



# For the Good of the Game

*I hope everyone had a safe trip to Orlando and productive time spent at the Golf Industry Show. The National Golf Course Owners Association, the Golf Course Builders Association of America and the American Society of Golf Course Architects joined the GIS for 2005. And interest is high for the Golf Range Association of America and the National Golf Foundation to join during 2006. The Club Managers Association of America has already committed to join in 2007.*

*The mission of The First Tee is to work with local not-for-profit entities and municipalities in the formation of facilities and First Tee chapters, where participating youth can learn not only golf but also the life skills that will assist these children for years to come.*

The educational offerings to the associations remain separate, but in the future look for some great educational offerings that appeal to several associations. And the show floor is more organized with the solution-centers concept. When one realizes that many of the vendors that attend the GIS have also been attending other golf-related association shows, it is evident that one of the main driving forces for a consolidated show floor is the huge savings to be incurred by vendors attending one show instead of multiples. Besides, we will all welcome the smell on the show floor associated with great food when the CMAA joins the GIS in 2007.

There is another alliance that needs some mention: the World Golf Foundation. The PGA Tour launched this foundation in 1994 to oversee the establishment of a World Golf Hall of Fame. And when other, allied golf associations joined in the effort, a new umbrella organization took shape to facilitate collaboration among the associations. The new mission of the foundation became "to unite the golf industry and those who love the game in support of initiatives that promote, enhance the growth of, and provide access to the game of golf, while preserving golf's traditional values and also passing them on to others."

The First Tee, a primary initiative of the WGF, was started in 1997. The mission of The First Tee is to work with local not-for-profit entities and municipalities in the formation of facilities and First Tee chapters, where participating youth can learn not only golf but also the life skills that will assist these children for years to come. One of the most successful First Tee programs is The First Tee Junior Program of Aurora. The City of Aurora and the Fox Valley Park District run this program cooperatively. At first, during 1998, 200 youth participated in the summer program; the favorable response allowed the program to be expanded year-round as part of the physical education program in the public and parochial schools. Since 1998, more than 3,000 youth have been introduced to the game of golf.

The golfing portion of the program takes place on a three-hole junior course at Phillips Park. Superintendent Todd Schmitz says that the kids utilize several stations at the driving range, and the nursery green also serves as the putting green. Todd's office area is in close proximity to that of Jim David, coordinator of The First Tee program. Jim expresses that the entire community embraced this program, which is key to their success. Not only are youth engaged in golf at an early age, many of the youth continue with the program from year to year and are ultimately gaining access to golf courses throughout the Fox Valley area. The success of this program has caught the attention of the media and CLTV will air this success story. You can check out the success of this program at [www.aurora-il.org](http://www.aurora-il.org).

The community of Aurora will serve as a benchmark for other communities that wish to introduce golf and life skills to their youth. This truly is for the good of the game.

