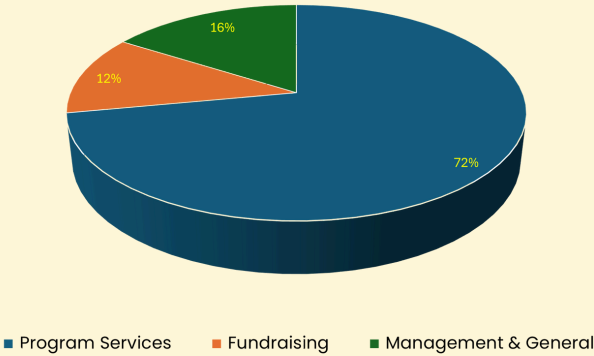
	2024
TOTAL YOUTH SERVED	68,945
Group Lesson & Community Participants	3,000
Diverse Participants (up 35.2% in five years)	28.8%
Female Participants (First Tee avg. is 34.5%)	32.7%
Group Lesson & Summer Camp Participants Receiving Financial Aid	170
% Annual Retention (First Tee avg. is 37.4%)	37.8%
Participants at National Opportunities	4
Summer Camp Participants (Cromwell only)	224
School Program Participants (Gym Teacher Led)	46,000
School Program Locations	193
In-School Program Participants (First Tee - Connecticut Coach Led)	13,716
First Tee Certified Coaches	37
Total Number of Coaches	73
Program Volunteers	39



2024 Revenue Sources



2024 Expenses





# 2024 Events and Happenings



## Game Changers Par-Tee Burning Tree Country Club

The First Tee – Connecticut Game Changers Par-Tee took place October 23<sup>rd</sup> at Burning Tree Country Club. Greenwich's own Michael Breed of Golf Digest, CBS Sports and Sirius XM PGA Radio kicked off an entertaining program with four standout participants from the organization. Will Berthiaume, a Platt High School Senior, talked about his experience at the 2024 Game Changers Academy. Sam Dunn, a Berlin High School Senior, described her trip to Pebble Beach playing in the PURE Insurance Championship. In her first semester at Trinity College, Selam Olson shared her growth as a 2024 First Tee Scholar and her Women's Golf Coach, Andra Frappier, chronicled her journey from First Tee lessons to becoming a PGA Professional to coaching at Trinity College. Each young adult highlighted the core values and First Tee life skills curriculum that have shaped their lives.



## First Tee National Championship Laniah Moffett Selected for Prestigious Honor

The First Tee National Championship showcases the top 24 girls and boys from First Tee chapters across the country. The event brings together First Tee's elite players for an opportunity to highlight how the program has helped build the confidence, perseverance and skills needed to play at the next level. We were honored to have Laniah Moffett selected among these distinguished girls who have risen to the top of their games demonstrating enormous talent and skill. Laniah competed in June at Clemson University demonstrating the strength of character to excel at the collegiate level as she went on to do at Howard University in the fall. Laniah played in seven tournaments and notched two top ten finishes in her freshman year!



## Patrons Breakfast & Scholars Awards Annual Event During Travelers Championship Week

We were delighted to host our 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Patrons Breakfast on Saturday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> during the Travelers Championship. This event, by invitation only, provides an opportunity to showcase our annual scholarship winners and chapter news. This year, we awarded over \$55,000 to 31 deserving First Tee participants. With Mark Moriarty as emcee for the morning, and remarks from Ken Baldwin, Board Chair, patrons were brought up to date on all things First Tee - Connecticut. We were honored to present Warren Beardow as our 2<sup>nd</sup> Walter Shelton Coach of the Year! Our featured guest speaker Dottie Pepper, 17-time LPGA tour winner and CBS Sports Lead Walking Reporter, delivered an informative and entertaining presentation and graciously made time for 'meet and greets' with photos before heading out on the course for Saturday's round!





## National Coaches Training

### First Tee – Connecticut Hosts Two Training Sessions

At First Tee, we teach life skills, character and confidence, but we can't do that without coaches who are equipped, inspired and supported. We invest in our coaches because when we do, we invest in every child they'll ever coach, and that's how we Build Game Changers! Our Learning Links course and David & Geri Epstein Learning Center are sought after facilities to conduct national Coaches Training. In April, five new coaches were brought on board for Level 1 training, and in September, approximately 30 coaches from across the country attended Level 3 training. In Level 3, coaches learn how to design meaningful, relevant lessons that keeps teens engaged and growing, no matter their skill level-an important objective. Three First Tee - Connecticut coaches were certified in the process.



