

SBM SOUTH BRUNSWICK MAGAZINE

Life in Southern Brunswick County, NC

Spring 2011 - www.SouthBrunswickMagazine.com

The Charm and Character of Calabash

Let's Go

Berry Picking

The First Tee's

Lofty Goals

Flying High

with Brunswick Air

It's Time to Get

Beach Body Ready



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Complimentary

spring 2011

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The First Tee of Brunswick County



On a Thousand-Year Mission for Brunswick County Youth

With

all of the youth soccer camps, Little League, softball, football, cheerleading and tennis offerings in Brunswick County, you'd think a youth golf organization would find enrollment hard to come by. But for The First Tee of Brunswick County (TFTBC), that's not the case at all.

STORY BY BILLY JASON FRYE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEITH KETCHUM

TFTBC teaches around 300 of Brunswick County's 7- to 17-year-olds the skills and values they'll need to succeed on the golf course and in life. All from their small home course at Cinghiale Creek in Shallotte.

But that's about to change. TFTBC's capacity to reach the region's youth will explode with the completion of two massive expansions that will take their present facility — which includes three golf holes with multiple greens and tee boxes, an indoor putting green and golf simulator, as well as classrooms and locker rooms — to a new level.

The first expansion is the construction of the North Carolina Life Skills and Leadership Academy (NCLSLA), an 11,000-square-foot facility with dormitories for 50 youth and 16 counselors, a commercial kitchen, a dining and meeting room, and a covered outdoor area to accommodate large groups. At the NCLSLA, youth from across the region, state and nation will have a place to gather to learn the game of golf and the core values and leadership skills The First Tee (TFT) emphasizes in its internationally recognized curriculum.

The second phase of TFTBC's expansion is the Tom Watson Signature Practice Facility, a 10-acre facility featuring a short, nine-hole golf course designed by Tom Watson, PGA Tour legend and current Champions' Tour player. With the Watson and NCLSLA additions, the Cinghiale Creek home base of TFTBC will have a first-rate facility for the region's youth.

Rusty Petrea, who, along with his wife, Carol, founded The First Tee of Brunswick County, believes the new facility will provide a marked improvement in their ability to serve the young people of Brunswick County. Currently, fourth and fifth graders

travel to Cinghiale Creek every other week during the school year for 90-minute instructional programs that not only meet North Carolina's teaching standards for physical education, but also meet TFT's national standard for teaching golf skills, life skills and nine core values that will help students find success in all aspects of their lives.

The First Tee's Core Values Curriculum includes nine points key to success on the golf course and in life. By teaching honesty, integrity, sportsmanship, respect, confidence, responsibility, perseverance, courtesy and judgment in a golf-related context, TFT is building not only better golfers, but also better citizens.

Petrea believes in TFT's mission and says the core values have "a striking and lasting impact on young people, impacting them to be better, stronger leaders and citizens." Research conducted by TFT's national office bears that out.

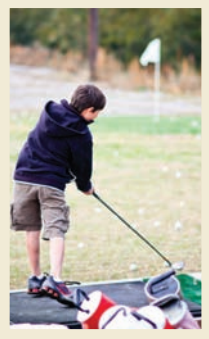
In a 2003 study, parents of TFT participants reported overwhelming improvements in the attitudes and behaviors of their children. Seventy-six percent reported more confidence in their children; 74 percent said their children were more responsible; 74 percent reported improved communication skills; 66 percent of parents saw an improvement in social abilities, and 52 percent reported improved grades in school.

**Future Generations
Golf Tournament**

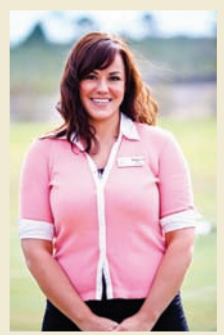
Want to play in the June 11 Future Generations Golf Tournament at St. James Plantation?

Entry fees for a four-person team are \$380 for this Captain's Choice tournament. Your entry fee covers green fees, entry into the hole-in-one contest, one mulligan, a boxed lunch, a complimentary beer and wine cocktail hour and dinner. Proceeds will go toward construction of the North Carolina Life Skills and Leadership Academy and the Tom Watson Signature Practice Facility for The First Tee of Brunswick County.

To register or find out more information, contact Beth Coffey at (910) 754-5288 or visit www.thefirstteebrunswickcounty.org.



Above: The First Tee of Brunswick County teaches kids ages 7 to 17 the skills and values they'll need to succeed on the golf course and in life.



Left: Rebecca Albin is the new executive director of The First Tee of Brunswick County. Other photos: More than 300 local residents volunteer their time with The First Tee of Brunswick County.



Left: The First Tee of Brunswick County was the recipient of a 2010 ATMC community grant, which provided printers for the new computer lab.

