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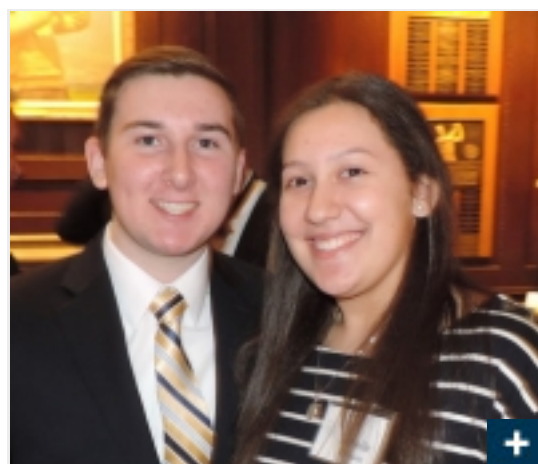
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That the NJSGA is the second oldest State Golf Association, having been founded in 1900? You would know if you subscribed to NJSGA GOLF Magazine.



NEWS

FIRST TEE OF RARITAN VALLEY MARKS 1st DECADE AT USGA MUSEUM



Many of the top names in New Jersey's golfing community gathered at the United States Golf Association's stunning [Golf Museum](#) to observe the 10th anniversary of [The First Tee of Raritan Valley](#). "We are proud of the impact we've had on the children of our communities over the past 10 years," said Bruce Smallwood, cofounder and former president of the TFTRV. "But what has us really excited are our prospects for the next 10 years!"

At its core, The First Tee program provides educational programs that build character, instill life-enhancing values, and promote healthy choices through the game of golf. TFTRV currently serves more than 50,000 students annually and delivers this unique character education program to youth throughout six New Jersey counties including: Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset, Union, and Warren.

Last week, at The First Tee National Convention in Dallas, TFTRV learned that it had earned the highest accreditation offered by the organization. "There are 180 First Tee chapters around the world," explained Mike Blackwell, the chapter's executive director. "We were one of only 17 chapters to earn the "Ace Award" this year as one of the top chapters throughout the world. It's a rigorous process and a tremendous honor that validates the great work our chapter and our many volunteers are doing."

After announcing its Ace Award at the celebration, the chapter awarded its 2015 (and first-ever) TFTRV College Scholarships to two high school seniors, Brendan Demitus (Colonia HS) and Isabel Gonzales (Bloomfield HS). Both have completed the highest-level First Tee development programs, are 4.0 students, are leaders in their schools and co-captain their respective high school golf teams.

"I feel as though being one of the first scholarship winners is both an honor and a responsibility," said Isabel, who represented the chapter last year in the Nature Valley/First Tee PGA Senior Tour event at Pebble Beach Golf Club in Monterey, California. "I plan to be a great role model for other students in The First Tee program."

Included in the audience were officials from the [New Jersey State Golf Association](#) and the leaders of several local clubs whose contributions through the [Red Hoffman Cup Matches](#) (a New Jersey interclub golf competition) completely endow the TFTRV's College Scholarship Fund. "These college scholarships are a capstone to The First Tee experience for these kids," noted Kevin Casey, member of TFTRV Board and founder of the Hoffman Cup Matches. "They provide a significant reward to these kids – and help to their parents – for hard work and for being great young citizens."

For more information on TFTRV, contact Mike Blackwell at 732-259-4297; thefirstteerv@gmail.com

ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS:

Isabel Gonzales, a resident of Bloomfield and a senior at Bloomfield High School (BHS), has become one of two 2015 college scholarship recipients of The First Tee of Raritan Valley. This competitive scholarship honors the commitment and achievements of students who have participated in The First Tee of Raritan Valley's youth development program. Not only is Isabel ranked in the top 10 percent of her high school class, she is an officer in the BHS' Key Club and captain of her

high school golf team.

Isabel has reached the highest level of achievement with The First Tee, excelling in both its character development program and as a golfer. Isabel intends to start this fall at Methodist University in Fayetteville, N.C.

Brendan Komitus, a resident of Colonia and a senior at Colonia High School (CHS), has become one of two 2015 college scholarship recipients of The First Tee of Raritan Valley. This competitive scholarship honors the commitment and achievements of students who have participated in The First Tee of Raritan Valley's youth development program. Not only is Brendan ranked in the top five percent of his high school class, he is an officer in CHS' National Honor Society and co-captain of his high school golf team.

Brendan has also reached the highest level of achievement with The First Tee, excelling in both its character development program and as a golfer. Brendan plans to attend Fairleigh Dickinson University in Madison, NJ.



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