

# OnCourse

The News Magazine of The First Tee of Connecticut



David Polk

## Say Hello to an 18 Hole Good-Bye



Photo Credit: Kay Bagwell

It only made sense that the send off for David Polk, the long-time Executive Director of The First Tee of Connecticut (TFTCT), would be at historic Keney Park Golf Course in Hartford.

The First Tee of Connecticut and Keney Park Golf Course share both a past and a future. The 90-year old course, which opened in 1927 (and its sister course, Goodwin Park) have been long-time home to First Tee programs. TFCTC spearheaded new programming at Keney including Camp Courant, PAL, The Boys & Girls Club of Hartford and Trinity Academy. In 2016,

Keney re-opened after a massive restoration in which two TFTCT Board Members, Gary Reynolds and Dr. Paul Bocciarelli, played vital roles. As part of the consulting team from the Connecticut PGA Section, Gary Reynolds, Emeritus Director, TFTCT, helped oversee course operations and design flow that integrated course, club house and customers. The results of the renovation were “spectacular,” Gary said.

Keney Park Golf Course is home to the newest DISH Restaurant — The Tavern. And yes, one of its principle investors—Board Member Dr. Bocciarelli.

The September 28th event was totally sold out, benefitting The First Tee of Connecticut.

“This season-ending tournament was supposed to be a secret and frankly I would normally be against such an event honoring me for doing my job,” Polk said. “But I see this event as more about honoring the good work of The First Tee of Connecticut. To that I say thank you.”

The par-70 golf course occupies Hartford’s historic 700-acre Keney Park, located in the city’s north end.

*Continued Page 2*

## Great Scott! CT Youth Pairs Up With U.S. Open Champion at PURE Insurance Championship

For the 5th consecutive year The First Tee of Connecticut was well represented on the PGA TOUR Champions.

17-year old high school senior Andrew Maslar of Monroe, CT was paired up with 1987 U.S. Open Champion Scott Simpson in the 2017 PURE Insurance Championship, an official PGA TOUR Champions event. The Tournament was played at famed Pebble Beach Golf Links and Poppy Hills Golf Course in Pebble Beach, CA, the week of September 19-24, 2017. Golf Channel televised the event internationally. “I met many people outside The First Tee

that will be very helpful as I get older and grow my contacts into a broader spectrum,” Andrew said about his storied weekend. “The week was surreal and it was an experience I will never forget.”

Maslar joined 81 other participants from The First Tee chapters, selected by a national panel of judges. Participants were selected based on playing ability and comprehension of the life skills and core values learned through their involvement with The First Tee.

The youth golfers were teamed with

*Continued Page 2*



*The First Tee of Connecticut’s Andrew Maslar.*

## 18 Hole Good-Bye

*Continued*

The 18-hole Keney Park Golf Course was designed by Devereux Emmet, with the first 9 holes opening in 1927. A preeminent figure in the history of golf course architecture, Emmet is responsible for iconic layouts nationally such as Bethpage State Park in New York and Congressional Country Club in Maryland. The back-nine at Keney Park opened in 1930 and was designed by Robert “Jack” Ross, an engineer for the City of Hartford. The full-scale restoration of Keney Park Golf Course included completely renovated tee boxes, fairways, greens and bunkers, as well as an updated clubhouse.



*A “retired” David Polk*

So at the end of a long day, as David Polk packed up his clubs for the last time as Executive Director of The First Tee of Connecticut, David can welcome this long good bye, all 18 holes of it.

## Great Scott!

*Continued*



*PGA TOUR pro Scott Simpson and Andrew Maslar*

81 PGA TOUR Champions players.

Maslar has an outstanding golfer pedigree as All State Golfer, 2016-2017 at Masuk High School in Monroe, Assistant Coach Prospect Golf Driving Range and Volunteer on the Travelers Championship Grounds Crew.

What’s next for Andrew Maslar? “I plan to focus on my education,” Andrew said. “I have aspirations to be on TOUR but if it doesn’t happen I hope to get a job that involves the TOUR.”

