First Tee Students Gain Insight and Motivation as Volunteers for President’s Cup Events

By Remi Shendell

Volunteer experience is an integral part of The First Tee ACE and Eagle levels; however, recent opportunities made available to TFTMNY participants show that volunteering is not only something that they are required to do but also something that they enjoy.

On September 24-26, Plainfield Country Club hosted the inaugural Junior President’s Cup. Volunteers from TFT of Plainfield were given Standard Bearing positions for the tournament. Participants not only witnessed exciting, strategic play but also gained valuable insights into the minds and motivations of their role models. “Being able to watch how the players conducted themselves and handled such a challenging course was inspiring,” says Annie Cerria, a volunteer from TFT of Plainfield. Some volunteers even got the chance to meet honorary captains, Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus. For many TFTMNY participants, this rewarding volunteer experience was far from over the first day; the days following were filled with crowds, television cameras, and professionals at the President’s Cup. (Continued on PG. 3)
Mosholu Participant Tyler Kim Soaks It All in at the PURE Insurance Championship at Pebble Beach Impacting The First Tee
By Allison Wong

Tyler Kim, 17, of Manhattan, represented TFTMNY at the 2017 PURE Insurance Championship tournament, taking place at Pebble Beach Golf Links and Poppy Hills Golf Course, from September 19-24. The event benefitted The First Tee and was broadcasted live on Golf Channel. 81 First Tee junior golfers were each paired with a Champions Tour Professional and played a best-ball format with their pro. All of the participants also had the opportunity to mingle with other participants, event sponsors, businessmen, and local dignitaries.

Tyler was paired with fellow New York native Joey Sindelar for the week. While Tyler admitted he was a little nervous on the first tee box, he used the Core Values of The First Tee to stripe one down the middle. “Playing with Joey was such an incredible experience. He was so nice throughout the entire week and it was nice for me to be up close and see how an accomplished PGA Pro like Joey works his way around a golf course,” said Tyler. Playing Pebble Beach was also an experience in it of itself for Tyler because of its history and beauty.

Our First Tee NYC Director of Player Development, Anthony Rodriguez, accompanied Tyler the entire week and helped prepare his game for the competition. “Tyler has got some serious game and more importantly he’s a great kid and model First Tee student,” said Anthony.

Tyler’s advice for the selected participant next year is to “enjoy it to the fullest and have fun because it’s a once-in-a-lifetime event.”

Ernza Theodore and George W. Bush
By Adam Zweig

Participant Ernza Theodore, pictured left, gave a speech to some of the top executives in the world of golf and the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush. Ernza, who is from Haiti, came to the United States when she was 10 and didn’t know English but quickly realized she had better pick it up quickly! Using the Core Value of Perseverance, she learned how to read, write, and speak the language with the help of her family. She later learned of the tutoring program that was offered at The First Tee at Mosholu Golf Course and then immersed herself in the program, receiving academic help, hitting golf shots and making friends while surrounded by positivity. Today she is part of the Ace Scholars Program and is also giving back by helping the younger kids in the program. A true First Tee success story!
Liberty National Golf Club welcomed energized crowds, celebrities, and the best professional golfers in the world to its pristine golf course in Jersey City. TFTMNY participants took part in an exclusive, inside-the-ropes experience as Standard Bearers September 28th through October 1st. They were thrilled to see their golf idols like Jordan Speith and Hideki Matsuyama play from just a few feet away. “Rickie Fowler is my favorite player, and he was in my group. Just watching the professionals play and being there with them was awesome,” says Xavier Partee, 13, a student at TFT of NYC.

Although it will be a while until the next PGA tournament is close to our chapter, the impact on the participants is only growing.

With exciting events like these, TFTMNY participants discover that volunteering for the community can be both meaningful and fun. Through tournaments like the Junior President’s Cup and the President’s Cup, participants can channel their passion for golf in a productive, positive way. The volunteering opportunities that the PGA, various golf courses, and TFTMNY work together to create and provide both a love for golf and for giving back.

Our Chapter, TFTMNY was excited to have participant Asaru Wahls alongside Hall of Famer Annika Sorenstam, recognize The First Tee’s 20th Anniversary live on Golf Channel during the World Golf Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. The event was held on September 26th at Cipriani’s, located on Wall Street in New York City.

In front of some of the greatest golfers to have ever played the game and on live TV, Asaru spoke about how The First Tee taught him values that have helped him in golf and in school. “The First Tee has taught me to set goals and to never give up trying to reach them. I need to keep working on my game to get better and also persevere in school to master my courses and to excel,” said Asaru. Pictured below is Asaru and Annika rehearsing those very words before the big lights.

That night five new members were inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame: Henry Longhurst, Davis Love III, Meg Mallon, Lorena Ochoa, and Ian Woosnam. The World Golf Hall of Fame has a long history of honoring both men and women and their significant contributions and successes within the game of golf.
3\textsuperscript{rd} Annual Founder’s Invitational at Meadow Brook Club

By Barry McLaughlin

The Meadow Brook Club has hosted many Chapter fundraising events over the years. This year is extra special, as it hosts our Founder’s Invitational over the newly remodeled and majestic links. This year nearly 100 golfers enjoyed a beautiful fall day, the fine cuisine offered at both lunch and the reception following golf, and the renovations that make this club one of the premiere golf courses in the metropolitan area. This year’s event raised more than $220,000 in support of youth development programs and the three major initiatives of the Chapter: Expansion of Outreach and Diversity, Facility Development and Educational Opportunities. TFTMNY proved once again the impact the organization is having on the lives of thousands of young kids. MasterCard, a long-time partner of TFTMNY, was the Title Sponsor, along with New York Life as Presenting Sponsor.

