

Honesty Integrity  
Sportsmanship  
Respect Confidence  
Responsibility  
Perseverance Courtesy  
Judgment



## IMPACT REPORT

# Understanding The First Tee's Impact

Young people do not automatically act with integrity or demonstrate sportsmanship. The acquisition of values is often a by-product of a series of complex processes that evolve from individuals' experiences. The First Tee Life Skills Experience teaches participants a set of skills to allow them to face challenges at home, school and play in a constructive manner. The goal is for participants to internalize the Nine Core Values™ (cover), which are at the heart of The First Tee mission.

This desire to understand how The First Tee Life Skills Experience impacts young people has driven the organization's commitment to conduct research. It began in 2003 with a snapshot look at the program and continued with a longitudinal study (2005-2008) by a leading expert in youth development through sport.

The primary purposes for the research were:

- Determine **retention** and predictors of continued participation in the program.
- Assess **retention of life skills** and **core values** in the golf setting.
- Identify how participants are **transferring life skills** and **core values** learned through The First Tee to other areas of their lives.

The results are included in this report.

## THE FIRST TEE LIFE SKILLS EXPERIENCE

### LEVELS

**TARGET** Introduction to the Life Skills Experience; provides a fun and safe environment that creates curiosity about the game of golf.

**PLAYer** Introduces playing the game of golf with special emphasis on learning golf and The First Tee Code of Conduct.

**PAR** Focuses on interpersonal communication and self-management skills.

**BIRDIE** Emphasizes goal-setting.

**EAGLE** Concentrates on resilience skills, conflict resolution and planning for the future.

**ACE** The advanced level of the Life Skills Experience; focuses on personal planning for golf, education, career and volunteerism.

“After one gathering with the people of The First Tee, I knew I wanted to play golf. I was enthralled by the activities we did and being able to meet new people and discover new social skills.”

16-year-old girl

**OUR 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.

# Four-Year Study Overall Results

## The First Tee Life Skills Experience Impacts Today's Youth

### > RETAINING YOUTH IN THE FIRST TEE

• **73%** of The First Tee participants were retained from year one to year four of the research. This retention rate is impressive given the average dropout rate per year is about **50%** in other youth organizations.



• At the completion of the four-year study, more than half (**57%**) of those youth no longer in The First Tee still play golf and more than half (**55%**) participate in a variety of other sports. Remaining physically active is a sign of positive youth development.

• Findings indicate the top three factors that contribute to retention in The First Tee are:

- ① Enjoyment of experiences
- ② Confidence in golf ability
- ③ Support by coaches and friends

### > LEARNING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH GOLF

• The First Tee youth **learn and improve life skills** in the golf setting and these results are stable over time. According to research, The First Tee teaches young people valuable life skills including problem solving, managing time, controlling one's emotions, making friends with diverse peers, working well with others and improving relationships with family and community.



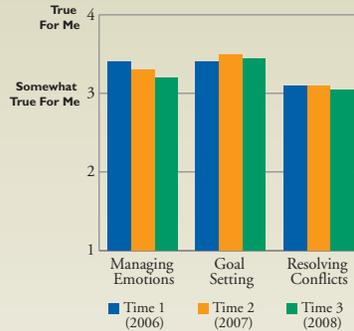
“I often lay in bed thinking about how I have touched peoples’ lives today, how I have contributed to society... that’s why I personally like being a mentor in The First Tee because I feel it’ll extend beyond my generation.”

17-year-old girl

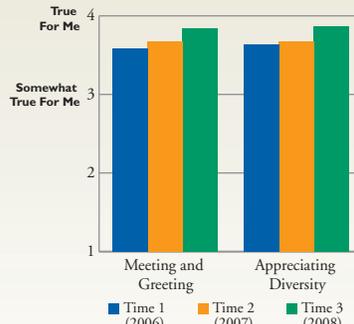
# Four-Year Study Overall Results The First Tee Life Skills Experience Impacts Today's Youth, continued

## > TRANSFERRING SKILLS FROM THE COURSE TO LIFE

• Youth credited The First Tee for their ability to transfer many of the life skills they learned in golf to school and other areas of their lives. **Managing emotions, setting goals** and **resolving conflicts** were skills The First Tee participants continued to transfer by, for example, staying positive when frustrated with homework, setting goals to get better grades and looking for solutions to problems with friends.