# Letter From Executive Director

Dear Friends,

After 6+ years as the Program Director at The First Tee of Connecticut I am so thankful for the opportunity to continue my involvement at the chapter as its new Executive Director, effective August 1. I want to take this opportunity to thank David Polk for his leadership since 2010 and for being such a wonderful representative for the work we do in the **community**. We had such a wonderful turnout of long-standing and new **friends** at Keney Park on September 28th to celebrate David’s retirement.

I would also like to thank all of those participants, families, supporters and partners who have reached out to say “congratulations!” to me. That support has really given me a huge amount of **confidence** as we embark on the challenges that lay ahead. On the subject of congratulations I am so proud of the young people at our chapter who have applied for and been selected to the various National Opportunities offered by The First Tee. Each of these high schoolers is a true role model for the next generation of participants in Connecticut and I know you will enjoy reading about their experiences on the following pages. To all of our volunteers and donors, your time, treasure and talent have a direct impact on our young people and for that you are to be applauded!

I am often asked “what is The First Tee all about?” So I thought I could share a real life example that answers this question. My daughter, Julia, is a PLAYer Level participant at East Mountain Golf Course.

## Network Meeting Awards & Recognition

In November, The First Tee will celebrate 20 years of impact during the Network Meeting in Orlando, FL.

We are pleased to announce that Ted May will be honored with The Jack Stephens Leadership Award. This award seeks to recognize an individual such as a past or present board member, donor or community advocate, for their service, leadership and commitment to the mission of The First Tee. Obviously, Ted May is all of these things and more to The First Tee of Connecticut.

The First Tee Chairman’s Award recognizes the executive director(s) who



*Mark Moriarty*

At dinner one night this summer my wife was talking about something that she could never do and Julia chimed in that she “wasn’t showing much confidence and that you could do anything if you have a little confidence.” When we pursued the topic with her she shared that she had learned that lesson from Coach Karen at “golf class.” Do I want Julia to succeed on the golf course? Yes. Be a player for life? Yes. Beat her dad? Not just yet. Demonstrate the behaviors associated with the Core Values and Life Skills that The First Tee introduces? A resounding yes! So, my final thank you is to all of the coaches at The First Tee of Connecticut. Each of you has the power to impact, influence and inspire these young people in so many ways through the game of golf. In case you haven’t heard it before – The First Tee is More Than Just A Game!

Here’s hoping for an extended fall, a mild winter and an early spring.

Mark Moriarty

Executive Director

demonstrates outstanding achievements in leadership and service to the chapter and The First Tee in the area of organization development and in the delivery of participant benefits. Congratulations to David Polk for being recognized with The First Tee Chairman’s Award.



*Andy Bessette, VP, Travelers; Ted May and CBS Golf Analyst Gary McCord*



# First Tee of CT Members Making Their Mark On and Off The Course.

The First Tee of Connecticut transforms lives one swing at a time. Here are three transforming

## Meghna Mazumdar makes headlines again—wins spot in National Outstanding Participant & Leadership Summit



First it was winning a spot with Rory McIlroy at the 2016 Wells Fargo Championship. Now, The First Tee of Connecticut's Meghna Mazumdar, 14, of South Windsor has been selected from a pool of national candidates to attend The First Tee Outstanding Participant & Leadership Summit, November 8–11 in Orlando. Meghna is just one of 28 participants selected to attend the summit based on academic achievement, community service, chapter involvement, leadership, essay responses and letters of recommendation. Additionally, Meghna has been selected as one of eight finalists who will be honored at the Gala Dinner on Saturday, November 11th with two finalists being awarded a \$20,000 scholarship. Stay tuned for a Meghna update in future newsletters.

## CT Teens Attend National Life Skills & Leadership Academy

Elena Anderson, 16 of Windsor and Lilly Moreau, 14 of Wethersfield, from The First Tee of Connecticut attended The First Tee Life Skills and Leadership Academy in East Lansing, MI July 26–August 1. Elena and Lilly joined more than 90 other junior golfers from The First Tee programs across the nation, ages 14–17, to participate in this national event. In addition, Coach Rodean Minto (from Fairchild Wheeler) was selected to be one of the instructors and alumni Christian McDavid was a counselor. “I had a great experience where I learned to become a more effective leader, got some swing tips that have already helped my game, and developed many great relationships both with my fellow participants, my coaches, and my chaperone,” Elena said. “Thank you for providing this awesome opportunity. I loved every minute of it!” Lilly said.

