

The First Tee of Northwest Arkansas impacting the lives of young people throughout NWA



National School Program Field Day with Springdale's Elmdale Elementary School at The First Tee facility at Stonebridge Meadows Golf Course

The First Tee of Northwest Arkansas has charted its future course by launching its new initiative, "Invest in Values that Last a Lifetime," an ambitious three-year plan with the goal of making a positive impact on every youth in our area. With its mission to impact the lives of young people by providing learning facilities and educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf, The First Tee has grown significantly from its early days when, in 2006, participants were simply hitting the ball into a net in the All Star Sports Arena. With programming now being offered at golf facilities in Bella

Vista, Fayetteville and Siloam Springs, the nearly 700 active participants are offered 32 weeks of programming on an annual basis. "Our programming seeks to introduce our participants to a game that can last a lifetime," said Tim Pschierer, Director of Life Skills Programming. "And more importantly, [provide them with] life skills that will make a lifetime better." A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, The First Tee's program is based on its Nine Core Values of honesty, integrity, perseverance, respect, responsibility, courtesy, sportsmanship, judgment and confidence. "Each of our Core Values can be found within the game of golf, which allows us to seamlessly teach both the game and the life skills to our participants," said Pschierer.

The First Tee's "Invest in Values that Last a Lifetime" initiative provides a springboard to reach much further into the organization's target population of youth ages 7 to 17. The initiative will seek to retain those introduced to the programming by developing both an affordable and accessible First Tee Learning Center facility in Lowell, and creating "welcoming" partnerships with local golf courses. "The outreach facet of the initiative is the piece we are the most excited about," said Mike Shea, Executive Director. "We will be seeking to provide every elementary school in Northwest Arkansas with the equipment, lesson plans and training to make The First Tee life and golf skills program part of the physical education curriculum. Coupled with the Mobile Teaching Units, we truly will have an opportunity to reach out to every child in Northwest Arkansas," Shea continued. The Mobile Teaching Units will allow The First Tee coaches and staff to



bring the "driving range" to the students. "With the Units' trailers outfitted with portable putting greens, clubs, mats and 'almost golf' balls, we will be able to convert every middle school, junior high school or Boys and Girls Club property into a golf facility – and that is exciting," Shea said. *For more information about the exciting things going on with The First Tee's "Invest in Values that Last a Lifetime" initiative and how you can get involved, call (479) 845-3905 or visit www.thefirstteenwar.org.* ■

