



first tee

greater cincinnati
& northern kentucky

Building Game Changers

2020 Annual Report



Friends,

Over the past 15 years, our chapter has relentlessly pursued our mission to build game changers in our community. In 2020, our character was tested through one of the most unique challenges yet. I'm so proud of the resiliency of our staff, coaches and volunteers who diligently sought ways to navigate the early stages of the pandemic. We're incredibly grateful to our Board of Trustees for their leadership and trust throughout the entire process, and we will turn the page on the pandemic stronger than ever before.



We hope as you read through our 2020 annual report you will see the great care we took in ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for our kids. I hope you also enjoy reading about the creative ways we were able to continue positively impacting kids and teens in our community.

In the new year, we have a new opportunity to expand our chapter service area to begin serving the kids and teens of Butler & Warren counties. As we continue to grow and write the next page of our chapter's story, we remain committed to meeting each of our kids and teens on an individual level.

Wishing you and our entire First Tee - GCNKY family continued health and safety in 2021 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Alicia

Alicia Lawrence
Executive Director

Meet Our Team

Staff

Alicia Lawrence, Executive Director
Alex Hill, Curriculum & Participant Engagement Manager
Jeanne Siegel, Operations & Communications Coordinator
Ben Walker, Community Impact & Volunteer Coordinator
Charmian Wilkinson, Development Coordinator

Board of Trustees

Matt Davis, Kit Duval, Steve Fischer, Sarah Herron, Amy Lantz
Patrick Lynch, Taylor Metcalfe, Jim Muething (Board President)
Steve Mullinger, Blake Roe, Ben Russert, Tom Torre, Phil Wehrman
Erica Zoellner

Community Council

Christopher Burger, William Hawkins, Ryan Holmes, Lesli Hopping
Eric Johnson, Michael Kessler Jr., Jeffrey Kroeger, Simran Magowan
Drew McDonald, Andrew Mock, Alex Rodger, Collin Ryan
Sally Schultz, Lisa Thal, Chris Virgulak (Chair)

**25 Head Coaches and Golf Instructors as well as
over 100 Volunteers invested over 2,700 hours
mentoring kids on the golf courses in 2020!**



Persevering through a Pandemic

When the nation shut down, and everyone was filled with uncertainty, it became evident that our program was more relevant now than ever. Perseverance is an everyday necessity and our self-management skills, introduced at our Par level and reinforced throughout the upper levels, were being heavily used as kids and adults navigated their emotions. We immediately pivoted to online activities to support our kids and to stay engaged by giving them an outlet for meaningful activity. Coaches and staff submitted videos and ideas and within days we provided daily activities from putting to crafts.

We thought about our graduating seniors whose dreams of those final months of high school were drastically changed. Although small in gesture, our surprise congratulatory signs were met with huge smiles.

Although the pandemic had a tremendous effect on our programs in 2020, we eventually benefitted from the socially distant nature golf naturally provides which created additional interest in our program. Countless hours were spent adjusting our procedures to get back to programming and as a result 100% of parents were satisfied with our safety measures. In June, we welcomed our kids back to the courses. By fall, we had record number of registered participants.



Helping the Community

Cincinnati Recreation Commission has been a long time partner of ours. Many of their centers offer our engaging after-school program to kids who might not otherwise have exposure to golf and life lessons that are learned through the game. We quickly put together equipment and training so that 8 new CRC Centers could deliver our program to their kids a safe activity to learn something new and to reinforce those core values. In total 17 centers around the Cincinnati area delivered First Tee program to over **500 summer campers!**

What We Do

We exist to enable kids to build the **strength of character** that empowers them through a lifetime of new challenges. By seamlessly integrating the game of golf with life skills curriculum, we create learning experiences that **build inner strength, self-confidence, and resilience** that kids carry to everything they do.

With the belief that all kids deserve the chance to grow in a supportive environment with mentors guiding them, we are dedicated to building programs that are accessible, welcoming, and as impactful as they are fun.

646

Number of kids and teens who took part in our Life Skills Program on Golf Courses during the summer and fall. Many of our kids participate in numerous classes throughout the year.

