



A program of the Desert Recreation District

### FTCV Chapter Report

2026 is off to an amazing start with 850 kids in the program to date!

- **16th Annual Golf Tournament-** A limited number of sponsorships to play are available at every level for the "2026 Play for a Purpose" except for the presenting sponsorship. We have secured over \$179,277 in pledged sponsorships, but we need all your help to sell out the event! Please send out the tournament information to all potential sponsors for the tournament ASAP. Thanks!
- **Jim Kane Scholarship Committee –** Applications are due March 27th and the committee will have until April 7th to read applications. Jim Kane Scholarship Ad Hoc Teams committee Meeting will be 4:00 p.m. April 7th.
- **Alexander Yang Tree Dedication-** Our beloved 17-year-old participant passed away in October and honored his life with a tree planted in the old pond on hole #1 on Saturday, March 7. Thank you to everyone who attended the dedication ceremony. It was beautiful and the Yang family was very grateful and touched.
- **Genesis -**We sent 20 participants to attend the Genesis Invitational with 20 participants free of charge with lunch included and fun activities for the youth on February 21st.
- **Sun City Palm Desert Fundraiser-**Amazing Volunteers Paul and Suzy Pendolino created a fundraiser at Sun City Palm Desert attached to their Couples golf event. We brought Micaela to speak and I spoke to the room. At the end of the event a private donor let me know that they would be sending in a donation for \$15,000 from their DAF to add to the event total.
- **2026 Play For A Purpose Online Auction:** We are doing well with procuring items, and I am actively reaching out to local golf courses and businesses for online auction items. This is crunch time for procuring items! If any board members could gather certificates or

items for the auction, please communicate that with me and we will get the items packaged and added to the online auction. As of today, with the help of the tournament committee, we have secured 53 items. The goal is to generate \$50,000 from the items up for sale. I have also created a marketing piece for Board Members, Coaches, and Volunteers to hand out in the community to help with collecting items.

- **2026 Volunteer Coaches:** We are continuing to recruit and train new volunteer coaches. FTCV's current count is 70. We will be hosting a volunteer appreciation dinner on Thursday, April 9th from 4:00 PM-7:00 PM

- **No Boundaries Class:** The Spring (1) Session No Boundaries class currently has 10 Participants coming on Saturday morning, which is very exciting! We moved the class time to 9:00 AM to try and beat the heat. No Boundaries will be utilizing space inside at the DRD for Spring (2) to keep the participants comfortable during the hotter months. I wanted to share a quote from a parent survey that I sent out at the conclusion of last session: "He enjoys just being there the most. Existing in a safe space of love. It allows him to be creative and learn. His mind is always going but when he's there, he can focus on what brings him joy."

**2026 Winter Session Session Recap:** The West Valley experienced significant growth during the 2026 Winter Session, highlighted by strong increases at both Tahquitz Creek and The Golf Center. The Golf Center also continued its upward trend, growing from **361 registrations in Winter 2025 to 533 in Winter 2026, a 48% increase.** Overall, the Winter Session reflected strong community engagement and continued demand for First Tee programming.**2026 Spring (1) Session Update:** The West Valley saw exceptional progress during the 2026 Spring 1 Session, achieving record participation and expanding our community reach. Tahquitz Creek continued its strong growth, increasing from **29 registrations in Spring 1 2025 to 73 in Spring 1 2026**, while The Golf Center grew from **500 to 552 registrations** over the same period. This collective momentum contributed to our **largest Spring 1 session as a chapter to date.** In addition to these gains, we launched a new program during the school day with **Dove's Landing Micro School**, serving approximately 30 students in weekly Monday classes. We also added **Bermuda Dunes Learning Center in Palm Desert** as a new community partner. Overall, Spring 1 reflects impactful partnerships and continued growth across the West Valley.

**Looking Ahead:** We are excited about our upcoming Spring 2 partnership with the YMCA in Palm Desert. In addition, we are exploring potential program expansion into the Morongo Basin (Yucca Valley and 29 Palms), representing an exciting opportunity to expand the West Valley and bring First Tee programming to a new and underserved area.

**Spring 2 and Summer 2026 Upcoming Programming:** For Spring 2, we will continue offering classes through our partner programs, including Desert Recreation District sites and Boys & Girls Club locations, while also maintaining programming at The Lights. Looking ahead to Summer, we are planning to host summer camps at The Lights, providing youth with additional opportunities to develop their golf skills and engage in First Tee life skills programming. We are also planning to expand programming at the PGA Superstore in La Quinta, where we plan to offer morning and afternoon classes. Morning classes will focus on partnership-based programming (such as DRD and Boys & Girls Club participants). Afternoon classes will consist of age-based classes open to the public.

