

The Long Game:

2025 Impact Report



A Message from Our Executive Leadership

There is something special about First Tee – Central Ohio. You feel it the moment you see a kid step up to the tee for the first time, or watch a teen discover that the values they built on the course are the same ones carrying them through life.

This year, more than 11,900 kids and teens experienced that feeling – because of coaches who show up every day, teachers who open their classrooms and donors and partners who believe in the long game.

For us, 2025 was a year of momentum. We strengthened the quality and consistency of our programs, ensuring every kid we work with receives meaningful support. We fostered a passionate, mission-driven team and welcomed new partners, new schools and new communities into the FTCO family – **growing our reach without losing the personal connection that makes this work so powerful.**

We also welcomed new leadership. Patrick brings deep experience working with schools and educational partners and a genuine belief in meeting kids where they already are. We are excited about the future with Patrick leading our efforts!

As you read through the pages that follow, we hope you see what we see – **a community of game changers in the making, and a mission worth every effort it takes to sustain it.** Thank you for being part of the long game.



Gio Smyth
Board President



I’m honored to join First Tee – Central Ohio and lead an organization that is making such a meaningful impact on young people across our community. I’m excited to work alongside our staff, board, coaches and partners to expand opportunities for more kids to grow, learn and thrive.

– Patrick Lynch, Chief Executive Officer

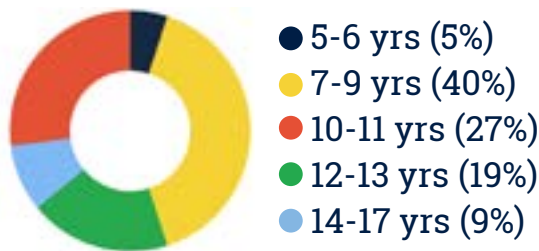
Our Impact

In 2025, we served **11,926 kids and teens** on golf courses, in schools and through community partners.

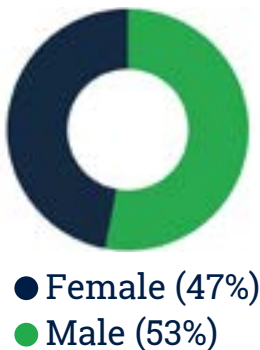
None of our work would be possible without the time and effort from our coaches and volunteers. 2025's impact was supported by **29 coaches and 41 volunteers**, who generously give their time at classes, summer camps and special events.

Who We Serve

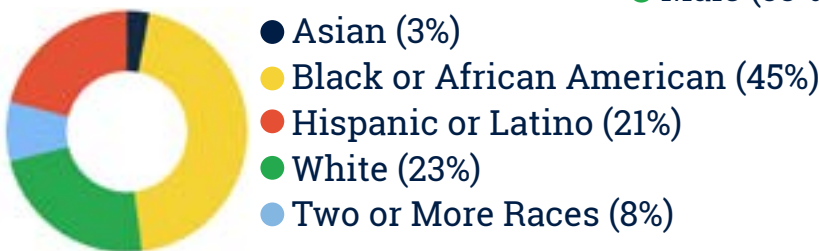
Age



Gender



Ethnicity



2025 Program Snapshot

11,926

Kids and teens
impacted last year

70

Coaches and
volunteers

68

School and
community
partnerships

6

Program sites
throughout
Central Ohio

How We Make an Impact

First Tee Programs

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graph LR; A((First Tee Programs)) -.- B((On-Course Golf & Life Skills Program)); A -.- C((Community Partnership Programs)); A -.- D((In-School Golf & Life Skills Program)); A -.- E((LPGA-USGA Girls Golf));
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On-Course Golf & Life Skills Program

Hundreds of kids participate in our core classes on the course 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 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.

LPGA-USGA Girls Golf

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

Bringing Golf to Their Backyard

Through the summer, FTCO coaches spent a week bringing golf instruction and character lessons to kids at the Milo-Grogan, Adams and Linden community recreation centers. Then for the first time, those participants capped off their week with a trip to Blacklick Woods Metro Golf Course.

More than 90 kids rotated through hands-on stations: putting on a real green, taking full swings at the driving range and playing out of a bunker. For many, it was their very first time stepping onto a golf course.

This experience was made possible through the 2025 City of Columbus Summer Youth Programming Grant, awarded in partnership with the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department. The grant supported FTCO's broader partnership with LiFEsports at The Ohio State University – funding coaching, character programming and the field trip itself – ensuring that kids in every corner of our community have access to the game.



“

I love to see participants have those clicking moments — whether it's something in their swing or even a life skill. It's even more impactful when you yourself have been through it, because you know how much it took to get there.

– Paige, FTCO Alum and Intern

The Long Game Pays Off

Longtime participant, Isaac, recently took on a new challenge – entering his first year at The Ohio State University. Isaac earned the prestigious Evans Scholarship – a full tuition and housing award for high-achieving golf caddies who demonstrate strong academics, financial need and outstanding character. That last requirement is no accident.



Through First Tee classes, local and national leadership opportunities and four summers as a coach and intern, Isaac built the kind of character that opens doors. But he is quick to point out that no door opens without the right people behind you.

Almost all of the ‘firsts’ in my life have come from FTCO – playing golf, flying in an airplane, my first job. Without a doubt the biggest impact has been Coach Ethan. He’s been with me since the beginning. He’s definitely on my go-to team.

– Isaac, FTCO Alum and Intern

Leading the Way – On and Off the Course

This summer, eight participants attended the LPGA Leadership Academy, where they spent two days focused on empowerment, self-discovery and what it means to lead.

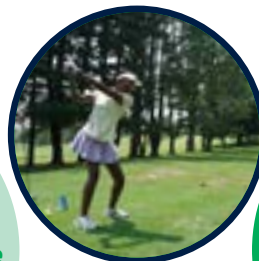
Even though this was out of my comfort zone, I’m happy I came.

