

NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT: **The First Tee of Delaware** BY DANIELLE FAHEY

» In 1994, the McDonald's Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Championship Tournament was held at the DuPont Country Club in Wilmington, sparking an increase in golf's popularity and support in the New Castle County area. As golf grew its presence in the state of Delaware and across the country, many people appreciated the sport's potential for community building and envisioned a unique scholarship opportunity for children. That's when The First Tee was founded, and in 2005, the First Tee of Delaware was formed.

The First Tee of Delaware, a partnership among the LGPA, the Masters Tournament, the PGA of America, the PGA TOUR, and the USGA, is Delaware's branch of the youth development program. The First Tee seeks to change children's lives by providing educational golf opportunities that build character, introduce important life values, and create lasting friendships. For over ten years, the First Tee of Delaware has sought to give children of all ages, backgrounds, experiences, and abilities to come together and play golf. While forming valuable communities across the state, the program hopes to teach kids its nine core values: honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy, and judgment. The program also

emphasizes physical, emotional, and social health for children.

"There's something for everybody here. We want our kids to succeed both on and off the course, to find their passions, and to reach their potential as much as possible," said Charma Bell, Program Director of The First Tee of Delaware. "With an inclusive and family-focused environment, we welcome everyone."

The First Tee of Delaware has been recognized extensively for its efforts. Last year at the First Tee's 20th Anniversary National Network Meeting in Orlando, Florida, they received the First Tee National's ACE recognition for the highest level of Chapter

Performance nationwide. They also received the "Growing Girls Through the Game" Award, which recognizes a superior commitment to gender diversity and support for female participants in the scholarship portion of the program. Bell was celebrated as a First Tee Recognized Program Director for her outstanding ability to educate The First Tee of Delaware's participants.

With so much recognition and such a large impact on Delaware communities, where is the First Tee of Delaware headed for the future? "We want to grow in all three counties, and our big goal is to develop learning centers that any child can go to and enjoy," said

Charma Bell. "Sponsoring with various communities, we want to create a home away from home for kids where they can learn life skills."

The First Tee serves over 10 million children nationwide, and the First Tee of Delaware provides community service initiatives, mentoring, and scholarship opportunities for children across the state. On golf courses, in schools, and at youth centers, the First Tee seeks make a difference in as many communities as possible. Programming is offered year-round at many different locations in all three counties, and volunteers and equipment donations are always needed. For more information, visit <http://www.thefirstteedelaware.org>.



An elementary school team poses for a team photo.