



# Building Game Changers

2022 Annual Report



# Meet the Team

## Staff

Patty Lusheck Ragio,  
Exexutive Director  
Wendy Mockabee  
Sarah Redett  
Jeanne Siegel  
Ben Walker

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Sarah Herron (Board President)  
Amy Lantz  
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Tim Carris  
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Denise Meisner  
Andrew Mock  
Alex Rodger  
Collin Ryan  
Lisa Thal  
Tom Torre  
Chris Virgulak (Chair)

25 Head Coaches and Golf  
Instructors, as well as over  
160 Volunteers, invested their  
time mentoring kids on the  
golf courses in 2022!



Greetings, members of the First Tee family!

It's my honor and pleasure to introduce myself as the new CEO for our Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky Chapter. I'm truly looking forward to working with our staff, board, coaches, golf instructors, volunteers, donors, parents, and participants to redouble our efforts to instill character, resilience, and other life skills through golf.

First, I need to come clean: I'm a terrible golfer. A really, really terrible golfer. And, I absolutely LOVE the game! When this opportunity arose, it piqued my interest because as a golf lover and youth golf and athletics parent, I know first-hand that our youth need and want fun, challenging and engaging, outdoor experiences to balance their otherwise flat-screen world. I can't wait to share our message and expand our impact throughout our community.

As you review our 2022 Annual Report, I hope that you will get a sense of the tremendous impact and imprint that our engaged board, coaches, golf instructors, staff, and departing Executive Director, Alicia Yund, have made upon our region's youth. Nearly doubling the capacity of our organization over the last five years, First Tee – Greater Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky now serves over 1,000 junior and teen golfers on the course and another 19,000+ in schools and community centers across our footprint! To our volunteers, donors, and sponsors, I offer my sincere gratitude for your personal and financial investments in First Tee's mission and beneficiaries and for the tremendous platform from which I personally will launch my First Tee life. To Alicia, I offer a sincere job well done! I invite you to help us extend our reach in 2023 so that we may both sustain and grow our impact on youth and in our community. Together, we are Building Game Changers!

With gratitude,

Patty Lusheck Ragio





# 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.

We are incredibly proud of what we were able to accomplish in 2022 and are grateful to everyone who made it possible.



We added 3 new coaches to our roster last year. All head coaches receive training to provide them with the tools to make kids feel safe, included and empowered.

## 20,403

This represents the number of kids and teens impacted through our golf course, community, and school programs in 2022!



Volunteers continue to be a huge part of our success and the number continues to grow each year. In 2022, 166 volunteers help out in our golf course program.



Seven First Tee Seniors graduated in Spring 2022, each having been awarded the Rita S. Metcalfe Scholarship benefitting First Tee.



CRC Community Golf Days more than doubled it's growth in 2022 with 186 kids and teens from the community participating in the 8 week program.



First Tee School Program continues to grow. At the end of 2022, we had 70 school partners trained to deliver our program in PE class.

# Building Game Changers

## Growing with First Tee - GCNKY

Through First Tee HQ, unique opportunities are offered to committed participants to recognize and reward them for being a game changer on and off the course through character development, education, and golf skills. Each year, First Tee teens from over 150 chapters apply for these events with the hope of being selected from a very competitive field of applicants. Junior, Henry Mentzel, was selected for not one but two of these events in 2022. Henry has spent the last decade at First Tee - GCNKY participating in classes, volunteering with the younger kids and advocating for our Chapter.



First, Henry was selected for the First Tee Game Changers Academy Honoring Joe Louis Barrow, Jr. Seventy-two teens gathered in Philadelphia for a five-day learning and empowerment academy, where they participated in conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Henry shared, "After those five days, I had made so many new friends that I still talk to today. The biggest impression that was left on me was how I view others. The atmosphere created in the meetings made it so everyone shared their feelings. This was eye-opening for me because they shared certain events or instances where they were affected in a negative way. I had never thought about some of the topics other kids were sharing, and this made me feel a small amount of guilt. But Rise taught us that guilt isn't something you should feel. We learned that we need to embrace these feelings to create a better change in our community and the world as a whole. This is something that is going to help throughout my whole life when interacting with future leaders, bosses, and team members."

A week after attending the Game Changers Academy, which also included golf at Merion Golf Club, Henry was headed to Jacksonville, Florida, to spend a couple of days at the PGA TOUR Global Home Office. There, Henry met senior leaders of First Tee HQ as a member of the 2022 Participant Advisory Council. Henry was one of only eight teens selected to this council that advises HQ on matters pertinent to all First Tee participants.

