

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — The Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBA) has become a major partner in The First Tee program, an initiative of the World Golf Foundation to provide affordable and accessible playing opportunities for beginning golfers, especially youths.

"This is a perfect fit for the GCBA," said Phil Arnold, executive vice president. "Our members build the best golf

Builders partner with 1st Tee

courses in the world and The First Tee program meshes with our own Sticks for Kids initiative." Sticks for Kids is a nationwide program to provide good quality golf clubs for children who otherwise could not afford them.

The two-year partnership agreement calls for GCBA members to construct facilities

at or near cost whenever a participating builder can be matched with a local First Tee chapter. Participation by individual builders is voluntary.

Common types of facilities will be three-hole courses, a pitch-and-putt courses, nine-hole executive courses and full-scale 18-hole courses. All will feature

extensive teaching and practice areas and other facilities.

"The saving in construction costs could really be significant — amounting to several million dollars, depending on how many facilities we can participate in," said Arnold.

The First Tee's goal is to develop 100 facilities by Dec. 31, 2000. "Four of the six official suppliers to the First Tee are GCBA members," Arnold noted.

Reaching Out



This package of stories is one of an ongoing series covering initiatives and projects developed to bring new golfers into the game, particularly youths and minorities. People wishing to submit projects for articles should contact the editorial department at *Golf Course News*, P.O. Box 997, Yarmouth, ME 04096; e-mail:

ASGCA members designing First Tee facilities

CHICAGO — The American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) members are handling the design work on many of the community-based projects being created under the umbrella of The First Tee program.

According to ASGCA President John LaFoy, the involvement of the organization and its members is consistent with its efforts to promote the creation of affordable and accessible golf facilities. He estimates that ASGCA members will contribute several million dollars to The First Tee program in the short term in the form of pro bono work and special pricing.

"We have long believed in providing venues that welcome new golfers," LaFoy said. "We are delighted to participate with The First Tee, since it will introduce so many new players to the game."

The ASGCA has 141 members in the United States and Canada. Twelve members are active in projects already underway, while others are lending their expertise to projects still in the initial stages of development.

"We are delighted to receive the society's support," said Tod Leiweke, executive director of The First Tee. "Our mission is to create affordable and accessible golf facilities, with an emphasis on serving kids who have not had access or exposure to the game."

Leiweke said The First Tee is ahead of schedule in meeting its objectives. "We are on target to have 100 sites — from small learning facilities to full length golf courses — in place by the end of the year 2000," he said.

Leiweke said he hopes The First Tee designs will demonstrate "best practices" because of the many challenges involved in working in smaller areas, especially inner-city sites.

According to LaFoy, myriad factors are associated with the planning and ultimate creation of any golf facility, and these are compounded on some of the sites of The First Tee.

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