



2024 Impact Report

Who We Are

First Tee – Central Ohio is a youth organization that promotes character development in kids and teens through the game of golf.

We enable kids to build the strength of character that empowers them through a lifetime of new challenges. By seamlessly integrating the game of golf with life skills curriculum, we create learning experiences that build inner strength, self-confidence, and resilience that kids carry to everything they do.

Building Game Changers

We deliver experiences to help kids and teens uncover what is inside them and work each day to become the best version of themselves.

Game Changers:

- Pursue goals
- Grow through challenge
- Collaborate with others
- Have positive self-identity
- Use good judgment

A Message from Our Executive Director

As I reflect on this past year, I am filled with gratitude for the support of our FTCO community. Because of champions like you, FTCO continues to create meaningful opportunities for young people across Central Ohio – helping them grow in confidence, leadership and resilience.

In 2024, we saw firsthand the power of golf to change lives. **More than 10,500 kids and teens** experienced the impact of FTCO – whether through our on-course programs, school partnerships or community events. With the support of **50 dedicated coaches and volunteers**, we introduced the game to new players, deepened relationships with **64 schools and community partners**, and continued growing across **six programming sites**. Behind every number is a story of a kid learning perseverance, a mentor making a difference and a wide-reaching community coming together to support our mission.

This year, our local programming thrived as **we welcomed 12 summer interns – 11 of whom were First Tee participants or alumni** – who gained invaluable leadership experience while coaching and inspiring younger golfers. **We expanded our six-week programming to The View in Lancaster, trained more than 70 Columbus City Schools teachers in the First Tee School Program, and supported four participants in the PGATSS Leadership Series.**

This year also brought incredible community support. A transformative **\$500,000 commitment from the McCoy family** will sustain our chapter for the next decade, ensuring long-term impact. We received **over \$70,000 in grants**, including \$10,000 from the City of Columbus to support our summer camp in partnership with OSU LiFEsports. Additionally, **generous equipment donations from Good Sports, Inc.** allowed us to better serve our participants.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to empowering kids through the game of golf. None of this would be possible without your support. Whether through donations, volunteering or sharing our mission, you are making a lasting impact on the lives of the kids and teens we serve.

Thank you for being a part of the FTCO family. We look forward to an even greater year ahead!



Greg Wright
Executive Director

Our Impact

In 2024, we served **10,507 kids and teens** on golf courses, in schools and through community partners.

Our partnerships extended our reach to even more kids – with **53 schools and 11 community partners** delivering First Tee programming throughout Central Ohio.

None of our work would be possible without the time and effort from our coaches and volunteers. 2024's impact was supported by **15 coaches and 35 volunteers**, who generously gave of their time at classes, summer camps and special events.



I believe that the work that First Tee does is truly making a difference in the lives of young people, and I am proud to support their mission.

– Shannon, FTCO Parent and Volunteer

Who We Serve

Age



- 5-6 yrs old (5%)
- 7-9 yrs old (40%)
- 10-11 yrs old (29%)
- 12-13 yrs old (19%)
- 14-17 yrs old (7%)

Ethnicity



- White (26%)
- Black or African American (48%)
- Two or More Races (8%)
- Asian (3%)
- Hispanic or Latino (15%)

2024 Program Snapshot

10,507

Kids and teens
impacted last year

64

School and community
partnerships

50

Coaches and
volunteers

6

Program sites
throughout
Central Ohio



Gender



- Female (44%)
- Male (56%)

Our Mission

In today's society, where character development is often neglected, **FTCO's mission of teaching life skills alongside golf is more crucial than ever.**

Independent research has found that character is a lost value driven by a lack of regular opportunities to cultivate it. Our commitment to helping kids learn life skills, not just golf, stands to empower kids and teens in leading healthy and productive lives.

Parents whose children play sports say their activities have a positive impact on their children's:

94%
Social health

93%
Physical health

93%
Behavioral health

92%
Emotional health

76%
Academic health

“

One of the biggest gifts of this program is that it's not just about golf – it's really, truly about engagement with the kids. These coaches have poured into [my daughter] far beyond the weekly class.

– Daniele, FTCO Parent

How We Reach Kids

On-Course Golf & Life Skills Program

More than 1,000 kids participate in core classes on golf courses each year. By seamlessly integrating the game of golf with character-building curriculum, we create learning experiences that help kids build character for when they are on the course, at home and in school.