## First Tee Network Summit

### Staff and Board Member Education

The 2024 First Tee Network Summit took place in November in Phoenix, Arizona. This three day seminar takes place every other year and is recommended for all chapters. Similar to our coaches training, it's critical for staff and board members to be introduced to and educated on national initiatives for 2025 and beyond, such as First Tee Week. Through engaging speakers, such as Larry Fitzgerald and Tom Watson, and break-out sessions with representatives from other chapters, we learned about new partnerships, marketing campaigns and created action plans for the future. The First Tee expo gave everyone an opportunity to make connections with corporate partners that support First Tee, such as Callaway Golf, Accenture and other vendors. Everyone left inspired and motivated with new connections from across the country!



## Girls Golf Program

### Growing with LPGA Epson Tour Partnership

Our Girls Golf Program at First Tee - Connecticut is growing! Girls are able to sign up for Group Lessons in the Spring, Summer and Fall that are "Girls Only" and these popular classes are usually filled up on registration opening day. Similarly, we offer two special weeks during Summer Camp that are "Girls Only" sessions and girls are welcome to attend any of the other co-ed sessions too. In 2024, we had two new clinics with LPGA Professionals from the Epson Tour where girls received hands-on instruction in chipping, putting and the full swing. One clinic took place in March at our Learning Center after the CT Golf Show, and the other at the Hartford HealthCare Women's Championship at Great River Golf Club in July. We also had holiday-themed parties using our Trackman for the girls to continue making connections and stay engaged with First Tee - Connecticut in the off-season.



# Sam Dunn Selected for PURE Insurance

## Sam Dunn Participated in the 2024 PURE Insurance Championship Impacting First Tee!

Sam Dunn, a senior at Berlin High School was one of 80 teens chosen for the 2024 PURE Insurance Championship! This collaboration provides First Tee participants a national stage on which to showcase the skills and values they've learned at their chapter. Sam was also selected this year as one of just eight teens nationally for the **First Tee Participant Advisory Council (PAC)** providing valuable input and creative feedback to headquarters.

Throughout the week, teens network with peers, PGA TOUR Champions players and leaders from the business world who are competing in the amateur field, gaining exposure to the opportunities golf can provide both on and off the course. During the tournament, which is hosted at the famed Pebble Beach Golf Links, each teen is paired with a golf legend who provides mentorship as they compete for the pro-junior title.

With pairings parties, inspirational speakers and iconic views, the experience competing with Professional Joe Durant at Pebble Beach is something Sam Dunn will never forget!

*"First Tee – Connecticut has always given me opportunities to engage with golf and taught me life skills. It fostered my love for golf, and I want to give back. I've met so many amazing people through First Tee – Connecticut, and those connections have only deepened my engagement. It's been an incredible journey, and I'm excited for what the future holds."*

~Sam Dunn



Sam Dunn with members of the First Tee Participant Advisory Council at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.



# Selam Olson Earns First Tee National Scholar Award

Preparing youth for success is at the heart of our mission. The **First Tee College Scholarship Program** supports selected alumni throughout their college career with professional development workshops, access to internships and full-time employment placement post-graduation.

In 2024, Selam Olson, a First Tee participant since the age of 7, achieved her goal and became one of 24 students nationwide selected as a First Tee National Scholar. She is paired with First Tee - Connecticut Board Member, Bess Barnes, VP of Programming with CBS Sports (pictured below), as her mentor. Bess has already been instrumental in encouraging and guiding Selam through her collegiate experience at Trinity College and beyond!



As a freshman, Selam was driven to be the best applicant possible for the First Tee National Scholar program. A student at Choate Rosemary Hall where she received a scholarship to attend, Selam completed an astounding 668 hours of community service! Her involvement spans various activities, including volunteering with the Special Olympics and coaching for First Tee - Connecticut. She envisions a career in the nonprofit sector or public health fields where her passion for community service can thrive, carrying the values that First Tee - Connecticut instills in its participants.



*"The community that First Tee - Connecticut has fostered has been an amazing experience and helped prepare me for today and the future. They want the best for all of us; I feel very supported and have a network of people behind me."*

*~Selam Olson*





## Grateful for these Organizations' Fundraisers!

We are thankful for these incredible groups that named First Tee - Connecticut as a beneficiary of proceeds from their events. Whether it's a Memorial Tournament, Member-Guest entry fee donation or a Golf Association Outing, these funds are extremely important to our mission.

6th Annual John Romano Golf Tournament  
 Blue Fox Run Ladies Golf Group  
 The Bongiorno Golf League  
 Capital Region Education Council  
 Connecticut Retail Network  
 Dave Rand Memorial Sooners  
 Elite Fundraising Solutions  
 19th Annual Final Final Open  
 9th Annual Gary Gatzen Memorial  
 Gaylord Specialty Healthcare  
 Gengras Auto Group  
 Grandstand Sports Memorabilia  
 Grassy Hill Men's Association  
 Keney Links Women's Golf Club  
 Let's Grab Lunch Inc  
 LPGA Epson Tour  
 Mastercard Employee Golf Outing  
 Max Cares Foundation  
 Mikey Conroy Foundation Inc.  
 Orange Hills Country Club Men's Golf Assoc.  
 PGA TOUR Charity Challenge  
 Quaker Hill Country Club  
 Redding CC Longest Day Marathon  
 6th Annual Ron Booth Mission Golf Outing  
 11th Annual Sharon Country Club Marathon  
 Silvermine Road Trippers  
 Southern New England Women's Golf Assoc.  
 6th Annual Sine Die Cup  
 Texas Roadhouse  
 Yusen Associates, Inc.

