The First Tee® Harrisonburg

NEWSLETTER

Winter Issue • 2016

New Opportunities

Winter is approaching and The First Tee of Harrisonburg is winding down its 15th year in operation. We have so much to be grateful for as we have accomplished more in 2016 than we ever thought possible. This past year our chapter focused heavily on growing and expanding our programs and providing new opportunities for the youth in our community. Our success in 2016 is a direct result from the tremendous amount of support received by all of our donors, volunteers, community partners, board and staff. On behalf of everyone here at The First Tee of Harrisonburg we thank you for taking the time to read our winter newsletter. Enjoy!

Middle School Golf Club

Over the summer our staff hosted a brainstorming session with Harrisonburg High School's athletic director Darrell Wilson to see how we could help HHS rebuild its golf program. In 1996 HHS's golf team won the 2A State Championship, yet participation and performance has dwindled in recent years. With no formal junior varsity team in place, it became clear we needed to bring interested students from Thomas Harrison and Skyline Middle Schools together before their transition to HHS. With help from Thomas Harrison's athletic director Tony Lechota and Skyline's athletic director Anthony Hill we established for the first time this fall The First Tee of Harrisonburg's Middle School Golf Club!

Once established, the "golf club" opportunity was introduced to students at each school in early September and parents were invited to The First Tee of Harrisonburg's Rotary Learning Center at Heritage Oaks Golf Course for an informational Q&A open house. During the Q&A session we explained to parents and students that all instruction, equipment, and even snacks would be provided at no cost to the family. Also, with help from Anthony Hill and Tony Lechota we were able to get city school buses to drop students from each school off to our Rotary Learning Center each week. Led by our program director Jeff Simmons and executive director Garrett King, the club kicked off its first session with a bang as twenty-five excited students visited The First Tee and Heritage Oaks Golf Course!





In our first club meeting Jeff and Garrett had quite the task of getting to know each student and understanding their respective motivations for joining the club. Surprisingly, nearly two-thirds of the group had no prior golf experience and never imagined getting an opportunity to practice and play on a real golf course. At the onset, each student was fitted and equipped with a set of clubs and provided balls, tees, and other tools to prepare them for their first golfing experience. More importantly, each student was introduced to The First Tee's Nine Core Values **(honesty, integrity, respect, sportsmanship, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and judgment)** and was educated on golf etiquette and how to properly introduce oneself when stepping onto the first tee. By the end of day 1, students were even exposed to Heritage Oaks Golf Course as we walked the group down hole #1 explaining all the intricacies of the course and game along the way.

Congratulations Fleming Fund Grant Recipients!

The First Tee of Harrisonburg would like to congratulate Olivia Fulk, Abby Villacusis and Emily Villacrusis for receiving this year's Fleming Fund junior golf camp grants. For the second year in a row The First Tee of Harrisonburg partnered with the Fleming Fund, a component fund of the Virginia State Golf Association's VSGA-VIP Foundation, to award three female golfers grants to cover the cost of attending the Robins Junior Golf Camp. These weeklong summer boarding camps at Independence Golf Course in Midlothian, VA provided an unforgettable experience for three of our brightest female participants! Congrats!



Picture of Olivia Fulk (The First Tee of Harrisonburg Birdie participant) with Robins Golf Camp Director, Gavin Parker.

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SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

Kjellstrom + Lee construction
Heritage + innovation

The First Tee of Harrisonburg would like to express a special thank you to Fulton Sensabaugh and Kjellstrom + Lee Construction for their continued support over the past two years. Mr. Sensabaugh recently joined The First Tee of Harrisonburg's Board of Directors and is eager to expand our programs into Staunton and Augusta County.

A message from Fulton Sensabaugh "Heritage + Innovation – concepts we as a company are always striving to achieve. Two simple words that stem from more than half a century of molding, shaping, and constructing the environment around us. As one of the owners of Kjellstrom + Lee Construction, and a lifetime resident of the city of Staunton, it is imperative that the "free time" I have is utilized in the most impactful way possible. The First Tee is the perfect opportunity for me to step back from my position as owner, builder, wearer of many hats, and participate in a sport I love while supporting a cause with an impact that is immeasurable in the lives of children. The First Tee of Harrisonburg, its Nine Core Values, and its commitment to the children in our communities exemplify these concepts. I would encourage anyone who is looking for a new sport to try, a way to spend quality time with your child, or just a great organization to support to visit the facilities, engage the staff, and be a part of the cause."