Community Partnership Programs

Our coaches work with local community partners who share our mission to deliver First Tee programming to hundreds of kids each year. We supply coaches and flexible lesson plans that can be adapted to any location, age group or skill level.

In-School Golf & Life Skills Program

We provide educators at local elementary and middle schools with training, equipment and a golf curriculum that enhances social-emotional learning (SEL) skills. This program exposes more than 8,000 kids annually to the game of golf.

LPGA- USGA Girls Golf

Girls Golf empowers girls through golf, teaching confidence and life skills alongside golf instruction. We combine fundamentals with fun, offering creative, social experiences to keep participants engaged and inspire girls to build leadership skills, healthy habits and a love for the game.

First Tee Programs

Our ultimate goal is to **create a pathway for participants to progress and grow their love of the game.**



“

Having First Tee come into our school, teach us about golf and also supply us with equipment, has been one of the best things that could have happened to our students.

– Jena, Columbus City Schools PE Teacher

School Programs

Last year, we expanded our reach by adding six new school partnerships—four of them within the Columbus City School District. To strengthen these collaborations, we provided additional support through onsite visits, where we conducted hands-on teacher training and engaged students in the First Tee school curriculum.

In 2024, we brought learning to life with onsite field trips, welcoming local elementary students to Blacklick Woods Metro Golf Course. There, they had the opportunity to put their newly learned golf skills into action at interactive stations across the course.

Additionally, we hosted a dedicated training day for Columbus City Schools, equipping more than 70 educators with the tools and techniques needed to integrate First Tee programming into their PE classes—ensuring even more students benefit from the values and skills the game of golf teaches.

Community Partnership Programs

Our Community Program partners with other youth-serving organizations to introduce golf using games that are flexible to the ages and abilities of the kids involved. Throughout the year, we partnered with organizations like Ohio State School for the Blind, Home for Families and the Down Syndrome Association of Central Ohio to remove participation barriers and reach more kids, with a special focus on kids in under-served communities.

We were excited to deepen our partnership with LiFEsports at The Ohio State University this year by offering character-building lessons through golf during summer sports camps at three Columbus community recreation centers. Over three weeks, FTCO introduced 160 kids—many holding a golf club for the first time—to the game at Adams, Beatty and Linden Community Centers. By bringing golf directly to these neighborhoods, we continue to expand access and create meaningful experiences for kids who may not otherwise have the opportunity to play.



Working with [FTCO] to reinforce the importance of social emotional skills through positive youth development is nothing short of a tremendous opportunity to pour into the future of Central Ohio.

– Joe, The LiFEsports Initiative at The Ohio State University

LPGA-USGA Girls Golf

Last year, we expanded our Girls Golf program by introducing a six-week session at Oakhaven Golf Club – providing even more girls with the opportunity to develop their skills and passion.



We also welcomed the Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland for a special golf clinic, where many participants picked up a golf club for the first time and discovered the fun of the game.

Adding to an exciting year, we were invited by First Tee – Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky to attend the LPGA Queen City Championship. This special event brought together participants from both sites for fun games, player autographs, and, most importantly, the chance to connect and build friendships with fellow young golfers.



“

I wish I'd had access to Girls Golf when I was a young girl. This program is more than learning about golf. It's about helping girls grow into strong empowered young women.

– Ellen, Girls Golf Coach

Participant Spotlight – Kristina

After taking her first FTCO class at just five years old, Kristina, a long-time participant, says the character lessons she's learned at FTCO have had the greatest impact on her life.

Kristina's journey with FTCO began 12 years ago at a Game Changers Summer Camp. Inspired by the positive experience, she asked her parents to enroll her in more classes. Early on, Kristina discovered a passion for golf and cherished the friendships she formed while learning key skills.

Her path wasn't without challenges. Kristina recalls retaking some class levels because she wasn't ready to advance. These experiences taught her perseverance and the value of embracing challenges. "A challenge is a good thing," she explains. "It's super valuable to learn how to push through [a roadblock] because you never know what's going to be on the other side."



When I was in this program, the coaches made an impact on me, and I get to be that for somebody else.

