



2025 WINTER NEWSLETTER

WE'RE BUILDING GAME CHANGERS!

As we close out another remarkable year, we reflect with gratitude and pride on the progress made by First Tee – Greater Trenton and the young people we are privileged to serve.

This year, we impacted close to 700 youth through our Life Skills and golf programming—many of whom were introduced to the game of golf for the very first time. Beyond learning how to swing a club, our participants developed essential life skills such as confidence, resilience, integrity, goal setting, and respect—values that will serve them well on and off the course.

We are especially proud of the continued growth of our girls' golf programming, with female participation representing a strong and increasing portion of our enrollment. Watching young girls gain confidence, leadership skills, and a sense of belonging reinforces our commitment to creating inclusive and empowering spaces for all youth.

Providing access remains central to our mission. This year, First Tee – Greater Trenton continues to reach into underserved and underrepresented communities, ensuring that high-quality youth development programming is accessible regardless of background or circumstance. Through school-based programs, community partnerships, and on-course experiences, we continue to remove barriers and open doors of opportunity.

None of this progress would be possible without the unwavering support of our coaches, volunteers, board members, donors, parents, and community partners. Your belief in our mission allows us to meet young people where they are and help them discover their potential.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we remain committed to expanding access, strengthening impact, and developing the next generation of leaders—one swing, one lesson, and one young person at a time.

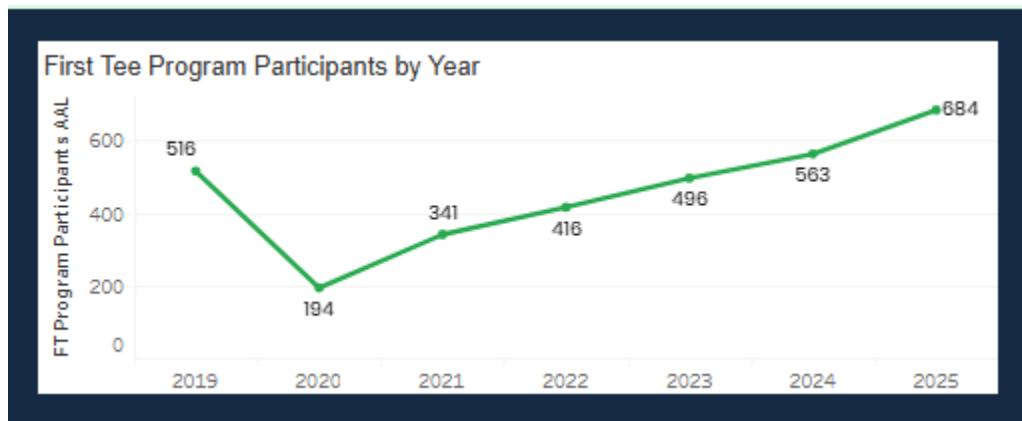
Thank you for being an essential part of the First Tee – Greater Trenton family. Together, we are changing lives through the game of golf.

With sincere gratitude,
First Tee – Greater Trenton
Board of Directors, Staff, Coaches and Volunteers



Highlights From An Impactful Year

- Active participant numbers grew by 21.4% from 2024 to 2025, which resulted in 121 new youth.
- Our annual results surpassed our Peer Group in all seven measurable categories below.
- We excelled particularly in the following categories:
 - Teen Retention
 - Female Participation
 - Diverse Participation
 - Outreach to Underserved Communities.



Metric	First Tee Greater Trenton	Network Average	Peer Average
Active Participants	684	1,080	551
Annual Retention	71.0%	36.2%	42.6%
Annual Teen Retention	55.1%	33.2%	41.5%
Tenure Rate	18.1%	15.7%	22.4%
Female %	49.6%	37.4%	38.3%
Diverse %	79.1%	49.5%	40.6%
Underserved %	63.5%	24.1%	28.9%



We Kicked Off the Year With Our Winter Programming at Christina Seix Academy

In January, our Winter Session at Christina Seix Academy was in full swing, with participants actively honing their golf skills and preparing for a strong start to the new year. The dedication and focus shown by our youth underscores the importance of year-round access to golf and life skills programming.



Resurrection of the Trenton Central High School Golf Team

We are proud to celebrate the revival of the Trenton Central High School golf team, a milestone highlighted in a recent article by Trentonian columnist L.A. Parker. This achievement reflects a collaborative commitment between First Tee – Greater Trenton, the Trenton School District, and determined student-athletes. Beyond golf, these young men and women are learning resilience, accountability, and leadership.

Additionally, members of the Trenton Central High School golf team gave back by assisting with summer programming, serving as mentors and coaches for younger participants. Their leadership and service reflect the full-circle impact of our work.