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

2016 at The First Tee has been busy. I am proud of the many successes, our growth and opportunities we have to impact the lives of youth in our area. I am very thankful and want to acknowledge three important groups: our excited youth participants; our staff and volunteers; and our partners and donors.

We now have over 600 kids for 2016 in our certification program involved in demonstrating the nine core values and learning golf skills along the way – AND we have reached over 5,000 kids in our various Outreach initiatives with several local schools. We continue our successful Juvenile Diversion program with the Rockingham County District Court and we are excited to start a City Middle School Golf Club.

While golf is our "vehicle", The First Tee curriculum primary focus is on teaching character education and our "Nine Core Values" of honesty, integrity, respect, sportsmanship, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and judgment. These core values will never get outdated!

The First Tee of Harrisonburg Rotary Learning Center, at Heritage Golf Course, is one of the best in The First Tee network and we offer ALL kids access with scholarships if needed and free use of clubs and our facilities. We welcome interested volunteers, parents and kids to come take a look. We look forward to seeing you in 2017!

Dan Nardi

Board Chair, The First Tee of Harrisonburg

Congratulations Fleming Fund Grant Recipients!

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At Robins Junior Golf Camp, I had lots of fun. They taught me a lot of new things in a fun way. I had a great experience and would recommend that other kids go and try it. I learned how to have more confidence in my swing, have more power in my swing, and have better aim.

We began each day doing a game that would get us moving. After that we would go into our learning environments and we would play games to help us learn golf swings and techniques. We also learned the "7 Wonders of Golf," which we were then tested on and received a bracelet for each component we correctly demonstrated. Each day after lunch we would go do "Challenge 36," where we played nine holes and tried to shoot a 36 or below. Each time you would accomplish this, you would start further away from the hole.

As a boarding camper, I would spend the evenings playing golf related games or playing other fun games with our coaches and other campers. Robins Junior Golf Camp helped me become a better and more confident golfer. I earned the "Most Strokes Lost" award for my group and I also made it to Level 5 of "Challenge 36" (200 yards out). It was a great experience!

-- Olivia Fulk

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Volunteer Spotlight



James and Sarah Hairston

"I decided to volunteer with The First Tee of Harrisonburg as an Assistant Coach after my oldest daughter, Sarah, took her second class earlier this year. I left a little early from work one day to go hit some golf balls at the driving range to unwind from the work day and wait for her class to end. While her class was in session, I watched the coaches. I watched the kids having fun. I watched my child constantly yell my name to watch her swing the club. She was having fun along with one other young girl. In fact, the only other girl in a class with 8 other boys. I thought to myself, "if I can take off work a little early, once or twice a week, to come to the same place where my child is having fun and learning a sport which I have enjoyed playing, why am I not up there helping out instead of sitting around waiting?" I have taught elementary kids at church in our "Aletheia Jr." church program for the past 9 years so I have always enjoyed teaching younger kids and being a positive role model and mentor for them. I don't know why I waited so long to get involved with The First Tee of Harrisonburg.

My wife and I have 2 girls (5 and 7) who are in different classes and a boy (almost 2) who wants to do everything his sisters do. The girls have enjoyed the classes they have taken, the other volunteer coaches and Coach Jeff. They tell me what they've learned or how good they hit the ball or what new friend they made or what positive things the coaches said when they hit a good shot. My oldest, Sarah, has mentioned numerous times wanting to play golf with me one day when she gets better (which she never mentioned prior to joining The First Tee program). It was encouraging to me as I didn't have the same opportunities to learn golf growing up and it has become something that we now share together, even if we do it recreationally."

What's New

It's getting cold outside but The First Tee of Harrisonburg is heating up!



Don't put away those clubs just yet! The First Tee of Harrisonburg Rotary Learning Center is gearing up for colder temperatures and is proud to announce the installation of four new infrared heaters located in two of our back hitting bays! We would like to express our sincere gratitude to The Fred O. Funkhouser Charitable Foundation for their generous contribution that made this possible!

Welcome to The First Tee of Harrisonburg's Board of Directors!

