

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J. and PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Fla. (Oct. 13, 2022) — Commemorating a 25-year partnership with a focus on growing the game, the USGA has continued its investment in First Tee by awarding IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility) grants to 25 chapters across America.

The USGA's IDEA Grant Program delivers direct funding to community-based programs that break down barriers to participation in golf and First Tee's character-building programs, improving pathways to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility. In 2022, 25 chapters — from Massachusetts to California — were awarded up to \$25,000 each to provide transportation, hire diverse coaches, train volunteers and build programs in diverse communities, among other activities.

Totaling \$325,000 in 2022, the USGA's investment in First Tee is the latest demonstration of its long-standing commitment to ensuring recreational golf continues to thrive. What started as a \$3 million, three-year commitment by the USGA as a founding partner in 1997 has helped underpin First Tee's ability to reach more than 2 million youth annually.

"This year's IDEA grants are the latest milestone that reflect significant progress made to date in partnership with First Tee," said Mike Whan, CEO of the USGA. "The best way to introduce youth to the game is by meeting them where they are in their communities, and we are going to continue to drive resources toward the local level to ensure a more accessible and inclusive game for generations to come."

"The USGA's support is a game changer for the communities that we serve," said Greg McLaughlin, First Tee CEO. "With these grants, our chapters are opening the door to even more youth, especially in underserved and underrepresented communities, to explore the possibilities in golf and beyond as they build their character and life lessons through the game."

First Tee was founded in 1997 through the leadership of five golf organizations, aimed at making golf more affordable and accessible in the United States through a national grassroots program. As the first programs were being developed, First Tee began an intentional effort to seamlessly integrate the game of golf with a life skills curriculum, creating learning experiences that build inner strength, self-confidence and resilience that kids can carry to everything they do. Many alumni continue to play and work in the game, inspiring the next generation.

As part of more than 25 years of substantial growth that led to the establishment of 150 First Tee chapters with more than 1,400 program locations in communities across America, the USGA's targeted support has helped First Tee drive greater equity among underrepresented youth to access golf. The IDEA grants, launched in 2021, fund innovative initiatives for golfers with disabilities, those in Spanish-speaking communities, Indigenous people and at-risk students, among others.

First Tee is focused on increasing diverse participation year over year through many strategies, including hiring and training diverse coaches and implementing the First Tee School Program in Title 1 schools. The efforts are contributing to the diversification of the sport: Since 1997, there has been a 25 percent increase in non-Caucasian golfers, many of whom entered the game through First Tee.

The 2022 grant recipients include:

- **First Tee — Four Corners**, located in southwest Colorado and northwest New Mexico, primarily serves at-risk Native American and Latino youth through programs at Aztec Boys & Girls Club, Sycamore Park Community Center and local elementary schools. The USGA's IDEA grant funding helps the chapter subsidize green fees, cover curriculum costs and financially support Native American youth participating in junior tournaments.
- The expansion of **First Tee — Greater Charleston**'s Game Changers program provides mentoring, STEM and character education, safe spaces, transportation, meals and enrichment activities for students starting in sixth grade and guiding them through high school graduation. The chapter offers programming five days a week during the summer months and every Saturday during the school year with support from the USGA's IDEA grant funding.

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- Increased opportunities for adaptive youth golfers have been made possible at **First Tee — Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky**. The USGA's IDEA grant has allowed the chapter to add programming for teens and children with autism, partner with Special Olympics of Hamilton County, host programming for kids with life-threatening and chronic health challenges and provide transportation to Reeves Golf Course for an eight-week life skills course.
- A two-time IDEA grant recipient, **First Tee — Greater Pasadena** hosts clinics for the Latina Golf Association while the USGA's IDEA grant helps cover course and coaching fees for the events tailored toward Hispanic women who have never touched a golf club.
- The all-female leadership team at **First Tee — Hampton Roads** works to increase access to golf for young people of diverse cognitive and physical abilities by partnering with the Special Olympics to host multiple adaptive events and provide members of the adaptive community with access to chapter facilities free of charge.
- Eighty-six percent of **First Tee — Monterey County** participants are Latino, and a partnership with Valley Heath allows the chapter to provide programming to underserved individuals without health care. With support from the USGA's IDEA grant, this chapter can create golf and life skills classes for Special Kids Connect while expanding its overall ADA accommodations.
- **First Tee — Pittsburgh** provides life skills and youth development through a work preparedness program, adaptive golf for special-needs students in the South Fayette School District and community partnerships with Pittsburgh Police Department and Allegheny Youth Development. These initiatives are supported by IDEA grant funding, which covers transportation costs and the purchase of a van to transport youth to year-round sessions.

Since 1997, the USGA has invested more than \$33 million in junior programs, including First Tee; LPGA-USGA Girls Golf; Drive, Chip & Putt; and the AJGA as part of a long-standing organizational commitment to advancing the game of golf with exposure beginning at the junior level. Introducing golf at a young age has proven to be a critical tactic in reducing barriers of entry to welcome greater diversity to the game. More than one-quarter of today's 3.1 million junior golfers are non-Caucasian compared with 6 percent of youth more than 20 years ago.

In addition to its initial \$3 million starter investment in 1997, the USGA immediately began to deliver sizable grants to build First Tee programs in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Kansas, Alabama, Arkansas and many other communities.

IDEA Grant applications were open to all First Tee chapters affiliated with one of the USGA's 58 Allied Golf Associations (AGAs). Located in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, AGAs serve millions of golfers at the recreational level by increasing engagement and participation and improving the golfer experience.

2022 USGA IDEA Grant Recipients:

First Tee — Central Mississippi

First Tee — Cleveland (Ohio)

First Tee — Coastal Carolinas

First Tee — Connecticut

First Tee — Greater Dallas (Texas)

First Tee — Denver (Colo.)

First Tee — Fort Worth (Texas)

First Tee — Four Corners (N.M., Colo.)

First Tee — Greater Charleston (S.C.)

First Tee — Greater Chicago (Ill.)

First Tee — Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky

First Tee — Greater Pasadena (Calif.)

First Tee — Greater Philadelphia (Pa.)

First Tee — Greater Portland (Ore.)

First Tee — Hampton Roads (Va.)

First Tee — Indiana

First Tee — Massachusetts

First Tee — Metropolitan New York

First Tee — Monterey County (Calif.)

First Tee — Pittsburgh (Pa.)

First Tee — Sandhills (N.C.)

First Tee — South Dakota

First Tee — South Puget Sound (Wash.)

First Tee — Southern Colorado

First Tee — West Michigan

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