18

Our First Tee School Program brings our curriculum to your child's gym during PE classes. During the 2019-2020 school year, 18 new schools received training to deliver First Tee.

10,910

Total number of kids and teens reached in our community through on course, in school and in collaboration with our community partners.

15 Years of Mentoring and Believing

Bill Donaldson was awarded with the 2020 Tom & Melissa Briner Heart of the First Tee - GCN Award for the giving of his time and talent to our organization as a golf instructor for the past 15 years, believing in our mission, and his compassion for the youth in our city.

We asked Coach Bill to be our mission moment at a Board Meeting to surprise him with this award. Armed with his huge smile and sense of humor, he took us down memory lane. From his history with First Tee to the growth of our chapter, he has been with us through it all. But he mostly wanted to talk about the kids and the potential he sees in each one of them. Bill has touched countless youth in our community through his work with First Tee, outreach programs, as well as his day job with Cincinnati Public Schools. Coach Bill believes in these kids and wants the best for them.

Libby Chamberlin, an alumni, explained how challenging certification to the Eagle level was for her but that she developed perseverance and confidence with the help of Coach Bill. "He really helped me by staying at the range with me for hours trying to figure out how to overcome my mental roadblock. I wanted to certify so desperately that I was unable to focus on the shot at hand and stay in the moment. Swing after swing Coach Bill stayed with me, the sun beating down on us, as he helped me tweak my swing and pushed me towards my goal. He showed me that the mechanics of my swing were there, I just needed to relax and believe in myself. I can still hear his encouraging words on the range, "stay relaxed and trust your swing" before every shot. This message really resonated with me and continues to guide me today," says Libby. Her mom added, "(Libby) really does lean on the words "Trust It" in all aspects of her life. **Coach Bill believed in her long before she could believe in herself.** We all need someone like this in our lives. She was so lucky to have him."



What does First Tee mean to you?
"Family. It feels like a big hug."
-Coach Bill

Impact On and Off the Course

This past December, we were thrilled to present Henry Mentzel with The 2020 Tom & Melissa Briner Heart of the First Tee - GCNKY Award. This award recognizes individuals who embody the "Heart" of the First Tee through giving of time, talent or treasure; by demonstrating and living one of First Tee Core Values; or by going above and beyond to promote or further our missions.

Henry, a freshman at Walnut Hills High School and currently at the Eagle level, has participated in our classes since he was 7. He embodies the core values which are the heart of our curriculum. His leadership, patience and kindness is why he is a beloved volunteer and mentor for our kids on and off the course. We teach how to develop your "go-to team" and also how to be that "go-to" person for someone else. Henry has taken this lesson and lives it every day.

"We are all living in extraordinary and trying times that have tested all of us in ways we couldn't even imagine...Despite these challenges Henry Mentzel acting upon the values of the First Tee found a way to make a difference in our son's life", Rosie Abel wrote in her nomination. "My son, Will, who has Down syndrome, is not unlike most sixteen-year-olds – very outgoing, social, and full of energy. But the pandemic has proven to be particularly frustrating for him especially when Ohio shut down in March. His sense of isolation grew as the effects of the pandemic spread."

As the sudden shutdown of school left all of us confused, worried and unsure what to do, Henry took that opportunity to check in on his friend, who is also a fellow First Tee participant. "To say it was a great day for Will is an understatement. This small act of kindness made such a difference in Will's life. Henry was a peer lifeline for Will for the summer" said Rosie. "We immediately recognized the significance of Henry's big-hearted actions. "

Henry continues to be that go-to person for Will. He supports Will by including him in activities with friends, supporting him at the Buddy Walk and he continues to encourage Will during their rounds of golf together. Henry is just one example of how we are Building Game Changers.



Building Game Changers

Teens Achieve Highest Honor

Abigail Laake and Elizabeth Chamberlin were named to the First Tee 2020 Class of ACE Certified Participants. They were 2 of only 25 teens across the nation to achieve this honor and the first 2 participants in our Chapter's history! ACE certification is the highest level of certification and requires dedication and discipline to complete the 4 major projects covering golf, career and education planning, and giving back to the community.