The First Tee of Harrisonburg would like to welcome three new members to the Board of Directors. This fall Aaron Epstein, Lindsay Snead, and Fulton Sensabaugh joined our board to help further our mission and make a positive difference in our community. Welcome and thank you for your service!



Fulton Sensabaugh
Partner/Owner
Kjellstrom + Lee Construction



Aaron Esptein
Assistant Director
JMU Duke Club



Lindsay Snead
Accountant
Holtzman Corp.

2016 Program Results

607 participants in our certification classes (Little Legends, Player, Par, Birdie, Eagle).

2,034 students served through our Outreach Program

3,150 students exposed to NSP

The First Tee's 9 Core Values and Life Skills Experience through our National School Program (Golf activities led by PE teachers at Thomas Harrison & Skyline Middle Schools, John Wayland Elementary, Elkton Elementary, Plains Elementary & McGaheysville Elementary).

Welcome to The First Tee Coach Program!

In order for our chapter to continue to grow and reach more youth in the community we must acquire additional volunteers willing to join our Coach Program to become an Assistant or certified Level 1 Coach. The First Tee of Harrisonburg would like to extend a huge thank you to all of our volunteers registered in The First Tee Coach Program and would like to congratulate Brett Mowbray, Brian Mowbray, and Mark Moretti for their efforts in becoming Level 1 Coaches in 2016. These three gentlemen are PGA golf professionals at Massanutten Resort and have made a commitment to positively impacting the youth in our community. If you are interested in supporting our programming efforts by becoming an Assistant or Level 1 Coach please reach out to Jeff Simmons or Garrett King at 540-437-4239.

The First Tee® Harrisonburg

690 Garbers Church Road
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801

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2016 Program Highlights

- Led a PLAYER level certification class at Thomas Harrison during two weeks in January. 189 5th grade students were exposed to the game of golf and The First Tee's Nine Core Values
- Collaborated with Keister Elementary PE teachers and delivered The First Tee lessons to all K-4 students for two weeks in both spring and fall
- Worked with 182 Spotswood Elementary School 3rd & 4th grade students for over two weeks in May.
- Hosted JMU Valley Scholars students for a fun filled afternoon at Heritage Oaks Golf Course
- McGaheysville Elementary School 5th graders visited the Harrisonburg Rotary Learning Center during a field trip in October
- Registered 33 new participants during summer golf camps at our new program location at Woodstone Meadows Golf Course.

"SUPPORT THE FIRST TEE OF HARRISONBURG!"

We are excited to announce our "2017 The First Tee Golf Card" is now available for sale! The purchase price is $50 and all proceeds benefit The First Tee of Harrisonburg. This year, 11 local golf courses and Mulligan's Golf Center generously agreed to FREE driving range balls and reduced golf rates. These coupon books make great gifts for all occasions and they SAVE you hundreds! Make your $50 donation online at www.thefirstteeharrisonburg.org and receive your 2017 golf card today!



- (1) $25.00 round of golf with cart coupon to the following courses: Bryce Resort, Fisher Mountain Golf Club, Heritage Oaks Golf Course, Lakeview Golf Club, Luray Caverns Country Club, Woodstone Meadows Golf Course, Mountain Greens Golf Course, Packsaddle Ridge Golf Club, & The Club at Ironwood.
- (1) $45.00 round of golf with cart coupon to Spotswood Country Club. No restrictions, may be used all of 2017!
- (1) $25 round of golf with cart coupon to Shenvalee Golf Resort Monday-Thursday.
- (2) FREE Large bucket coupons to Mulligan's Golf Center. No purchase necessary.
- (1) FREE bucket of range balls coupon to the following: Bryce Resort, Packsaddle Ridge Golf Club, Shenvalee Golf Resort, Woodstone Meadows Golf Course.
- (1) Buy one, get one free bucket of range balls at Heritage Oaks Golf Course.

Free range balls are also included with your round at The Club at Ironwood and Lakeview Golf Course.

YES! I WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO THE FIRST TEE OF HARRISONBURG

Name _____

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Please detach this form and mail to: The First Tee of Harrisonburg, 690 Garbers Church Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22801

The First Tee of Harrisonburg is a 501c3 Charitable Organization, donations are tax deductible.