This resilience paid off when Kristina recently competed in The First Tee National Championship at Clemson University. The event was a full-circle moment for her, as her brother, Stephen, participated in the inaugural championship three years earlier. Beyond the competition, Kristina's favorite part was connecting with golfers from across the country and creating lasting friendships.

Now a senior in high school, Kristina continues to be involved with FTCO as a participant and volunteer coach. She credits FTCO's core values and supportive coaches for shaping her both on and off the golf course. "Learning things like integrity and perseverance and how they translate into your everyday life, not just golf, was really important to me," Kristina shares.

Kristina's journey exemplifies FTCO's mission to build character through golf, demonstrating how a supportive community and strong values can profoundly impact a young person's life.

Building Game Changers

Throughout 2024, our participants embraced meaningful opportunities, **showcasing their talent and dedication** on prestigious stages across the country.



Early in the year, four teens participated in the First Tee Leadership Series in partnership with PGA TOUR Superstore. Over five weeks, they explored their personal values, strengths and career aspirations, gaining invaluable leadership experience.

Bella competed in the inaugural LPGA-USGA Girls Golf National Championship at Pine Needles, where she joined 143 Girls Golf participants from across the country. She demonstrated resilience, leadership and the power of community on a national stage.



Kristina represented FTCO at The First Tee National Championship at Clemson University, where she not only competed against fellow First Tee participants but also engaged in networking events and activities designed to introduce teens to the college experience.

Kristina



Bellamy took her talents to the international stage, competing on the renowned Olympic Golf Course at the U.S. Kids Golf South American Championship in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – a remarkable achievement that highlights her determination and skill.

Bellamy



Nicholas



Nicholas, a local teen and dedicated FTCO volunteer, organized his second golf equipment drive, collecting more than 93 clubs, 12 golf bags and various accessories to support our programs and participants.

On our **PGA Jr. League team**, 7-13 year olds compete in matches to experience league play and develop their teamwork and sportsmanship.

This year's participants demonstrated perseverance and grit throughout the season while improving their skills and supporting their teammates.



Participant Spotlight – Mikaili

As a junior in high school, Mikaili is already making an impact as a First Tee participant, intern and Girls Golf eLeader. Mikaili attended the inaugural First Tee Leadership Academy in partnership with PGA TOUR Superstore and spent five transformative days in Atlanta developing leadership skills and exploring the impact of sports on communities.

Selected as one of 48 participants nationwide, Mikaili embraced the experience, connecting with peers, learning from inspiring speakers, and touring iconic sports facilities. “I instantly made 47 new friends,” she shared. “It was really cool to see how similar we all were – like we all had experience with teaching younger kids.”

Throughout the week, Mikaili explored the sports world, from visiting the Atlanta Falcons training facility to attending her first professional soccer match. Leadership exercises, like crafting a collective paragraph using daily key words, helped her gain teamwork and communication skills.

Mikaili’s leadership extends beyond the Academy – she’s a Girls Golf eLeader and this summer mentored younger players as

a Game Changers Intern. These experiences reinforce the importance of listening and networking, skills she knows will benefit her in future leadership roles.

Mikaili’s journey showcases FTCO’s empowering of young leaders. As she pursues her passion for golf and dreams of becoming a graphic designer and architect, we look forward to seeing her success on and off the course.

I really enjoy giving back and volunteering with Girls Golf. It’s really good to see younger girls trying something new by learning golf.



Game Changers Interns

Over the summer months, we engage hundreds of kids through our onsite classes, camps, community partner organizations and special event sessions. These programs would not be possible without our team of high school and college interns!

These 12 young people brought positive energy and enthusiasm and served as inspiring examples to younger kids of the character that it takes to be a Game Changer.

We're excited to provide such growth and leadership opportunities within our community, empowering our participants to make a real difference.



1,920

total hours
contributed
in 2024

92%

of our summer
interns are First
Tee participants
or alumni

42%

of our summer
interns are
female

“

Coaching with First Tee reminds me that the most important part of golf is the friendships and the fun we create for the kids.

– Carter, FTCO Game Changers Intern



Supporting Our Mission

Fore the Kids

Fore the Kids 2024 brought together golf enthusiasts and community supporters for an unforgettable evening at X-Golf Columbus, featuring exciting golf simulator challenges, a silent auction, wine tasting and great camaraderie – all in support of our mission. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, including lead sponsor Nationwide, and the enthusiasm of our attendees, the event raised more than \$45,000!