Lilly Moreau



Elena Anderson



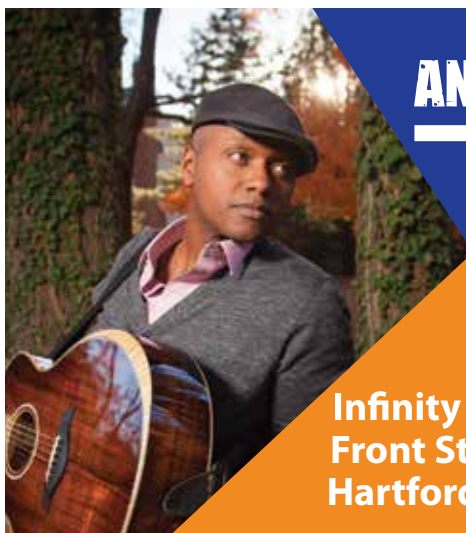
## Who Says Playing Golf Isn't Rocket Science?

Matthew Luponio, 14 of Plantsville participated in the first ever USGA “Learning Science Through Golf” Academy STEM event held in Far Hills, N.J., this past July 9–13.



Mathew Luponio, Middle

Luponio was one of 24 teen participants from The First Tee chapters selected to attend the academy that included interactive lessons and experiments, each illuminating various Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) principles. USGA created this fun and new experience to show youth golfers the many ways to learn from the game of golf, from the aerodynamics of a golf ball to the physics of the golf swing, to ways technology can track where golfers walk on a golf course,” said Mike Davis, Executive Director/CEO of the USGA.



## AN EVENING WITH JAVIER COLON

Sat. Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> BENEFITTING THE FIRST TEE OF CONNECTICUT

VIP Meet & Greet Reception 6:30 pm - 8 pm  
Charity Concert 8 pm

Join Javier for a great night out as he steps on the Infinity Hall stage in a benefit concert for The First Tee of Connecticut. You'll hear first hand why he is known as one of the best acoustic soul artists around as he performs his original songs, as well as a mix of songs from James Taylor to Broadway.

LEVELS OF SPONSORSHIP • Major Level - \$5,000 • Gold Level - \$3,000  
• Silver Level - \$1,500 • VIP Ticket - \$150

For Sponsor and/or VIP Ticket opportunities please contact Christy Miller at 860-316-2513

# 2017 PROGRAM WRAP-UP AND WINTER PREVIEW

It was a busy and fun-filled season for The First Tee of Connecticut with nearly 3,000 young people participating in Group Lessons and Teams on-course play at 22 facilities across the state! As of July 1st we added lots of new friends when our chapter assumed responsibility for programs in Fairfield County – specifically at Fairchild Wheeler. The season was kicked off by our popular “Parent-Child” Open at Lyman Orchard’s Apple Nine, followed by several “Girls Only” events held in Cromwell as part of our LPGA-USGA Girls Golf Program, as well as terrific participation in the Nutmeg State Games in July.

Those are just a few examples of The First Tee’s “Activity-Based” approach to seamlessly

incorporating important Life Skills within golf activities. The Life Skills Experience is at the heart of what The First Tee is all about. Our trained coaches teach young people aged 5-18 Nine Core Values: **Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Courtesy, Judgment, Perseverance, Sportsmanship, Confidence and Responsibility**, and Nine Healthy Habits like staying hydrated or being part of a community. Speaking of a community, we enjoyed another exciting Summer Camp season with over 200 young people attending one of our eight, four-day camps that included Girls Only sessions and half day sessions for our 5 and 6 year old friends. The Life Skills Experience would not be as effective (and at the same time fun) as it is without our fine



Learning Center at Goodwin Park Golf Course, Hartford, CT

coaching staff and volunteers, many of whom are PGA members. We are extremely proud of and thankful to our nearly 90 coaches who are currently making an impact on the young people within our program. Among those coaches are 14 individuals who are a part of The First Tee’s National

Coach Program: Warren Beardow, Jackie Beck, Phil Blonksi, George Claffey, Coleman Davis, Taylor Januario, Karen Michaels, Rodean Minto, Mark Moriarty, Mark Murnane, Patrick O’Connor, Bobby Powell, Randy Taylor and John Vitale.