– Hebe



This experience was life changing and gave me a different perspective of how I feel about myself.

– Tori



I hope I will be able to come back as a counselor and share my knowledge with others.

– Mikaili

Golf for Every Kid

Sometimes it takes one person to open a door for an entire community. When FTCO volunteer Judy Schmitz connected the team with Maddison Matthey, Adaptive and Inclusive Program Coordinator for Grove City Parks and Recreation, a new kind of partnership was born. Grove City had just launched an adaptive program and was looking for the right partner and FTCO was the perfect fit.

Fully funded by a USGA grant, FTCO launched a six-week session at the Grove City Recreation Center in Fall 2025, serving 25 kids ages 7-11 with developmental, physical and invisible disabilities. Every lesson was tailored to meet participants where they are, in an environment built on confidence, resilience and belonging.



Growing the Game in the Classroom

Thanks to the generous support of Scotts Miracle-Gro and the Columbus Youth Foundation, FTCO's School Program continues to grow where it matters most. Together, their investments fund the staffing, equipment, training and curriculum that bring golf and life skills into PE classes across Central Ohio.

2025
Snapshot

5 new schools – all
within Columbus
City Schools

57 partner
schools

8,000+ students
reached

First Tee sparked an interest in golf and helped students boost their self-esteem, concentration and focus. First Tee centers around empowerment, which is evident through the children that experience success in many forms through their program.

– Jordan, Columbus City Schools PE Teacher

Dear Coach...

In May 2025, we celebrated our first annual **First Tee Week** – a campaign dedicated to the coaches who bring our programs to life every day. Throughout the week, participants shared heartfelt messages for the coaches who shaped them.

In 2025,
FTCO coaches
dedicated more than
21,000
hours to programming
local kids & teens



What our coaches
provide goes beyond
teaching the game of golf.
They create safe, positive
environments where young
people feel seen, supported
and encouraged to grow.

– Cheri, FTCTO Director
of Operations



*My coaches
have taught me
about improving
my golf game and
how to be a better
person in
real life.*

Bank of America Golf with Us

This July, Bank of America teed up something special at Champions Golf Course – welcoming over 50 kids for a free golf clinic. Local coaches and Bank of America volunteers led hands-on sessions, while special guests Nick Swisher, MLB All-Star and World Series Champion, and Kary Hollenbaugh of the OSU Women's Golf team inspired young players on and off the course. Thank you to Bank of America and Champions Golf Course for making this experience possible.



Why It Matters

My favorite part of Girls Golf is getting to meet new friends. It's such a welcoming community, and everyone supports each other while learning and having fun.

– Maranda, Participant



I think the mission matters deeply because kids today need safe, physical places where they can grow, feel encouraged and learn who they are.

– Carolyn, Volunteer

The game of golf mirrors life. You'll have moments of brilliance and moments where you struggle, and First Tee helps kids explore those moments on and off the course. First Tee gives kids a supportive place to grow their confidence and character, not just their swing.

– Barry, Parent and Coach



What stood out most was not just the skill development, but the character building. The emphasis was never on winning. Instead, it was about working together, improving step by step and never giving up.

– Channon, PE Specialist, Columbus City Schools



Golf is the platform, but the lessons – respect, honesty, perseverance, responsibility and confidence – carry far beyond the course.

– Christina, Parent and Coach



Get to Know Our Team

Administration & Development

Patrick Lynch
Chief Executive Officer

Abby Erkkila
Development & Stewardship
Coordinator

Cheri Jenkins
Director of Operations

Janae Miller
Marketing & Development
Manager

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

Riley Albright
Rori Barker
Ashley Bisciotti
Evan Boren
Christina Buoni
Ann Conley
Jonas Conn
Anji De La Cruz

Cory Dempsey
Belina Khammounry
Eliza Khammounry
Jack Malone
Erica Miller
Anjali Mishra
Nikelle Pledger
Carter Raubenolt

Grant Raubenolt
Michael Romig
Elizabeth Shultis
Mikaili Smith
Alan Southard
Jeff Starrett
Isaac Stewart
Akoua Tagro

Sarah Tagro
Reese Walker
Jasmine Williams
Mason Williams
Brenden Woodfork

Board of Directors

Giovanni Smyth – President
Douglas Shank – Vice President
Yaz Ashrawi – Secretary
Emmett Bahnson – Treasurer

Matt Barnes
Mike D'Arienzo
Sue Eubanks
Ben Forquer

Oscar Guerrero
Paul Howard
Kyle Monfort

Jason Smith
Jameel Turner
Courtney White

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

John Martin | Tammy Weaver

In It for the Long Game

We rely on the generous support of donors and partners throughout Central Ohio and beyond to carry out our mission. Their investment makes it possible to deliver free and low-cost programming to local kids and teens – fully funding our school and community programs and providing financial aid to families who need it most.

Because of this community, no family is turned away from the game.

**To everyone who has given their time, talent or treasure –
thank you for being part of the long game.**

Community & Program Partners

After School All Stars
Blacklick Woods Metro Golf Course
The Buckeye Ranch
DICK's Sporting Goods
Down Syndrome Association of Ohio
Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland
Golf Galaxy
Grove City Parks and Recreation
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
Virtues Golf Club



Join Us In Building Game Changers

Volunteer

No golf experience needed – just a passion for positively impacting kids. Join us for a session, an event, or a few hours a month.

Donate

Every gift makes an impact. Support financial aid, equipment and free programs for kids across Central Ohio. Give once, monthly or as a corporate partner.

Partner With Us

Share your skills, services or resources to help young people grow on and off the course.



Scan to learn more about getting involved with our mission!



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