2024 Golf Classic

Held at the exclusive Double Eagle Club, the 2024 Golf Classic brought together nine teams for a fantastic day on the course, raising over \$45,000 to support our mission.



Memorial Tournament

FTCO had an incredible presence at the 2024 Memorial Tournament, highlighted by the Game Changers Lunch, where three of our participants engaged in a panel discussion led by NBC4 anchor and FTCO Board Member Matt Barnes. While engaging families at the Clubhouse Kids Family Night, we also received a generous \$15,000 gift from Scotts Miracle-Gro to help support our First Tee School Program. From career exploration at the Beyond the Tee with AWS Tech Tour to watching the pros in action, our participants had an unforgettable experience. We're grateful to the Memorial Tournament, PGA TOUR Superstore and Scotts Miracle-Gro for making these opportunities possible!



2024 Orty's Outing

The 2024 Orty's Outing brought golfers together for a fantastic day on the course at The Lakes Golf & Country Club, all in support of FTCO. Attendees enjoyed a beautiful round of golf and heard from FTCO participant Isaac, who shared his journey as a player, intern and aspiring Evans Scholar.



Game Changers Golf Marathon

2024 saw the return of FTCO's Golf Marathon, which ran through the month of October. Our golfers, including several FTCO Board members, played a total of 620 holes of golf – impressive!



Ambassadors Council

In its first year, the FTCO Ambassadors Council laid the groundwork for future initiatives. As they grow, the Ambassadors Council looks forward to hosting engaging events in 2025, creating new opportunities for individuals to get involved, support FTCO's mission and make a lasting difference for local youth.

Golf Gear GIFTaway

FTCO hosted its first-ever Golf Gear GIFTaway, providing more than 30 families with free junior golf equipment, shoes, apparel and accessories. This special event was made possible by generous donations from Good Sports, Inc. and PING Golf, ensuring that every child has access to the gear they need to grow in the game.



Alum Spotlight – Jay

FTCO alum Jay Briggs Jr., epitomizes the blend of golf skills and life values fostered by the program. Introduced to golf at five by his father, Jay found not only a passion but also a source of connection and personal growth.

First Tee reinforced the same life skills Jay had learned from his parents, such as perseverance, integrity, and sportsmanship, shaping him not only as a golfer but as a future leader.



Transitioning from high school to college golf at the University of Redlands, Jay credits First Tee in part for honing his discipline and time management. Now a college graduate, Jay aims to make a mark in the corporate world, fueled by his commitment to giving back.



It's deeper than just the game of golf. First Tee is developing relationships that go a lot deeper than just teaching golf but are helping kids become a better man or woman in the future.

Inspired in part by First Tee's mentorship, he plans to establish his own foundation, paying forward the opportunities he received.

Jay's journey illustrates the transformative influence of supportive parents and programs like First Tee, molding not just skilled athletes but also compassionate individuals dedicated to serving their communities.

How to Get Involved

Join us in building game changers by **donating time, talent and treasure.**

Volunteer

Whether you're coaching on the course or supporting behind the scenes, your time and mentorship help shape the next generation. You don't need golf experience to volunteer – just a passion for serving kids and teens. Join us for a session, an event, or a few hours a month, and be a positive force in our community.

Donate

As an independently operated nonprofit, we rely on generous community support to make our mission possible. Your contributions help us provide life-changing opportunities through financial aid, equipment, and free school and community programs. Whether you give once, monthly or join us as a corporate partner, every gift makes an impact.

Join the FTCO Ambassadors Council

Our Ambassadors Council is a group of young-at-heart professionals dedicated to supporting FTCO's mission through fundraising, volunteering and community engagement. Open to anyone 21+, this is a great way to give back, connect with like-minded individuals and help shape the future of local youth – no golf experience required!

More Ways to Partner

There are countless ways to support FTCO beyond traditional volunteering or donations. By sharing your skills, services or resources, you help equip young people with the tools and confidence they need to succeed on and off the course. Want to explore unique ways to give back? Email Janae@tftco.org to find the right opportunity for you!