## We Are Honored to Receive Memorial Gifts for These Individuals

Robert B. Ames  
 Richard Stewart Feeney  
 Alex Lloyd  
 Paul Marianella  
 Brian E. Nelson, Sr.  
 Mark L. Powers  
 G. David Rand  
 Thomas Steen  
 Jon Stefenson  
 David Worthington



Rebecca Ribeiro, Mark Moriarty, Grant Gatzen and Ian Marshall with funds raised at the 9<sup>th</sup> Gary Gatzen Memorial.



Board Member Dr. Paul Bocciarelli, Bill Carbone and Dan Keller at the 19<sup>th</sup> Final Final Open



First Tee - Connecticut Girls Clinic with the LPGA Epson Tour Pros at the Hartford HealthCare Women's Championship



First Tee - Connecticut Alum Christian McDavid who coordinated a donation from his employer, Gengras Volvo of E. Hartford.



Sponsors from the 1<sup>st</sup> Mikey Conroy Memorial Foundation tournament which raised \$20,000 for First Tee - Connecticut!

## Thanks to All who Donated Products or Services in 2024!

Blackhawk Country Club  
 Bone & Joint Institute at Hartford Hospital  
 CBS Sports/Paramount  
 Central Connecticut Chapter LPGA - AGA  
 The Country Club of New Canaan  
 Ellington Ridge Country Club  
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 Foxwoods Resort Casino  
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 Watertown Golf Club  
 Waypoint Spirits  
 WFAN Sports Radio



# 2024 Annual Donors

First Tee - Connecticut would like to express our sincere gratitude to the many foundations, partners, corporations and individuals who have provided financial support in 2024. We believe every child deserves the chance to build inner strength and character to face life's challenges. Thanks to your generosity, we reached 69,000 children and ushered them to a brighter future!

## Sportsmanship Level

**\$20,000+**

Beverly Buckner Baker  
Art & Mariko Byrne  
CDW  
Connecticut State Golf Association  
Mikey Conroy Foundation Inc.  
David & Geri Epstein Private Foundation  
Richard P. Garmany Fund  
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Mastercard  
PGA TOUR  
PricewaterhouseCoopers  
The Travelers Championship  
Webster Bank

## Responsibility Level

**\$10,000 - \$19,999**

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Connecticut Section PGA  
The Andrew K. Dwyer Foundation  
The Gary Gatzen Memorial  
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Tom & Lisa Vacheron  
Walking For Kids Foundation

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**We are deeply grateful to our  
grantors for their continued  
support of our work to improve  
young people's lives:**

Accenture NA  
American Savings Foundation  
Joe & Kay Calvanese Foundation  
CDW  
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County, Inc.  
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CVS Health Foundation  
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PricewaterhouseCoopers  
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The Toro Company  
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## Perseverance Level \$2,500 - \$4,999

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### Alliance Organizations

CT Association of Golf Course  
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CT Section PGA  
CT State Golf Association  
CT Women's Golf Association  
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## Judgment Level \$1,000 - \$2,499

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\$1 - \$99

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In 2021, First Tee - Connecticut established the Game Changers Society as a way of honoring donors who are consistently providing gifts of \$500 or more annually. If this describes you, then you belong in the Game Changers Society! We have various designations, Birdie, Eagle or Ace, and individuals commit to donating that gift level for five years. Along with recognition in our Annual Report, you'll be treated to a VIP cocktail hour, special membership gift or a twosome at our Charity Classic in memory of Shepard W. Baker in October. For more information, visit our website or contact Marsha Rupp at [mrupp@firstteect.org](mailto:mrupp@firstteect.org).

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We are grateful to our Legacy Society members who have arranged planned gifts to First Tee - Connecticut. No amount is too small, and donors may realize significant tax advantages. There are a myriad of ways to provide planned gifts, and those contributions may be designated for specific purposes, such as a project or campaign that is special to the individual. Just as loyal donors allow us to fulfill our mission to provide life skills to youth through golf, legacy gifts provide meaningful funds that carry on that tradition of giving. Explore the idea with your own financial planner, and contact Marsha Rupp at [mrupp@firstteect.org](mailto:mrupp@firstteect.org) for more information about our planned giving through our Legacy Society.

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Barbara Karis Downey  
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