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THE FIRST TEE OF PHOENIX HONORED DURING ANNUAL NATIONAL MEETING

PHOENIX, Arizona – The First Tee of Phoenix was recently honored with five awards during an annual meeting held this year in Austin, Texas (February 17-19) attended by more than 600 principals from the 198 First Tee National and International Chapters. First Tee of Phoenix leaders in attendance to accept the awards included Executive Director Hugh Smith, Director of Programming Coach Gabriel Jackson and Board Chairman Tim Kloenne.

- **ACE Chapter Recognition Award**, which recognizes each chapter that has achieved ACE status in the ZONE through Dec. 31, 2010. The ZONE (Zeroing in On Network Excellence) guidelines were created to ensure that chapters share some basic operational uniformity. The ZONE continues to evolve as a tool to quantitatively measure the network's consistency of performance and impact.
- Smith was awarded the **Chairman's Award**, which recognizes chapter executive directors who have demonstrated outstanding leadership and service to their chapter and to The First Tee in terms of organizational development and the delivery of programs and benefits to their students.
- Jackson was the recipient of **The First Tee Coach Recognition Award**, which recognizes individuals who have successfully completed Phase I, II and III of The First Tee Life Skills Coach Program and have achieved The First Tee Coach designation.
- First Tee of Phoenix participant, Kamio Espindola, earned **The First Tee Outstanding Participant Award**, which recognizes participants who demonstrate leadership and whose lives exemplify one or more of The First Tee Nine Core Values. One participant was

recognized from each of the eight regions of the U.S. and Espindola was tapped in the Mountain Region. For this he received a \$1,000 scholarship.

- The Thunderbirds, principal sponsors of The First Tee of Phoenix, was awarded with **The First Tee National School Program Involvement Award**, which recognizes special individuals (or in this case organizations) who exemplify The First Tee Nine Core Values and demonstrate their commitment and dedication to extending the reach of the National School Program into their community.

“We’re all very honored to receive special recognition from The First Tee,” said Smith. “It’s gratifying to know that our efforts are not only being noticed, but they’re achieving our intended goals. The Thunderbirds set the stage; our team at the First Tee of Phoenix takes the ball from there and the result is a student like Kamio Espindola earning a scholarship by incorporating First Tee’s Nine Core Values into his life.”

In addition to handing out awards during the meeting, First Tee Chapter Executive Directors, Program Directors, Coaches and Volunteer Board Members from the National and International Chapters had an opportunity to share ideas and best practices in an informal what’s-working-in-your-neck-of-the-woods forum. They also attended information sessions and classes given by experts in child and youth development, leaders in Strategic Planning and Risk Management and National CEO, Joe Louis Barrow, was on hand to give an inspirational speech to motivate attendees to be a Force for Good.

Also during the meeting, President George W. Bush was named The First Tee's honorary chair, succeeding his father, President George H. W. Bush, who served as The First Tee's honorary chair since the organization's inception in 1997. Senior will shift to an honorary chair emeritus role.

The First Tee Nine Healthy Habits program was unveiled at the meeting. Through collaboration between The First Tee, ANNIKA Foundation and Florida Hospital for Children, The First Tee Nine Healthy Habits were created to promote healthy, active lifestyles for young people. They include a list of nine health and wellness topics, presented as a part of the National School Program and the Life Skills Experience. The topics are formatted for easy understanding by elementary-age students and chapter participants. [Click here](#) for more information on this new curriculum.

About The First Tee of Phoenix and The Thunderbirds

The First Tee of Phoenix is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization created by The Thunderbirds almost a decade ago as the Valley's local chapter of the national First Tee organization. The First Tee of Phoenix provides affordable access to golf and golf-learning facilities for young people in Maricopa County from all walks of life – particularly those who otherwise might not have an opportunity to play. The Thunderbirds wanted to provide young Arizonans a place to learn valuable life skills and character-building lessons through creative activities and instructional programs that incorporate the fundamental teachings of golf. The First Tee of Phoenix currently impacts over 60,000 youths each year at five facilities and 120 schools as part of The National School Program outreach initiative. The Thunderbirds were founded in 1937 with the mission of promoting the Valley of the Sun through sports. Consisting of 55 “active” members and more than 250 “life” members, The Thunderbirds host the Waste Management Phoenix Open; the best-attended golf tournament in the world, which to date has raised nearly \$70 million for Valley charities, including the First Tee of Phoenix. With its unmatched fan participation and rich history dating back more than 75 years, The Waste Management Phoenix Open has gained legendary status for being a unique stop on the PGA TOUR. For more information on The Thunderbirds or the Waste Management Phoenix Open, call 602.870.0163 or visit www.WasteManagementPhoenixOpen.com. For more information on The First Tee of Phoenix call 602.305.7655 or visit www.TheFirstTeePhoenix.org.

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