## Golf Around the World

Would you like to play at Pebble Beach without having to board a plane? Keep an eye on our website for an announcement later this year about how to reserve your tee time on our golf simulator on select Saturdays/Sundays and school holidays at the David & Geri Epstein Learning Center in Cromwell.

## Open Houses - Cromwell

- Hit shots in one of two indoor nets
- Practice your putting on the indoor putting green
- Play a hole at select courses around the world on the High Definition Golf™ Simulator
- Stop by for a visit with our coaches & staff
- Learn about 2018 programs & upcoming events
- Introduce family & friends to The First Tee of Connecticut

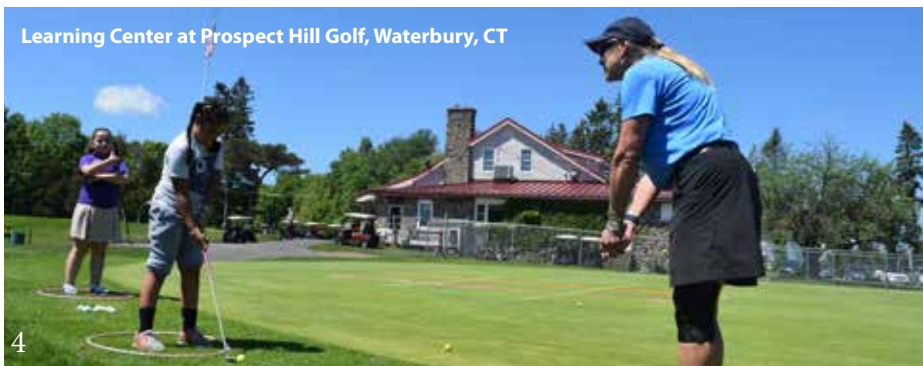
The dates and times of these Open Houses will be posted on our website toward the end of this year. There will be no cost to attend these Open House Events and advanced registration is **not** required.

## Small Group Swing Classes

Coach Lindsey’s Swing Classes will be offered again this winter for Par, Birdie and Eagle Level participants 10+ who would like to work on their golf fundamentals in January, February or March.

Days and times for the three 1-hour long sessions will be announced soon.

Learning Center at Prospect Hill Golf, Waterbury, CT



Open House at David & Geri Epstein Learning Center, Cromwell, CT





## Learning Center at Prospect Hill Golf, Waterbury, CT



### Think Spring - The Connecticut Golf Show

Although it's Fall, it's never too early to think Spring golf. The Connecticut Golf Show offers a welcomed preview of another great golf season. Circle March 23-25, 2018 to stop by The First Tee of Connecticut's booth at the Connecticut Convention Center.

#### 2017 Outreach Partners:

Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford and New Haven

Channel 3 Kids Camp

Hartford's Camp Courant

Waterbury, New Britain and Hartford PAL (Police Activity Leagues)

## In-School Programs

As the 2017 season ends and kids are settled back in at school, it's time to transition The First Tee's Life Skills Experience from our green grass locations into warmer spaces. Many of our coaches will be instrumental in bringing the Life Skills Experience curriculum inside during Physical Education classes this winter through a partnership with over 160 schools in districts such as Bridgeport, Cromwell, Danbury, East Hartford, Hartford, Middletown, New Haven, Norwalk and Waterbury.

These school-based programs, along with our Outreach Programs conducted during the summer months, are an important part of The First Tee of Connecticut's mission 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.

