first tee metropolitan new york

25TH ANNIVERSARY



2025-2026
Path to College Annual Report
2025 Impact | 2026 Outlook

In the fast-paced and competitive landscape of Metropolitan New York, First Tee - Met NY provides something transformative: a structured, high-support environment where young people are equipped to succeed academically, socially, and beyond the classroom. We are not simply teaching the game of golf – we are preparing students for life.

At the heart of this work is our Path to College program, a comprehensive academic and college-readiness model that blends individualized counseling, tutoring, SAT preparation, STEAM enrichment, and social-emotional development. As you read this year's report, you'll see how Path to College continues to expand access, remove barriers, and build confident, college-ready leaders across our communities. The results are measurable. The impact is lasting. And the future is bright.

Continue reading to discover the incredible impact our Path to College programs had on our participants in 2025, and what's on the horizon for 2026!

Academic Growth | College Access | Life-Long Impact.

"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." – Benjamin Franklin

Path to College propels kids to build the strength of character that empowers them for a lifetime. This program continues to operate as a high-impact program focused on academic enrichment and college preparation.

$800,000+ scholarships awarded

Approximately **325** First Tee participants

70% from historically underserved communities

95% demonstrated significant increase in core academic subjects

88% retention rate by engaging with First Tee programs year after year

100% High school graduation rate (since 2014)

A Deeper Look...

- Year-round academic enrichment programming at every age level, from 7-18, with an emphasis on long-term support for each child as they progress through school.
- A robust scholarship program that provides tuition assistance, personal and professional development, and mentorship for First Tee alumni.
- Since revamping PTC in 2014, student-athletes stay with the program 4 or more years, on average.

Path to College participants...

- Improve report card grades
- Get into NYC's best selective high schools
- Attend one of their top 5 choices for college
- Demonstrate high social & emotional intelligence*
- Express a higher self-confidence than their same-age peers*



** Path to College participants reported increased socio-emotional capacities via Hello Insight Youth Development Survey, including 84% advanced in Goal Orientation, 88% advanced in Self-Confidence, and 89% advanced in Academic Self-Efficacy.*

Program Leadership

"Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other."
- John F. Kennedy

Karen LesPierre

Director, Path to College



Karen is the Director for the Path to College Program, where she has dedicated the past 12 years using her partnership with FTMNY and her business, Ms. Karen's A+ Tutoring Center, LLC, in order to provide quality tutoring services to participants. She firmly believes that this mission addresses the holistic principles that are valuable and determine a child's future.

During her tenure at First Tee, Karen has led the implementation of the Path to College (PTC) Program, which includes the Summer STEAM Academy as well as the ACE Scholars and Individual Tutoring Programs. Recently, Women in STEM and the arts have been incorporated into the program.

Mark Cognata

Director, Curriculum & Evaluation



Mark Cognata is the Director of Curriculum and Evaluation at First Tee, where he has dedicated the past 10 years to designing, implementing, and assessing impactful educational programs. His work ensures that STEAM, literacy, and academic support initiatives are data-informed and student-centered, fostering measurable growth and meaningful learning experiences across all sites.

Ace Scholars



Approximately **63** First Tee Participants

63% Gain in Tier 3 Vocabulary

45% Gain in High School and College Awareness

72% Demonstrated gains in Social-Emotional Intelligence

7 Former Ace Scholars hired as paid tutors

A Deeper Look...

Ace Scholars consistently improve their grades, learn to navigate NYC's complex high school system, and get into a school of their preference. Ace Scholars are more likely to:

- Graduate in the top 10% of their class
- Demonstrate advanced leadership skills
- Earn merit-based scholarships
- Be accepted into competitive programs, such as Evans Scholars

Ace Scholars brings students together in a motivated cohort of peers and near-peers, creating a high-support, high-expectation environment that strengthens both academic and personal growth.

Strong vocabulary gains (63%) and college knowledge growth (45%) complement significant SEL improvements (72%).

The presence of seven alumni now serving as paid tutors highlights our success in cultivating mentors and workforce-ready leaders within the First Tee environment.

Individual Tutoring & SAT Prep



Approximately **58** First Tee Participants

96% of students showed measurable academic growth in core subjects

90% of students became more independent learners and earned an A on a tutored exam

Average overall score of **1400** on SATs

23% improvement in reading section scores

20% improvement in math section scores

1 in 4 reached or exceeded their target SAT score

Individualized tutoring supports students through a focused, high-support academic model that drives measurable growth across core subjects, with 96% of participants showing clear improvement.

These gains are reinforced by stronger study habits, with 90% of students earning an A on the exam they prepared for with their tutor.

The 2025 SAT Prep workshop supported roughly 30 student-athletes in grades 9–12 across all First Tee–Met NY campuses, with many reporting score increases of more than 300 points. The workshop was led by First Tee–Met NY alumnus Kishan Mangru, who is currently completing an MA in Biomedical Sciences in Chicago, with aspirations of attending medical school.

A Deeper Look...