• **57% percent** of youth surveyed across three years credited The First Tee for their **meeting and greeting** skills, and **52%** credited the program for their ability to **appreciate diversity**. In fact, trends revealed **increasing** scores for these life skills over a three year period.



## > REVEALING LIFE SKILLS TRANSFER IN THEIR OWN WORDS

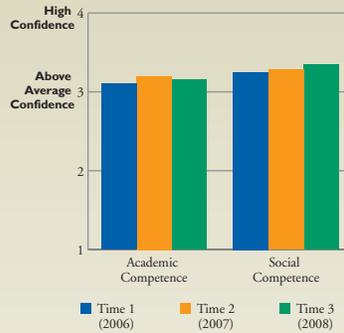
• During personal interviews, **78%** of interviewees described their ability to transfer life skills through specific examples and stories. Skills including **decision-making, self-management** and **setting goals** were consistently transferred to situations involving school, family, friends, jobs, college, career and out-of-school activities.

• In all four years, school was unanimously identified as a setting in which participants transferred life skills. Job/college, friends and out-of-school activities also showed an increase in life skills transfer. The changes in family and sports settings reflect adolescents' growing independence from family and a shift from playing sports to preparation for adulthood.

SETTINGS THAT REFLECT LIFE SKILLS TRANSFER				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
School	100%	100%	100%	100%
Job/College	35%	55%	67%	61%
Friends	60%	65%	50%	78%
Activities	30%	25%	50%	56%
Family	85%	75%	50%	33%
Sports	70%	75%	61%	39%

## > ACQUIRING CORE VALUES MAKES A DIFFERENCE

• After three consecutive years of participation in The First Tee, **73%** reported high confidence in their ability to do well **academically** and **82%** felt confident in their **social skills** with peers. This confidence remained stable each year they were in the program, providing evidence for The First Tee's ability to sustain confidence.



• Research confirmed The First Tee's ability to impart core values on youth. Of the Nine Core Values that could be measured directly, youth revealed particularly high scores for Confidence, Responsibility, Respect, Honesty, Judgment and Perseverance.

Because of The First Tee ...

**59%** Showed respect for themselves and toward others

**60%** Exhibited personal and social responsibility

**63%** Demonstrated honesty

On average, The First Tee youth surveyed reported **above average confidence** (2.9 on a 4 point scale) in their golf skills after participating in the program for three years. In fact, approximately half of all participants surveyed reported **high confidence** in their golfing ability. This is important because youth who believe they can successfully perform on the golf course are more likely to stay involved in the sport.



## > IN SUMMARY, IT'S MORE THAN A GAME

• Through personal interviews and survey responses, the research revealed **convincing evidence** that youth involved in The First Tee transferred life skills to multiple settings, learned and used life skills in the golf environment and demonstrated desirable qualities defined by the Nine Core Values.

• According to the expert who conducted the research, The First Tee Life Skills Experience and The First Tee Coach Program are **exemplary** sport-based youth development and coach education programs.

“The First Tee has given me the skills and values to become a more successful leader.” 15-year-old boy

## Year Three Highlights

### > STAYING INVOLVED IN THE FIRST TEE

• The First Tee youth who were interviewed revealed the top three reasons they like being in the program.

- ① The First Tee builds **positive relationships**;
- ② They learn and improve their **golf skills** through The First Tee; and
- ③ The First Tee is **fun!**

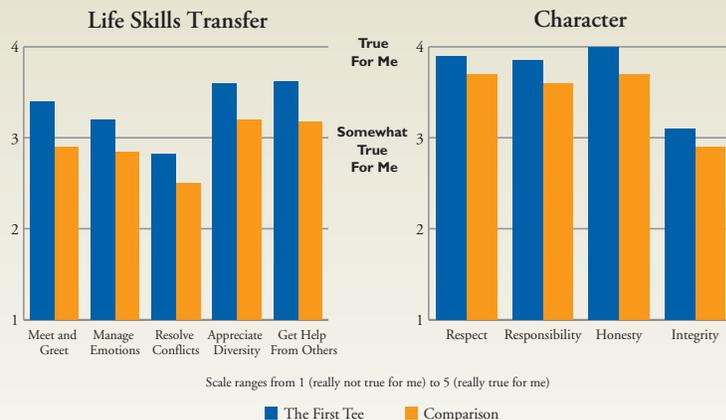


“The First Tee’s taught me how to present myself as a well-established person and to work together with people. In a job interview, you want to give off the best impression that you can...look the person in the eye, shake their hand. What you learn when you’re 8 years old will carry until you’re looking for a job.” 18-year-old boy