Each year our Chapter likes to give one of our accomplished participants the opportunity to speak about the program’s impact on them and thousands of their peers. This year Ernza Theodore, of Port au Prince, Haiti, spoke about her coming to the USA after the terrible earthquake that rocked Haiti. She found her way to The First Tee at Mosholu at the urging of her cousin, who has become a talented golfer with aspirations for perhaps a professional career. Ernza, who is still learning English, is an accomplished student who has maintained Honor Roll status for the past three years. Ernza currently attends Cardinal Spelling High School in The Bronx and is hopeful that its reputation for excellence will propel her to a higher education at the prestigious Harvard University.

A brief panel discussion led by Board Members Gene Bernstein, Jay Mottola, and Charlie Robson provided important details on how and why our First Tee Chapter was created, the significant impact the program is having on the lives of children, and hopes for the program’s future growth.

The 2017 Founder’s Invitational winners of the Lew Rudin Trophy were Gene Bernstein (TFTMNY Board Member), Jack Bransfield, Victor Imbimbo, and Bill Mentlik. Congratulations to all of the supporters and a special thank you to Dennis Harrington, Rick Meskell, John Carlone, and the entire staff at the Meadow Brook Club.
Columbus Day Fundraiser Benefitting TFT Long Island

By Allison Wong

On November 5, 2017, volunteers began to flood Rock Hill Golf and Country Club in Manorville, NY, as early as 7:00 a.m. After having to postpone its 5th annual Columbus Day Golf Outing twice, The First Tee of Nassau County was eager to make this day special for all the participants. At 10:30 a.m., the foursomes went to their respective holes, and the 18-hole scramble began.

The rain that quickly followed shocked them all, and the perfect golf weather disappeared in the blink of an eye. Despite all of the soaked golfers, smiles never faded, and many were amused at the irony in having postponed the event only to get caught in more rain. During dinner laughter filled the dining room, and everyone cheered as winners of the raffle prizes were announced. The event winner was the PGA Superstore team, which shot a score of 59!

A total of $30,000 was raised for TFT Long Island during this event. Thank you to all of the volunteers and staff of the Rock Hill Golf and Country Club for helping make the event a huge success.
Nassau Participant Signs with Elon D1 Women’s Golf Team

Congratulations to First Tee of Nassau County participant Faith Francioso on committing to Elon University to play on their Division 1 Women’s Golf Team. Faith is a longtime First Tee participant from Wantagh, NY. She is an Ace Level participant and was also selected as our chapter’s representative at the 2016 Pure Insurance Pebble Beach First Tee Open.

The First Tee NYC Ends 2017 with End-of-the-Year Championship

By Adam Zweig

The First Tee of NYC staff hosted its 2nd Annual First Tee of NYC End-of-the-Year Championship on November 4th. Over 100 participants from Mosholu, Brooklyn and Westchester flooded Mosholu Golf Course in The Bronx on a brisk, sunny day.

Participants competed against one another in different divisions based on their First Tee skill level in a fun and friendly environment. Family members were invited to come out and see the kids show off all they had learned from their First Tee coaches.

This year there were two very special winners who participated in the NYC Cup, a competition awarded to the First Tee participant who accumulated the most points in 2017. Points were earned by attending First Tee classes, volunteering, playing rounds of golf, being on honor roll at school, certifying up a skill level, writing book reports, passing First Tee assessments and many other things related to First Tee and school. This year’s winners were Leon Bui and Sarah Brannigan who were recognized at the award ceremonies. “I love being involved with The First Tee program because it involves education and golf and you feel like you’re at home on the golf course,” said Brannigan while holding her trophies for the day. At the end of the day the program is all about having fun learning the core values and respecting each other.

Participants and parents gather around the trophy presentation
Outstanding Participant Leadership Summit

By Barry McLaughlin

Our summer newsletter contained a story about Madhavi Shashank and Cameren Dawkins who were selected as our Chapter’s Most Outstanding Participants. Their names were sent to The First Tee for consideration to participate in the Outstanding Participant Leadership Summit, and they both were selected! Madhavi and Cameren spent November 8-11 in Orlando, Florida, with 26 other Outstanding Participant attendees. Madhavi had been pre-selected as one of eight finalists for the Outstanding Participant Award. Each of the finalists will receive college scholarship support, presented by Shell Oil Company, the award sponsor.

“I would like to thank The First Tee for giving me the opportunity to meet some of the most inspiring individuals who exemplify the core values in everything they do. They have become members of my go-to team and my family. This was without a doubt the best week of my life, and I learned a lot about myself as an individual and a leader, which is something I could not be more grateful for.” - Madhavi Shashank

All of the participants enjoyed a great week of events that included educational sessions on social media, leadership and character development and a better understanding of the college selection process. The group met with special attendees of The First Tee’s Network Meeting (this year celebrating 20 years) including Former President George W. Bush, Annika Sorenstam, Joe Louis Barrow, Jr. and Keith Dawkins. Saturday night was time for The First Tee Network Meeting Gala Celebration. All of the Network Meeting Chapter attendees gathered for one final time to celebrate the end of a fun-filled week and to announce the overall Male and Female Outstanding Participants. Each of the eight finalists, including Madhavi, had four minutes to share their story in front of the over 700 gala attendees. Later, Meghna Mazumdar and Gerry Jones, Jr. were announced as this year’s Outstanding Participants and Madhavi was there to congratulate Meghna and Gerry with hugs. You can be assured that we haven’t heard the last from Madhavi and Cameren.

“The First Tee has helped me achieve what I would have never thought possible. I will learn how to play this game, I will go to college, and I will live a life of integrity.” - Cameren Dawkins

Madhavi and Cameren at the Outstanding Participant Leadership Summit