### Announcing the Ana Grace Project

We are especially proud to announce that beginning in 2018 the National School Program will be delivered in six (6) schools within the Consolidated School District of New Britain through a partnership with the district and The Ana Grace Project. Many

of these schools are known as Love Wins Schools, which is a program organized in New Britain by The Ana Grace Project; an organization dedicated to promoting love, community and connection for every child and family through three lead initiatives: partner schools, professional development, and music & arts. The following schools will participate:

- Smalley Elementary School**
- Smith Elementary School**
- Northend Elementary School**
- DiLoreto Elementary and Middle School**
- The New Britain Transition Center School**
- Chamberlain Elementary School**



In-School Program



Learning Center at Alling Memorial Golf Club, New Haven, CT



*Meghna Mazumdar, Corey Sturgis, Justin Mecca, Christopher Rose,  
Carson Delaney, Celina Jiang, Sophia Qiu, Jason Liu*



Another very important event for The First Tee of Connecticut is the Annual Patrons' Breakfast, traditionally held the morning of Saturday's round during the Travelers Championship. The Breakfast provides The First Tee of Connecticut's Staff and Board of Directors the opportunity to say "Thank You" to donors and is the perfect setting to present scholarships to participants who attend tuition-based schools. The 2017 Breakfast announced more than \$40,000 in 2017 Scholarships. Scholarship winners Jason Liu, Celina Jiang, Carson Delaney and Justin Mecca attended the Breakfast.

## 2017 Scholarship Winners (and attending school)

### **Andrew K. Dwyer Foundation Scholarship**

Carson Delaney, Providence College  
Jason Liu, Dartmouth College  
Dan Schena, Mount Saint Mary College

### **Donald E. Vacheron Scholarship**

Elena Anderson, Loomis Chaffee  
Taylor Januario, Manchester Community College

### **William P. Lyons Scholarship**

Chase Skrubis, Penn State University

### **Aetna Retirees Scholarship in honor of H. Grant Thomas**

Marcus Frank, Western New England

### **Aetna Retirees Scholarship in honor of Roger Lawson**

Cristina Ludwig, Luralton Hall

### **Epstein Family Scholarship**

Peter Cavaliere, Xavier High School  
Prithvi Guddera, UCONN  
Mark Joseph Hally, Franklin Academy  
Celina Jiang, Trinity College



Robbie Ludwig III, Notre Dame West Haven  
Justin Mecca, Penn State University  
Jax Murray, Fishers Island School  
Sawyer Murray, Fishers Island School  
Benjamin Poulos, Kingswood Oxford School  
Joshua Raj, St. Bridget  
Sydney Rastkhane, Choate Rosemary Hall  
Aidan Shea, Notre Dame - West Haven  
Corey Sturgis, Laurel Springs School

### **Walking For Kids Foundation Scholarship**

Alexander Cavaliere, Xavier High School

### **Daniel Novarr Scholarship**

Christopher Rose, Central Connecticut State University

### **Mazumdar Family Scholarship**

Carson Delaney, Providence College

## Walmart Charity Classic for The First Tee of Connecticut Presented by Stanley Black & Decker at TPC River Highlands

Our first event was the Kick-Off for the 2017 Travelers Championship at the TPC River Highlands on June 11th, otherwise known as the Walmart Charity Classic. This is our annual celebrity golf tournament where our golfers go out in groups of five – each group paired with a local celebrity. The format was a 5 Person Shamble. We had 22 fivesomes! The Walmart Charity Classic netted just under \$67,000! Since 2003, the

Central Connecticut Charity Classic has raised close to \$818,000 in support of programming in the central part of the state. This day would not be possible without all of our sponsors, with special emphasis on our top tier sponsors including: our Title Sponsor, Walmart and our Presenting Sponsor, Stanley Black & Decker.



*Celebrity line-up at Walmart Classic*

## RAISING FUNDS, FRIENDS & AWARENESS

We had several successful golf tournaments this summer in large part thanks to each of our tournament committees, our loyal sponsors and supports and our fantastic volunteers! Together these three tournaments raised over \$180,000 for The First Tee of Connecticut. We will put these dollars to good use and continue to provide Connecticut's youth with the tools they need to achieve success and make wise choices. Because of the generosity of benefactors like you, we can maintain the high standards we have established in bringing The First Tee of Connecticut Life Skills Experience based on Nine Core Values - Honesty, Integrity, Respect, Sportsmanship, Courtesy, Judgment, Confidence, Responsibility, and Perseverance and Nine Healthy Habits - to more than 71,000 children state-wide.