The teens shared their personal experiences as First Tee participants and provided input for projects and programs that will impact the experience of all First Tee kids and teens. "This experience has helped me grow in so many ways. Being able to connect with my peers and share ideas about something we are all passionate about was very impactful. These interactions helped me build character and maturity in critical thinking situations. These skills are vital to any sort of collaboration with others which will help me throughout my whole life," Henry said.

"It was interesting to hear how other programs operated. What stuck out to me was how many chapters had their own advisory councils made up of participants. They shared their process of elections and meetings where they discussed new ways to fundraise and critique the program to meet the needs of the kids," Henry continued. After returning from his advisory meetings, he shared his hope to establish a Participant Advisory Council at First Tee - GCNKY. With his help, this will begin in 2023.

Involvement in First Tee doesn't stop with our classes. It continues with these National Opportunities, College Scholarship Programs, and Alumni Programs. We always say we want kids to grow up with us and this is just one of the many ways we can accomplish this goal.





# Building Game Changers

## LPGA Returns to Cincinnati

Having the LPGA back in Cincinnati last September was so much fun for First Tee - GCNKY and the entire city. We were lucky to work closely with Emily Norell, tournament director, and received a front-row seat to the tournament providing endless brand exposure for our chapter. Our kids were treated to clinics, one teen played in the pro-am, and our volunteers and staff worked the 18th hole concession stand and as standard bearers throughout the tournament. All of this made for one incredible week at the Kroger Queen City Championship presented by P&G.

Thanks to a generous supporter, senior Fejiro Felix-Okpe, had the chance of a lifetime to play alongside LPGA professionals during the Pro-Am tournament. "Playing alongside the pros taught me valuable lessons that I will apply not only to my golf game but to life. Their drive and determination to be good at what they do is inspiring and something I will carry with me throughout my endeavors," Fejiro said in a letter written after the match.

LPGA \*USGA Girls Golf home office came to town to host a clinic at the tournament where over 50 girls participated in fun activities promoting the 5 E's: empower, engage, energize, exercise, and enrich girls' lives.

In addition, First Tee kids were invited to the LPGA Skills Challenge presented by Cintas. Eight professionals showcased their driving, wedges, and flop shots in front of First Tee kids and families. As if that was not enough entertainment, we were surprised by two Hall of Famers who joined at the end - Annika Sorenstam and Amy Alcott. They spent an hour giving instruction and incredible advice to these kids both on and off the course. Following this star-studded afternoon, Cintas presented us with a check for \$20,000! We are incredibly grateful and will use this gift to continue Building Game Changers.



## I Can Do Anything

The LPGA Leadership Academy is designed to keep teenage girls engaged in golf and to prepare them for leadership opportunities. Rita Warnecke, a sophomore who joined First Tee in 2017 and is also a member of our LPGA \*USGA Girls Golf program, was one of 40 teens from across the US selected to attend the academy in Michigan last summer. This two-day event was full of golf, leadership activities, and new friendships.

Rita volunteers each year in our classes, providing experiences to apply the leadership skills First Tee teaches in class. This academy strengthened her confidence. "I made a bunch of friends from all over the US at the academy. And the coaches were a lot of fun. They taught us to take charge. For instance, if a coach has to step away, I'm okay filling in and continuing the class until they return."

Rita continues to push herself to try new things and persevere. At 10 years old, Rita found she was born with a congenital heart defect after she experienced a medical emergency while at school. Through SCRATCHgolf, a program started for kids with heart defects to introduce the game of golf to keep them active, Rita joined First Tee. Golf allows her to play a sport despite the limitation put on her due to her medical condition. She now plays in high school. She says it best: "I am powerful. I can do this. I can do anything."





## USGA IDEA Grant

The USGA IDEA Grant Program was created to promote inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility efforts at the local golf level. In honor of First Tee's 25th Anniversary, the USGA awarded 25 chapters with this grant, and we were honored to be a recipient for a second year.

USGA's grant fuels our ability to provide adaptive opportunities for all kids. This allows us to grow our community programs like Els for Autism and Special Olympics of Hamilton County, to provide free programs to kids and teens of all abilities and skill levels. For these kids and those in the SCRATCHgolf program, we provide modifications to lesson plans so they are adaptive to the needs of the participants. This past summer, we were able to expand our CRC Community Golf Days, a program we host at Reeves GC for kids and teens at community centers. We were able to expand this eight-week summer program by transitioning additional community centers, providing transportation, and giving 100% scholarships to the 186 kids and teens in attendance.