First Tee - Met NY student, Kishan Mangru, will be attending Chicago Medical School at Rosalind Franklin University in the Fall of 2026, pursuing an MA degree in Biomedical Sciences

STEAM Summer Academy



Approximately **120** First Tee Participants

68% improvement in STEM proficiency

90% maintained or improved their reading level

75% strengthened their computer programming skills

92% reported increased readiness for school

88% increased interest in STEM subjects

The **STEAM Program** strengthens key academic and technical skills through an integrated model that pairs **hands-on STEM learning** with targeted **literacy support** to prevent summer learning loss.

Together, these components help students **maintain momentum across disciplines**: 90% of participants maintained or improved their reading level, and 68% demonstrated gains in STEM proficiency.

As a result, students returned to school more prepared **(92%)** and more engaged in learning **(88%)**. By combining literacy instruction with STEM exploration, the STEAM program ensures students build essential skills that extend well beyond the summer months.

High School & College Acceptances



30 Path to College participants served in **2025**

100% Graduation rate

Over **$800,000** in scholarships earned

4 college-preparedness sessions with First Tee Young Benefactors

About **750 hours** of counseling from Karen LesPierre

Maintained partnerships with Morgan Stanley, Chase, and Deloitte, activated partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS)

In 2025, the Path to College program served 30 seniors, guiding them through a successful high school and college admissions journey. With approximately 750 hours of individualized counseling from Director Karen LesPierre, participants earned acceptances to a range of prestigious institutions, including Holy Cross, SUNY Binghamton, Rutgers New Brunswick, Purdue University–West Lafayette's Daniels School of Business, John Martinson Honors College, the University of Georgia's Terry School of Business and Morehead Honors College.

Collectively, students were awarded more than $800,000 in scholarships, including three Plainfield Country Club (PCC) Scholarships, while maintaining a 100% high school graduation rate. They also engaged in four college-preparedness sessions with First Tee's Young Benefactors and continued to benefit from strong partnerships with Morgan Stanley, Chase, Deloitte, and a newly activated partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS).

Access & Equity

Path to College is intentionally designed to expand access and remove barriers for students who need opportunity most. Through full scholarships and transportation support, we ensure that financial or logistical challenges never stand in the way of participation.
The result is access that is equitable, consistent, and real.





- 325 youth served
- 70% from historically underserved communities
- 100% graduation rate
- 88% retention rate
- 40%+ recruited through community outreach (NYCHA, Mosholu Montefiore, City Parks Foundation)
- Full scholarships and transportation support provided to remove barriers

Academic Confidence
Family Feedback

Parents of Path to College students report strong gains in their children's confidence, academic readiness, study habits, and overall socio-emotional wellness. This summary reflects parents' responses from feedback surveys in 2025 and 2026.

Academic Confidence & Preparedness

Parents reported that Path to College strengthened their children's confidence as learners and helped them feel better prepared for academic challenges.

- **76%** said their child feels more prepared to study for tests and quizzes
- **67%** saw increased confidence in schoolwork
- **71%** noted greater confidence answering questions in class

Study Skills & Executive Functioning

Families reported meaningful improvements in students' ability to manage school demands and apply academic routines more independently.

- **91%** said their child now uses study strategies learned in the program
- **76%** saw improvements in completing assignments on time

Belonging, Community & Communication

- **81%** said their child feels like part of a community
- **81%** agreed their child feels supported by teachers and staff
- **86%** said their child feels comfortable speaking, asking questions, and trying new things

Motivation, Self-Belief & Future Orientation

Socio-emotional growth was one of the strongest themes in families' responses.

- **81%** said their child believes more in their future goals
- **76%** saw increased motivation to do well in school and beyond
- **86%** agreed the program made a positive difference in their child's life

Methodology

Our approach combines quantitative data, qualitative feedback, and research-aligned curriculum designed to ensure accurate reporting and high-impact instruction.

Data Sources & Measurement Approach

Program Attendance Records
Session-level participation and retention trends

Student Surveys
Assessing confidence, motivation, study habits, school readiness, and sense of belonging

Pre- and Post-Assessments
Measuring growth from day one to current progress

Parent Surveys
Capturing family perceptions of academic growth, socio-emotional development, and program impact

SAT Score Reports
Documenting point-gains and benchmark attainment

Coach & Tutor Feedback
Identifying individual progress, skill application, and emerging needs in both group and one-on-one settings

Counselor Logs
Detailing college-readiness milestones, application progress, and one-on-one support hours

Counseling Session Summaries
Documenting goal-setting, financial aid support, and post-secondary decision making

Methodology

All programs—including Path to College, Ace Scholars, STEAM, and SAT Prep—are built using evidence-based, pedagogically sound methods grounded in best practices from K–12 and college-readiness instruction. Our curriculum design process includes:

Curriculum Creation & Instructional Framework

Backward Design
Beginning with clearly defined learning outcomes and performance benchmarks (e.g., vocabulary mastery, STEM competencies, study skills, SEL competencies, high-school admissions preparedness)

Research-Aligned Instructional Strategies
Drawing on peer-reviewed frameworks in literacy development, executive functioning, socio-emotional learning, and test preparation

Collaborative Development
Integrating insights from academic specialists, counselors, and experienced tutors, along with student and family input

Scaffolded Skill Progression
Ensuring students move from guided practice to independent application across multiple weeks

Equity-Focused Design
With content tailored to the needs of students from historically under-resourced communities, including supports for literacy gaps, high-school selection barriers, and college-readiness disparities