A further study from 2005-06 showed similar results when they polled TFT youth. One hundred percent reported that they used methods learned in TFT to manage negative thoughts and emotions on and off the golf course; 99 percent called themselves “more respectful;” 97 percent said their meeting and greeting skills were improved; and 90 percent reported that they transferred TFT lessons into their lives at school, home and in other areas.

If that’s not enough evidence of TFT’s positive impact on school-age youth, there’s this: 73 percent of TFT participants reported “high confidence” in their ability to do well academically, and 82 percent felt more confident in their social skills with peers.

Without a doubt, TFT’s message is getting through and improving the lives of participants and everyone with whom they interact.

Lori Boldt, mother of three (soon to be four) TFT participants and a volunteer with TFTBC, says she and her husband, Terry, “believe [the program] has reinforced our family and faith values through the nine core values. Our children have consciously integrated these life skills at home, church, school and in other activities.”

With a testimony like that of the Boldt family’s, it’s easy to see why TFTBC has an army of eager volunteers. More than 300 area residents give their time to the organization, and only two full-time employees (and an involved board of directors) oversee the programming and operations.

It’s not just individuals who give their time, knowledge and love for community and golf to TFTBC. Nearly two-dozen affiliate courses in Brunswick County provide programming, special events, fund-

raising and course access to TFT participants. From The Bald Head Island Club to South Harbor Golf Links to Oak Island Golf Club to Carolina National and the four courses at Ocean Ridge Plantation, TFT youth have the opportunity to play on some of the most fun, challenging and beautiful courses the area has to offer.

On June 11, 2011, St. James, LLC, has donated the use of all four courses at St.

James Plantation — The Reserve, Members Club, Players Club and Founders Club — to TFTBC for their Future Generations Golf Tournament. The one-day tournament will raise money for the NCLSLA and the Tom Watson Signature Practice Facility and will be the largest charity golf tournament in Brunswick County history.

The tournament format will be a four-person team event, Captain’s Choice. The entry fee is \$380 per team



Waterway Cove’s Waterway Park: View of the Intracoastal

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and includes green fees, entry into the hole-in-one contest, one mulligan, a boxed lunch, a complimentary wine and beer cocktail hour, a dinner reception and a silent auction. Corporate sponsorships ranging from \$50 to \$10,000 are available, with many including entry for at least one team into the tournament.

Projected costs on the NCLSLA building and Tom Watson Signature Practice Facility are close to \$700,000, and, since the project will be completed without borrowing money, the success of the Future Generations Golf Tournament will help determine how quickly things can move forward. As of the end of 2010, more than \$200,000 had been committed to the projects.

Bob Jones, one of the committee members who faces the task of fund-raising for the facilities, says TFTBC “has received many offers of in-kind contributions, both nationally and locally... [the] Kohler Company has agreed to supply all the plumbing fixtures for our academy building. We will be pursuing grants, corporate sponsors and contributions from businesses, golf associations, civic groups and churches.”

Petrea says it was his wife’s idea to pursue expansion of the program.

“My wife, Carol, wanted to provide a program and facility for the youth of Brunswick County that would have a significant, lasting and county-wide impact,” Petrea says. “Her vision was to help improve the lives of our youth and give them the skills they’ll need throughout life, [and] with the North Carolina Life Skills and Leadership Academy and Tom Watson Signature Practice Facility we’ll be able to fulfill her vision.”

Reaching all of Brunswick County’s youth is important to TFTBC’s charter

and volunteers; that’s why they’re establishing a scholarship fund to help ensure youth from all backgrounds have the opportunity to participate in the programs offered at the NCLSLA. TFTBC also has expanded north to Camp Lejuene, where more than 50 youth and 20 coaches participate in The First Tee’s programming and are starting the organization at Camp Lejuene.

This level of dedication from TFTBC’s leadership and volunteers is one of the reasons the organization has been recognized at one of the top-ranked chapters in the nation. Joe Stanley, chairman of the TFTBC 2011 Board of Directors, says many volunteers find the experience as rewarding as the kids do fun.

“A volunteer can get back the great experience of watching young people mature and develop life skills through the game of golf,” Stanley says. “It’s a great thing to do for someone looking to make a difference in their community.”

Petrea has long-term goals for the program.

“I have a saying I like to use,” Petrea says. “There’s an old Chinese proverb that says, ‘To prepare for a year, plant rice; for a hundred years, plant trees; for a thousand years, educate your youth.’ Here at The First Tee of Brunswick County, we’re on that thousand-year plan.”

For more information on The First Tee of Brunswick County, visit www.thefirstteebrunswickcounty.org. While you’re there you can register for the Future Generations Golf Tournament and find information about volunteering with The First Tee. To learn more about corporate sponsorships, contact Bob Jones at (910) 616-7832. ■



Below: The layout of the new Tom Watson Signature Practice Facility at Cinghiale Creek. The short nine-hole course will provide a first-rate facility for local youth in The First Tee program. Bottom: A volunteer working in the TFT program.

