



The First Tee of Greater Richmond History

The First Tee of Greater Richmond was born from a national initiative launched in 1997 by the World Golf Foundation. Those who first dreamed of making golf widely available to young people dreamed big and envisioned The First Tee Programs throughout the United States. Through these programs, young people would learn a sport that could be played throughout their lives while benefiting from the positive values inherent to golf.

Local newspaper coverage of former President George Bush announcing the World Golf Foundation's initiative caught the eye of Mrs. Roddy Tattersall. She knew that the concept would interest her husband and she was right! A few months after introducing of The First Tee concept nationally, Fred Tattersall, a Richmond business and community leader and golfer, led the charge to establish a chapter in Richmond. The William Goodwin, Jr. and James and Robert Ukrop families joined the Tattersalls to become the lead founding benefactors of The First Tee of Greater Richmond. Before long the number of supporters grew to over 200 people. The project received significant financial support from First Union Bank (now Wells Fargo Bank), Target Stores, Chesterfield County, and the City of Richmond. On February 26, 1998 the founders incorporated "Richmond First Tee" as a non-profit organization, and laid the groundwork for the development of The First Tee facilities in the greater Richmond area.

The efforts of those committed to seeing youth benefit from affordable and accessible golf facilities paid off. In August of 2000, The First Tee of Greater Richmond opened its golf course in Chesterfield County, The First Tee of Chesterfield Facility, becoming the nation's twentieth programming location. Three years later, The First Tee of Greater Richmond opened the 100th programming location in the country with its golf course on the north side of the City of Richmond, The First Tee of Richmond Facility. Being able to locate a course in the heart of Richmond was a leap forward for the project; it meant that The First Tee could more easily reach inner-city children who often have difficulty accessing programs located in the suburbs. Lester George, renowned golf course architect, gave his time to design the course in Chesterfield and the course in the City of Richmond as a gift to the chapter. In 2010, The First Tee of Greater Richmond formed a partnership with Virginia Commonwealth University Athletics to make The First Tee of Richmond Facility the home of VCU Men's Golf.

Program expansion continued for The First Tee of Greater Richmond when it adopted The First Tee's National School Program, a national initiative that introduces the game of golf and The First Tee's Life Skills Curriculum to elementary students during physical education classes. In 2010, the National School Program entered into ten Chesterfield County Schools. One year later, ten Richmond City Schools began delivering the program. The First Tee of Greater Richmond now serves 69 local elementary schools with the hopes of expanding into all elementary schools in the Greater Richmond area by the end of 2017. Outside of delivering programs onsite and in elementary schools, The First Tee of Greater Richmond has many collaborate community partners, such as The Boys and Girls Club of Greater Richmond and Communities in Schools.

The First Tee Greater Richmond garners community respect by offering something unique to area youth. Without The First Tee of Greater Richmond, the majority of children who participate in the program wouldn't have exposure to the game of golf and the life skills encompassing the sport. Engaging the community in our mission will strengthen the organization today to ensure that The First Tee of Greater Richmond continues to be instrumental in touching the lives of thousands of children by providing a solid base for their development to become successful members of our community. Through both the Chesterfield and Richmond facilities and programs, we will continue to work to instill positive values, confidence and self-esteem in our region's children.