## Yale University Athletics Presents The First Tee Charity Classic at The Course at Yale

The First Tee New Haven County Charity Classic at The Course at Yale was on July 17th. We had 80 players participate in this best ball of four event, which turned out to be on a picture perfect day for golf.

Over the past 14 years this event has raised in excess of \$752,000 to support programming in the Greater New Haven and Waterbury regions. Included in this number are this year's results – as we netted \$41,620.

A special thank you is owed to our top sponsors including our Presenting Sponsor Yale University Athletics, who hosted this tournament over the past four years and has been a wonderful partner to The First Tee of Connecticut! Our Diamond Sponsor was our good friend and supporter Marshall Ruben.



*Ken Baldwin, Kevin Hennessy, Jim Ray and Dave Platt*



*Joe Troy, Bob Bantle, Teddy Bobroske, and Al Schenck*

## PwC First Tee Charity Classic Presented by MasterCard at Wee Burn Country Club

The PwC First Tee Charity Classic was hosted at Rolling Hills Country Club in Wilton. This spectacular course features 6,737 yards with a slope of 137 and a course rating of 72.9! Seventy-six players had the opportunity to play in this Best Ball of Four event.

TFTCT is grateful to Craig Watchmaker and PwC for their sixth consecutive year of the Title Sponsorship of the PwC

First Tee Charity Classic. Due to the generosity and commitment of PwC, MasterCard and all our sponsors, this event netted over \$74,000. A special shout out to Tim Bunt at CBRE, Inc. who secured 8 of the 19 foursomes that participated on August 28th at Rolling Hills.



Special Thanks to Konica Minolta Business Solutions  
for generously sponsoring this newsletter



The First Tee of Connecticut would like to give a special "shout out" to the individual donors and corporate sponsors who supported us in 2017 by participating in the Travelers Championship Birdies for Charity, Brackets for Good, and/or the Super Bowl Raffle, run in partnership with the Connecticut Chapter of the NFL Alumni Association. We are grateful for your support!



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## 2017 AB Honor Role

The First Tee encourages success both on and off the golf course. Every First Tee Chapter is asked to provide the Home Office with the names of participants who received all As and Bs in their classes each semester. These participants receive national recognition as The First Tee A/B Honor Roll members and are awarded a special certificate. We are proud to congratulate the following First Tee of Connecticut participants for their excellence in the classroom in 2017:

Mark Nicholas Albino  
Elena Anderson  
Isabella Bonvisuto  
Christian Bonvisuto  
Corey Christensen  
Trevor Christensen  
Eric Dillner  
Eythan Jiang  
Mitchel Leccese

Cameron Ledford  
Jason Liu  
Cristina Ludwig  
Robbie Ludwig  
Matthew Luponio  
Arjun Mantripragada  
Joshua Raj  
Elliot Rastkhane  
Sydney Rastkhane

Robby Shay  
Caleb Shea  
Corey Sturgis  
Christopher Vera  
Jack Wise  
Brooke Zajac  
Madeline Zavalick

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## BENEFACTOR EVENTS

We are grateful to the many individuals who dedicate a portion, or all, of the proceeds they raise through benefactor events (a/k/a third-party events) – their financial support is a real validation of The First Tee of Connecticut's mission.

- Final Final Open
- Lou Ferraro Golf Classic
- Superbowl Raffle
- The Dennis Hickey Memorial Golf Tournament
- The Harry Nowobilski Memorial Celebrity Amateur Golf Tournament
- InterFaith Open
- Redding Country Club Golf Tournament
- Simsbury/Granby Rotary Golf Tournament
- MasterCard Employee Outing
- Max Classic
- Gary Gatzen Memorial Golf Tournament
- Steve McCarty Memorial Golf Tournament