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From Mosholu Golf Course to Yankee Stadium: First Tee Students Get the Surprise of a Lifetime During Yankees HOPE Week

The New York Yankees honor First Tee – Metropolitan New York with a \$20,000 donation and an unforgettable day for local youth.

BRONX, NY | June 17th, 2026

On June 17, 2026, First Tee – Metropolitan New York (FTMNY) participants were surprised with the opportunity of a lifetime when the New York Yankees joined them at Mosholu Golf Course, the organization's headquarters in the Bronx, as part of the Yankees' annual HOPE Week initiative.

HOPE Week (Helping Others Persevere and Excel) is the Yankees' annual community outreach program that "is about recognizing and supporting organizations and stories that are impactful and worth celebrating," said Jason Zillo, Vice President of Communications & Media Relations for the New York Yankees. Through the initiative, Yankees players, coaches, and staff dedicate their time to collaborating with community members and organizations that inspire positive change.

Throughout the day, Yankees players Gerrit Cole, Max Fried, Clark Schmidt, Paul Blackburn, Ryan McMahon, Tim Hill, Brent Headrick, Trent Grisham, and Ryan Weathers spent time with participants through golf activities, conversation, and mentorship, reinforcing the values of confidence, perseverance, and teamwork that are central to both organizations' missions.

The Yankees also presented First Tee – Metropolitan New York with a \$20,000 donation to support youth development programming and create greater opportunities for young people throughout the region.

The partnership showcased the shared commitment of First Tee – Met NY and the New York Yankees to creating meaningful opportunities for young people. Through the game of golf, First Tee helps participants build confidence, resilience, and leadership skills that extend far beyond the course. HOPE Week gave students the unique opportunity to see those values come to life through interactions with some of baseball's biggest stars, creating memories and lessons that will stay with them long after the day ended.

"For First Tee – Met NY to be honored by the NY Yankees organization is beyond meaningful to our students, staff, and supporters," said Matthew Rawitzer, Executive Director of First Tee – Met NY. "As we celebrate 25 years of serving and changing the lives of in-need

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students by teaching life skills, educational, and career opportunities, having the Yankees shine a spotlight on our students and programs provides significant advocacy to current and future families, as well as the supporters who make our work possible. Bringing players to Mosholu Golf Course, a public NYC Parks facility in the Bronx, was a powerful demonstration of the Yankees' commitment to our community.”

Later that evening, participants were invited to Yankee Stadium, where they received exclusive on-field access during batting practice and had the opportunity to continue interacting with players before the Yankees' game against the Chicago White Sox. FTMNY Executive Director, Matthew Rawitzer, and Program Director, longest tenured FTMNY Coach and 2025 First Tee Coach of the Year, Anthony "Coach A-Rod" Rodriguez, were also honored with ceremonial first pitches before the game.

"Walking through the press entrance and onto the field as the Yankees warmed up was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Evan Morris, a First Tee participant and high school sophomore. "I'll never forget catching fly balls hit over the fence and watching Coach A-Rod throw out the first pitch ahead of Knicks superstars Jalen Brunson and Josh Hart. I've been a Mets fan my whole life, but I may have to start wearing a Yankees cap for all the team has done for First Tee."

For First Tee participants, the day served as a powerful reminder that the skills they learn through golf—integrity, perseverance, confidence, and respect—can open doors to extraordinary opportunities. Through partnerships like HOPE Week, First Tee – Met NY continues to connect young people with mentors, experiences, and resources that help them grow into the next generation of leaders.

About First Tee – Metropolitan New York

First Tee – Metropolitan New York is a youth development nonprofit that integrates the game of golf with a life skills curriculum to help young people build character and prepare for success. Founded in 2001, the organization serves youth across the Bronx, Long Island, and New Jersey through year-round programming and academic initiatives such as Path to College.

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