Young Benefactors Host 10th Annual 19th Hole Event at Liberty National

By Gabby Pena

On Thursday, May 10th, the Young Benefactors 10th Annual 19th Hole event was hosted at Liberty National GC where over 300 people attended the event to show their support for this amazing cause. The Young Benefactors are a network of young working adults with a mission to give back to TFTMNY’s Path to College program which provides participants and their parents with all the essentials they need to successfully graduate high school and get into the college of their dreams. They do this through fundraising, volunteering, spreading awareness and much more. Since its inception, the Young Benefactors have raised over $1,000,000 to assist with the amazing cause. (Continued on pg. 3)
Winged Keel Golf Outing at Quaker Ridge

Thank you to Aaron Abrahms for hosting the successful Winged Keel Group Golf Outing at Quaker Ridge Golf Course on May 8th. 72 golf enthusiasts played in the outing followed by a reception and silent auction. Funds raised support scholarships for TFTMNY’s program participants.

Two TFTMNY star participants, Leon (9) and Martha (16), greeted players on the par 3, 9th hole to offer advice or assistance to improve their score by trying to strike a ball even closer to the pin. Leon and Martha had a surprise when CBS Sports Broadcaster, Bill Macatee approached the 9th Tee Box and did a live play-by-play analysis of Leon’s shots. Macatee didn’t know he would also be surprised when he witnessed one of Leon’s shots land right next to the flagstick!

Thank you to Core Value sponsors Pure Insurance and Ken Whitney as well as the players who joined Mr. Abrahms in this inaugural outing. Due to the success, next year’s event is already on the calendar, May 14th, 2019 at Quaker Ridge!

Erin Schowerer selected for the Joe Louis Barrow Jr. Life Skills & Leadership Academy

Erin Schowerer, participant at The First Tee of Nassau County, was selected out of a large pool of First Tee participants from all over the country to attend the Joe Louis Barrow Jr. Life Skills & Leadership Academy from July 25 – July 31 in East Lansing, MI. The academy will develop and educate attendees in multiple aspects such as life skill development through engaging golf activities, leadership seminars, college preparatory and dorm living, and career exploration, all while having the opportunity to play championship golf and develop lifelong friendships. Through the week, participants will be inspired to consider how they can return to their chapters and communities and be a leader and role model to other participants. “I am looking forward to meeting new people and learning new skills that I will be able to use in college and also after college”, Said Erin, after learning she was selected for the opportunity.

In the spring, Erin will be attending SUNY Delhi to study Professional Golf and Business Management and will also be playing on the school’s Golf Team. Erin started playing golf 11 years ago thanks to her grandfather and then he introduced her to The First Tee program in Long Island where she has participated every year since.
The event, held inside the beautiful Liberty National clubhouse, featured a strolling dinner, open bar, and a golf simulator where attendees participated in a closest to the pin contest for a small prize. There was also a silent auction that featured sports memorabilia, sports tickets, New York City experiences, and foursomes at some of the most exclusive private golf courses in the New York Met area. Caren Yim (pictured below), who is the recipient of this year’s Lew Rudin NYU Scholarship and Eagle level participant, spoke about her experience with the program and how it has helped shape her life.

Each year at this event The Kate Keller Young Benefactors Award is awarded to individuals who play a major role in the YB’s mission. This year it rightfully went to co-founders Michael Rudin and Ned May (pictured below). They both were instrumental in helping start the YB network, developing fundraising opportunities through the Young Benefactors, and profoundly leading the program over the past 10 years.

A big thank you to Title Sponsor New York Life, Liberty National, the Young Benefactors, and all the attendees of the event. It’s because of all you we are able to raise funds and make an impact with deserving youth in our program.

The 16th Annual Lew Rudin Charity Golf Classic, held each year at Deepdale Golf Club, honors the memory of Lew Rudin who was a visionary and founder of The First Tee. This year, thanks to the Rudin family and friends, over $300,000 was raised to fund all four years of college for the two exceptional participants.

This year's NYU Scholarship recipients were Jewell Strickland of the The First Tee of Essex County at Weequahic Park GC in Newark, NJ and Caren Yim of The First Tee at Mosholu GC in the Bronx, NY. Caren gave a short heartfelt speech saying "The numerous resources that The First Tee has provided me with during my college process has allowed me to get into my dream school, without The First Tee's education programs I would not be going to NYU Shanghai next year." Yim credits the Rudin's and her mentors at TFTMNY for her successes, she plans to return to The First Tee and mentor children just as she once was.