## Year Two Highlights

### > DISTINGUISHING THE FIRST TEE YOUTH

• In 2006, The First Tee participants were compared to youth in after-school activities without a life skills curriculum. **The First Tee youth scored higher** than the comparison group on use of general life skills including goal-setting, taking initiative and managing their emotions, as well as on most measures of transferring life skills and demonstrating positive character traits. These differences between The First Tee youth and the comparison group were **statistically significant**.



• As it relates to confidence in their academic abilities, The First Tee participants reported **high confidence** whereas the comparison group reported just above average.

# Year One Highlights

## > PAR AND BIRDIE LEVEL PARTICIPANTS

99% Shared ways they respect others on the golf course

96% Cited golf etiquette and *The Rules of Golf*

94% Showed respect at school, home, sports, or the workplace

74% Described self-respect on the golf course

- 100% verbalized ability to transfer meeting and greeting skills in 10 situations outside of golf.
- 100% used methods to manage negative thoughts and emotions in a number of life settings.
- 99% said they used goal-setting skills in settings outside of golf such as school, home and job/career.

## > EAGLE LEVEL PARTICIPANTS

- 96% **Get help from others** by creating Go-to Teams.
- 91% **Make healthy choices** and defined the importance of physical, mental, emotional and social wellness.
- 91% Have a **greater appreciation for diversity**.

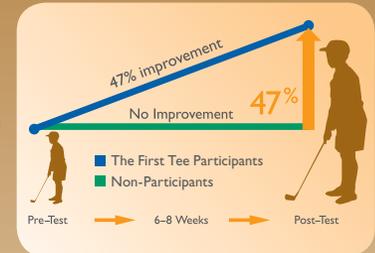
“It’s nice having diversity in my life and being open to different kinds of people and their different cultures and backgrounds.” 16-year-old girl

# SNAPSHOT HIGHLIGHTS

In 2003, a snapshot of the effectiveness of The First Tee Life Skills Experience on Par-level participants revealed several essential findings. It was this initial research that prompted the 2005-2008 study.

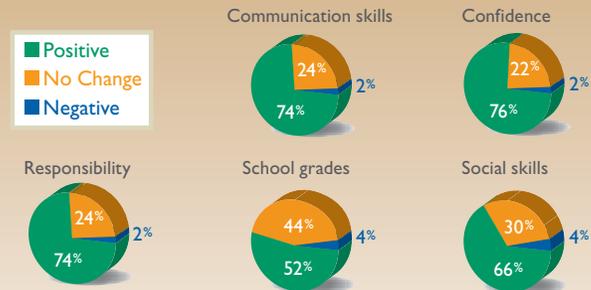
## > KEY PARTICIPANT FINDINGS

Participants showed a **47% improvement** in knowledge and understanding of life skills after participation in The First Tee.



## > OBSERVED CHANGES BY PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents confirmed these results by reporting **dramatic improvements** in their child’s behavior after participation in Par-level programming:



“My child wants to go to college now.”

Parent of The First Tee participant

## Conclusion



Research shows that youth who participate in The First Tee Life Skills Experience learn life skills and exhibit The First Tee Nine Core Values in the golf context, but also transfer and use these skills and qualities in school, at home and in other settings. In addition, the retention rate in The First Tee is significantly higher than is found in typical youth sport organizations.

For more information, The First Tee Life Skills Experience research summary reports can be accessed at [www.thefirsttee.org](http://www.thefirsttee.org).

“I don’t go a day without being thankful for the values I’ve learned in The First Tee. The comfort level when I first came [to college]... I really have to give that to The First Tee.” 18-year-old boy

## Acknowledgments

### 2005-08 RESEARCH

Maureen R. Weiss, Ph.D.

**University of Minnesota (2007-08)**

**University of Virginia (2005-06)**

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The UNLV and UF research project (2003) was funded by The First Tee home office. The UVA/UM research project was initially funded by a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice (2005) and from 2006-2008 was funded by a positive youth development grant from Philip Morris USA Youth Smoking Prevention.

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