**Scan to learn
more about
getting
involved!**

Our Partners

FTCO relies on the support of generous donors and partners to carry out our mission and is grateful to receive widespread support from organizations throughout Central Ohio and beyond. This support allows us to deliver free and low-cost programming to local kids and teens.

2024 Partners

Advanced Drainage Systems
Armor Paving & Sealing
Bill and Nancy Boardman
Blue Sky Business Valuation
Ric and Marina Dillon
City of Columbus
Columbus Youth Foundation
Discover Financial Services
Sue and Bill Eubanks
Golf Galaxy
Oscar and Terri Guerrero

Ingram White Castle Foundation
Mark Mishler
John B. and Jane McCoy
Nationwide
Tod and Betsy Ortlip
PGA TOUR Superstore
Harry Rhulen
the Memorial Tournament
Scotts Miracle-Gro
X-Golf Columbus

Community & Program Partners

After School All Stars
Blacklick Woods Metro
Golf Course
The Buckeye Ranch
Columbus Recreation and Parks
Department
Down Syndrome Association of Ohio
Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland

Golf Galaxy
Heritage Golf Club
Home for Families
LiFEsports at The Ohio State University
Oakhaven Golf Club
Ohio State School for the Blind
PGA TOUR Superstore
The View Golf Club

Get to Know Our Team

Administration & Development



Greg Wright
Executive Director



Cheri Jenkins
Director of
Operations



Janae Miller
Marketing & Development
Manager



Kristen Murray
Development
Assistant

Programming



Ethan Pinckney
Player Manager, LSE &
Community Partners



Beth Taggart
Program Operations
Coordinator



Denise Vermilion, LPGA
Director of Operations
for Girls Golf



Jonathon Wilson
School & Volunteer
Engagement Manager

Coaches

Ashley Bisciotti
Christina Buoni
Ann Conley
Belina Khammountry

Eliza Khammountry
Erica Miller
Elizabeth Shultis
Alan Southard

Jeff Starrett
Akoua Tagro
Sarah Tagro

A Message from Our Board President

It is an honor to serve as Board President for First Tee – Central Ohio, an organization that is making a lasting impact on the lives of young people in our community. My journey with FTCO began through a connection with longtime board member David Berson, and from the moment I learned about the mission, I knew this was something special. As someone who is passionate about improving opportunities for kids, has served on nonprofit boards and loves the game of golf, FTCO was a perfect fit.

Over the past five years, I've had the privilege of watching FTCO grow—expanding our reach, strengthening our programs and deepening our impact. What excites me most is how our work provides life-changing benefits, not only to the kids we serve but also to the broader community and the game of golf itself. Through our programs, young people develop confidence, resilience and leadership skills that will serve them well beyond the course.

Stepping into the role of Board President, I'm motivated by the momentum we've built and the incredible team we have in place—dedicated board members, staff, volunteers and supporters who are all aligned in our goal of reaching more kids and making FTCO stronger for the future. I look forward to helping further our long-term strategy, expanding our capacity and ensuring that even more young people have access to the opportunities that First Tee provides.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your support makes all the difference, and I'm excited for what we will accomplish together.



Gio Smyth

Thank You, Jason Job, for a Decade of Service



We extend our deepest gratitude to Jason Job for his decade of service on the FTCO Board, including seven years as Board President. Under his leadership, FTCO expanded from a single location to a thriving multi-site organization, grew its school program and saw many participants earn national opportunities. Jason's passion and dedication have been instrumental in shaping FTCO's impact, and while he is stepping down as Board President, we're grateful he will continue supporting our mission as Immediate Past President.

Board of Directors

Giovanni Smyth – President
Yaz Ashrawi – Secretary
Emmett Bahnson – Treasurer
Jason Job – Past President
Matt Barnes
Mike D'Arienzo
Sue Eubanks
Ben Forquer

Oscar Guerrero
Paul Howard
John Martin
Kyle Monfort
Jason Smith
Jameel Turner
Tammy Weaver
Courtney White

Honorary Chairman: Jack Nicklaus

Honorary Ambassadors:
Archie Griffin
Bill Hosket

***Thank you to our outgoing board members
for their dedication and service:***

Tonya Braun
Jeff Bruner



Your support makes an impact every day by empowering local kids and teens to navigate life's challenges with resilience, self-confidence and inner strength through the game of golf. Help us continue building game changers!



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First Tee – Central Ohio is
a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.