Each had impressive projects but together they added a component to the Give Back to the Community project which was truly special. Abigail and Elizabeth elected to implement a community element to our Girls Golf Breakfast event. They explored other non-profits in the community and selected Welcome House of Northern Kentucky as the beneficiary. After polling fellow participants, they settled on a baby themed drive for the breakfast. That information was shared with attendees and almost \$700 worth of baby supplies were collected at the event! These two managed this project from concept to execution and established a tradition for the breakfast that we will continue annually.

Abigail is continuing her education in the selective DAAP program at the University of Cincinnati. Elizabeth headed to Transylvania University majoring in Accounting and achieving her dream of playing collegiate golf. We are Building Game Changers.



Daring to Dream Big

Our classes bring experiences to build self confidence to show up to the challenge, the resilience to keep going when you fail, and the inner strength to do the right thing even when it's the hard thing to do. Our events have this same purpose and provide experiences for kids and teens to practice these skills in another setting.

Just weeks before the shut down, we held the inaugural Girls Golf Breakfast and it was so much more than a breakfast. We celebrated the girls in our program and women in our community. The intent was to inspire young girls in our chapter to reach for their dreams. We invited the girls to bring someone who have influenced their life in a positive way. Parents, friends and teachers accompanied our inspiring young ladies and together, they met other women in the community. We were honored to have a very special guest speaker in Justice Michelle M. Keller, of the Kentucky Supreme Court, whose journey to the Kentucky Supreme Court was inspirational and left us all wanting to dream big.

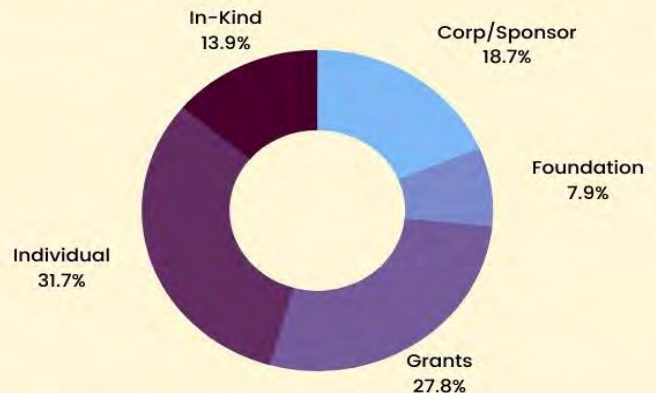
It was an inspiring morning filled with big dreams and a room full of **Game Changers**.



Financial Analysis

In 2020, we continued efforts to strengthen our financial position to ensure the quality and growth of our programming operations. We are careful stewards of the support we receive, keeping a sharp eye on our expenses and seeking operating efficiencies wherever possible.

We are able to grow our reach of participants by 68% from 2018 to 2019. We managed to achieve this growth with only a 6.2% increase in our budget. We are grateful to individuals, grant funders, corporate partners, and other support that enables us to reach an increasing number of children in the community.



Donations by Type of Investor

Clubhouse Society

The Clubhouse Society enables individuals to mirror the commitment of participants. Individuals contributing a minimum of \$2,006, in honor of the year we were established, annually are recognized members. We encourage a 5 year commitment to echo the five levels of progression a child makes through our Life Skills Program.

2020 Clubhouse Society Members

- Cindy Crilley
- Gary and Dina Gruber
- The Muething Family
- Phil and Maria Wherman
- Dave and Lisa Witgall



Grants

In 2020 we were grateful to receive generous grants for critical new and ongoing programs from the following funders:

J. Frederick & Helen B. Vogel Charitable Trust
Western & Southern Financial Fund
Charles H. Dater Foundation
Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation
World Golf Foundation
U.S. Bank Foundation
PGA Tour First Tee Foundation
The Spaulding Foundation
Maxwell Weaver Foundation





Corporate Sponsors

We are incredibly appreciative of our corporate partners who support our mission. Regardless of the level of support our partners choose, they are directly impacting the kids and teens in our community.



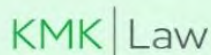
Gold Sponsor



Silver Partners



Bronze Partners



"First Tee was like a family. I was inspired to be my best self, and received the support and encouragement I needed to help me succeed."

- Samantha Asmah, Alumni