All of this is made possible thanks to the USGA's long-standing commitment to make golf accessible to everyone.

## Our 2022-23 Senior Class

Taylor Metcalfe, a former board member and long-time supporter of First Tee - GCNKY, along with his daughters Brooke and Blair, started a fund four years ago in memory of his late wife, Rita. Rita was an avid golfer and educator who loved children. Thanks to their generosity, six seniors were each awarded a \$2,000 scholarship to support their future educational pursuits.

From golf, to school, to extracurricular activities, to volunteering, Bradan, Fejiro, Gabrielle, Kaidyn, Jonah, and Will check all the boxes of a **Game Changer** and are well-deserving recipients of the Rita S. Metcalfe Scholarship benefitting First Tee - GCNKY.



**"First Tee's life lessons have made an invaluable impact on me on and off the course. Putting competitions encouraged perseverance, teamwork and sportsmanship over winning. Whereas, group discussions fostered building positive relationships and interpersonal skills by respecting others."**

**-Kaidyn, 2022 Senior**



We are so incredibly thankful to Taylor, Brooke, and Blair for their generosity and we are confident these teens will honor Rita's legacy.

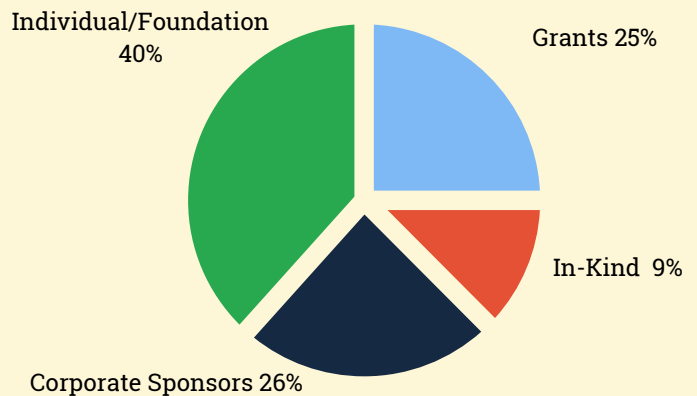
Congratulations Seniors!



# Financial Analysis

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 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.

### 2022 Members

Cindy Crilley  
The Diehl Family in Memory of Coach Ron  
Gary and Dina Gruber  
The Muething Family  
The Mullinger Family  
Tom and Torey Torre  
Chris and Nancy Virgulak  
Phil and Maria Wherman  
Dave and Lisa Witzgall



## Grants

In 2022 we were grateful to receive generous grants for critical new and ongoing programs from the following funders:

Charles H. Dater Foundation  
Elsa Heisel Sule Charitable Trust  
Greater Oxford Community Foundation  
LPGA Foundation  
Middletown Community Foundation  
PGA Tour First Tee Foundation  
United Healthcare Ohio, Inc.  
US Bank Foundation  
USGA

J. Frederick & Helen B. Vogel Charitable Trust  
Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation  
Western & Southern Financial Fund  
Wohlgelmuth Herschede Foundation



# Special Thank You To Our Corporate 2022 Partners!

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 Sponsors



## Silver Sponsors



## Bronze Sponsors



## Alumni Spotlight

Since graduating from high school and First Tee, Sarah Crowley graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 2019 with a degree in business. After college, she worked in non-profits before joining GE as a Lead Sourcing Specialist. She continues to support First Tee - GCNKY and volunteers in our classes. We recently caught up with Sarah to ask about her time at First Tee and any advice she has for current First Tee kids and teens.



"First Tee gave me the opportunity to make friends and mentors with people of diverse backgrounds outside my standard education, giving me an early understanding of how to see conflict from different viewpoints. From the coaches and volunteers to the regular participants, there was a genuine feeling of kindness and support.

I continue to be in awe of the people I met from my time in First Tee. They are educators, servicemen, business leaders, and engineers. I continue to be challenged to be a better person and community member from the classmates I had at First Tee.

My advice to First Tee students today is lean into the experience. You will get out as much as you put into it. I still have mentors from the program that I rely on for their candor and advice. **Golf taught me humility, but the First Tee taught me how to take those lessons from the course and apply them to life.**"

- Sarah Crowley, Alumni