[L.A. PARKER: Trenton High golf is back and swinging after 14-year hiatus – Trentonian](#)

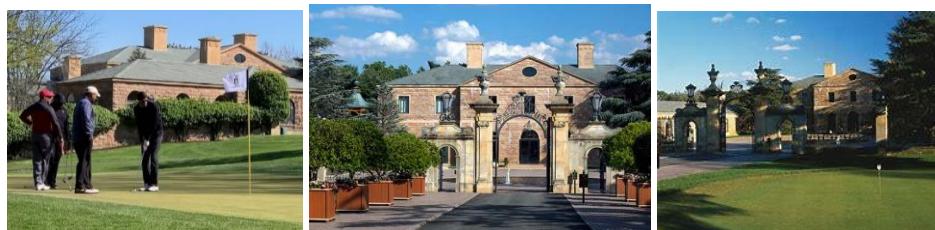


Annual Golf Fundraiser at TPC Jasna Polana

Our annual fundraiser at TPC Jasna Polana was another major success, welcoming 122 golfers and raising **\$115,000** to directly support our programming. We thank our sponsors, golfers, and volunteers for making this event impactful and memorable. **Please register for our April 27, 2026, Golf Fundraiser at TPC Jasna Polana in Princeton.**



[2026 FTGT Golf Fundraiser](#)



ShopRite LPGA Classic Scholarship Recipient – Khairi Allen

We proudly celebrate Khairi Allen, our chapter's recipient of the \$5,000 ShopRite LPGA Classic Scholarship, who also received an Acer laptop. Khairi was recognized alongside 11 other First Tee participants during the trophy ceremony on the 18th green—an unforgettable moment highlighting excellence and opportunity.

[L.A. PARKER: Ewing High senior takes home \\$5,000 scholarship from ShopRite LPGA Classic – Trentonian](#)



Partnership with the African American Chamber of Commerce of NJ

We are grateful to the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey for creating opportunities for our youth to engage with golfers during their fundraiser at Fiddler's Elbow. These experiences build confidence, communication skills, and professional exposure. **The participants donated \$1,800 in support of our program.**



Community Night with the Trenton Thunder

First Tee – Greater Trenton Night at the Trenton Thunder baseball game was a celebration of community, family, and achievement. The evening honored our participants, scholarship recipient Khairi Allen, and the Trenton Central High School golf team. We are grateful to **Case Pork Roll Company** and the **Trenton Thunder** for donating the suite and food for our participants and their families.



Back to School Day at Shiloh Baptist Church

We proudly participated in the Back-to-School Festival at Shiloh Baptist Church, introducing golf through fun putting and chipping activities. We were excited to welcome 18 new families who signed up to learn more about our Fall Programming.



Golf 4 Girls Event at Trenton Country Club

The 4th Annual Golf 4 Girls Event at Trenton Country Club was a tremendous success. Thanks to our sponsors, golfers and volunteers, we continue creating empowering opportunities for girls to learn, grow, and thrive through golf. We look forward to 2026!



National USGA IDEA Grant Recipient

First Tee – Greater Trenton was selected as one of only 29 chapters nationwide to receive a USGA IDEA Grant in recognition of the successful relaunch of the Trenton Central High School golf program. The grant supports inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility in golf.

[First Tee IDEA Grants Awarded to Chapters Nationwide](#)



First Tee – Greater Trenton Board



Front Row Left to Right: Mahesh Yadav (Secretary), Jeff Hughes (Past President), Rosalind Williford (President), Paula Taylor (Vice President), Jeanette Vega, Cindy Sussman and Marie Bardzilowski (Treasurer)

Back Row Left to Right: John Kostin, Ed Benson (Executive Director), Dwayne Redmond and Beth Golden

Missing from Photo: Michael Mitchell and Kyle Peace

FTGT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of FTGT is to impact the lives of young people by providing educational programs that build character, instill life-enhancing values and promote healthy choices through the game of golf.

FTGT STRATEGIC VISION

FTGT provides area youth with alternative and accessible forums for positive character development. We recognize that golf is an ideal vehicle to encourage this type of development, offering essential values including courtesy, respect, judgment, responsibility, confidence, honesty, integrity, sportsmanship and perseverance. More importantly, FTGT fulfills this need in an educational environment that is challenging, exciting, enjoyable and continuous throughout the year.

Link to Donate: [Annual Giving Fund - First Tee - Greater Trenton](#): The expansion and sustainability of the First Tee - Greater Trenton programs are made possible by our generous donors. Please consider making an investment in the lives of young people served by the First Tee - Greater Trenton. As evidenced by the few select highlights of 2025, our high-quality, positive youth development programs continue addressing the needs of our community and further development of our youth.



Rosalind Williford, President

Paula Taylor, Vice President

Ed Benson, Executive Director

Rob Connelley Program Director

Robert McGill, Lead Coach

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