- **Development Tour:** We have doubled to 36 participants this Spring-1. We may have to add another class when it grows beyond 40. Four participants graduated to 9-Holers from Winter session.
- **9-Holers:** Spring-1 Session at Indio Lights has grown to 16 participants that graduated from the Development Tour or are more developed golfers.
- **PGA Junior League:** Next season starts April 2026. We will have 2 teams with 30 total players. Desert Willow & Desert Princess are the other teams in the league. We also will have 16 players for the 14-17 age team for the first time.
- **Advanced & Open Practice Classes:** Advanced has 10 participants. Both Indio & PD Open classes average about 10 per session.
- **ACE 9-Holers:** 9-Holes each Saturday in session at various Clubs in the Desert for the ACE Participants. For the Spring-1 they will visit The Springs CC, Stone Eagle CC, Sunrise CC, Trilogy Cc. Toscana & LQCC will host for Spring-2. Ultimate plan is to have Ryder Cup teams format when we have sufficient enrollment.
- **The First Tee Monthly Sunday Events:** We are in the process of reworking formats to generate more interest for the participants. Next event is March 22 for the GIRLS Championships.
- **Roadrunner Cup:** We will be returning to The Lakes CC **May 24** 2026. Starting to gather players now.
- **Drive, Chip & Putt:** 2026 Local Qualifier will be held **May 30** at Tahquitz Creek
- **Prestige College Golf Tournament & Junior Clinic:** this was a smashing success with about 40 of our participants attending the free clinic and range lesson session. TV advertising featured 4 or 5 of our participants hitting on the range.

· **AMEX Standard Bearers:** Another successful year at AMEX. Next year's plans include more FT participants from across So Cal & more FTCV advertising with full uniforms on participants as well as a full staff presence.

· **Evans Caddie Scholarship Program:** We are caddying at Ironwood, Marrakesh and O'Donnell this season. We anticipate another site at Rancho La Quinta CC. We are looking at 18 caddies for next season. Mika is in her final year and is working feverishly to get in the required loops. We are talking to the Clubs regarding FTCV fundraisers at each facility. A goal for the program is to allow players to get caddies for no charge. This is a very important step forward for the program.

· **The US Kids Golf Tour:** Eight Spring-2026 Tour sites have been finalized. Tahquitz Creek, Trilogy, Desert Falls, Desert Princess, Sun City, Bermuda Dunes, Heritage Palms & PGAW Dunes. Spring Tour will run from April 4-June 7. Average players per event for Fall 2025 were 73 – an increase from 67 the previous year.

- **ACE:** To achieve ACE, participants must complete four major projects focused on community service, career planning, education, and golf. This Spring session, our 12 participants have continued to work on our golf project. Having participants identify and plan how they can apply the golf exposure they've gained through First Tee to their future goals. We are also focusing on developing our participants' public speaking skills so they can become more comfortable speaking at our fundraisers and events. In addition, multiple speakers have met with our participants to help give them exposure to different career paths. Recent speakers have included a master club fitter, a CEO, and a sports psychologist. Our Spring (2) session will feature a doctor specializing in emergency medicine, the director of instruction at Desert Willow, and additional professionals from across the valley.
- **ACE Play Day:** ACE Play Day gives participants the opportunity to experience golf at different clubs around the valley. This benefit motivates them to attend ACE class and work on their deliverables. Play Day also supports the Program by introducing participants to members and potential donors at these clubs, building awareness of FTCV. This past session, participants had the chance to play several outstanding courses, including Stone Eagle, Hideaway, and The Springs. Our Spring (2) session will feature ACE Play Days at La Quinta Country Club, Toscana, Rancho La Quinta, and more.
- **Teen Social Events:** Teen Social Events are held once a month; participants are encouraged to bring a friend to help increase awareness of our teen programming. February, we held a video game tournament for our teens in the green room. March, we are partnering with Golf Social to hold a teen night at their indoor golf studio.

- **Junior Volunteer Coaching: Programming** currently has over 35 participants ages 12 and older to assist with coaching and program delivery. Each junior coach completes mandatory training and receives clear role expectations, schedules, and uniforms. Volunteer hours are tracked to encourage engagement and awareness of our Jim Kane Scholarship, National Scholarships, and ACE program community service project. For this session, junior volunteer coaches have expanded assistance to help with East Valley Programming and now our children's adaptive golf program No Boundaries.