Special thanks to everyone who came out to support the Rudin family and TFTMNY in their efforts to give back.
In March of 2018, the PGA of America learned about a heartwarming story of two city girls. Madison Rios, age 10, and Dhanna Lopez-Rosales, age 11 are two young girls from the Bronx, who met through the game of golf. A few weeks later a camera crew showed up at Mosholu Golf Course and spent the day learning about their friendship, their family, and the program which linked the two girls together. Since being introduced to each other, Madison’s mother, Susie Rios, says, “They have become peanut butter and jelly and it came because of golf.” They are now partners in crime and good friends. Their individual success on the golf course at last year’s end of the year championship in which Dhanna won first place and Madison won second brought them even closer, and happy to support each other.

Although both of their parents were reluctant about getting them into golf do to the uncertainty of the game and financial issues, they gave it a shot with The First Tee of Metropolitan New York’s program (TFTMNY) and PGA Jr. League. Dhanna’s mother, Abril Rosales, says that she wouldn’t have been able to afford the classes because she’s a single mother. Thankfully, The First Tee offers scholarship opportunities for families in need. All of the staff at TFTMNY cares and understands the community around them which is what makes the program special. Coach Lizzy spoke about how much assistance is offered, stating, “They get free golf instruction, they get to play on the course every week for free, and they get to do PGA Jr. League for no charge.” You could tell how passionate they are about supporting underprivileged children that want to be part of the program.

Madison loves golf so much that during the winter time she chips in her bathtub at home. The kids and even the parent’s love Coach Anthony (ARod) and Coach Lizzy. “He [Coach ARod] really asks about who they are and what their interests are.”, states Ms. Rios. Participant Dhanna also says, “I love them because they have given me many opportunities to be here.” Everyone is so gratuitous to the program and the donations made to fund the scholarships.
Improving the Present and Looking into the Future

By Remi Shendell

The First Tee of Plainfield students, employees, and donors have been eagerly preparing for a new arrival on the course: a building that they can use as an oasis of learning, outreach, cooperation, and improvement for the First Tee chapter. On Friday May 18th, a ribbon cutting was held to reveal the newly constructed building at the Plainfield West Nine in Plainfield, New Jersey. Donors, builders, local newspapers, students, and TFT employees attended the ceremony. The excitement at the event was tangible; after all, this new building signals a bright future for the chapter. As TFT Plainfield Program Director Bill Castner explains, “The building instills pride in TFT participants because now they have a space of their own to work on their golf game and life skills.” The new building has two large garage doors so that in the winter six participants at a time can hit onto the second hole fairway. This element of the building makes hosting winter classes easier and more efficient for both staff and students. There will also be a nine hole putting course built into the floor, a classroom for standardized test practice, tutoring, STEM initiatives, and more space to teach, practice, and hold group discussions. These new rooms and facilities are welcomed with excitement by TFT members. Nineteen year old Josh Marseille, a former TFT student and now employee, spoke at the ribbon cutting. Marseille is looking forward to utilizing the convenience of the new building. “In the past, when weather got the best of us, we took everyone in a van to the nearby sports center and shuttled them back and forth. Now, we can just walk inside the building and continue to teach,” he says. Castner echoes this statement, adding, “We will be able to do everything at the course; we don’t have to arrange meetings at the library or YMCA to tutor students or host SAT prep sessions; we can now do that inside of the building.”

Although the building was constructed by Donnelly Contruction with impressive speed, the facility has been in the works for many years. The amount of rigor and passion with which the building was piloted has been tremendous. The town of Edison, the members and administration at Plainfield Country Club, the Wilf Family, and TFTMNY executives were all instrumental in creating the perfect space. Their mission of providing a home for TFT students has nearly been fulfilled, however the impact of this building is not only for the present students; the building will be vital in the future growth of the chapter. Now that students and coaches have more space and technology to learn and teach, more initiatives can be introduced and the existing classes can be improved upon. “There are so many other things that we can now arrange and improve concerning parent communication, volunteer training, our Path to College initiative, and more,” Castner says. The ribbon cutting celebrated the past, present, and future of the TFT of Plainfield Chapter. Josh Marseille says, “The ribbon cutting showed me that people are still thinking about the First Tee, and I find that pretty cool.” The enthusiasm for the project and the future of the chapter proves that TFTMNY would agree.