



## A Conversation About the Mentoring Experience



**Charma Bell**

Program Director, Coach,  
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*Pictured on the Left*  
Mentees Aryanna Persaud  
left, and Emily Mayo, right

The Go for the Greens Foundation Inc. hosts a Mentoring Experience that provides young women in high school and college an opportunity to meet and connect with women business leaders. This program is designed to recognize leadership qualities and inspire young women to dream big and focus on the next steps to realizing their potential as women in business, entrepreneurs and leaders.

This mentorship program provides educational opportunities in a highly interactive environment to encourage attendees to learn from mentors as well as from each other. The goal is to show an array of top-level careers with the idea in mind that “You can’t be what you can’t see.” September’s event is in person, and virtual events are being planned to take place throughout the year.

The 2024 program kicks off with a three-day curriculum at the Go for the Greens women’s business development conference on Thursday, September 26, through Saturday, September 28, at Disney’s Boardwalk Resort in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. The session culminates with a Golf Experience on Saturday that allows students to further interact, learn more about golf, and build relationships with businesswomen attending the conference.

This in-person event offers a unique opportunity to learn from women from all over North America and beyond.

We sat down with First Tee – Delaware Program Director Charma Bell and two mentee alumni, Aryanna Persaud of First Tee – Orlando and Emily Mayo of First Tee – Delaware, to talk about their experience as participants of the program in 2022 and 2023. Aryanna lives in St. Cloud, Florida, and is a junior at Harmony High School. Emily is a junior at Archmere Academy in Claymont, Delaware. Charma participated in the 2022 and 2023 Go for the Conference as both a chaperone and an attendee.

We wanted to hear why students were interested in the Mentoring Experience, what they liked about it, how we could improve it and what the Golf Experience meant to them. We also got Charma's perspective as one of our sponsors on the value she found in sponsoring and working with the program. Here is what we heard:

### **What did you like most about the 2023 Go for the Greens Mentoring Experience?**

**Aryana:** Every single minute was spent learning something or growing or doing something beneficial for me. It was very diverse and everyone was acknowledged and appreciated. You saw your skillset reflected in the women attendees, including the Canadian business owners. You networked and talked to people. At the end of the day, we all are humans, and everyone wants to get better. Everyone wants to help you get better. I just felt empowered!

**Emily:** What I really liked most was more opportunities to talk with the women in business rather than being talked to. I enjoyed the women empowerment and looking at women in different types of fields. It broadened my vision. For example, a lawyer who practiced in business spent time with us. She was not like the prosecutors you see on television, but a business lawyer. I did not think about the fact that businesses need lawyers too. It sparked my interest about maybe doing lawyer stuff.

**Charma:** The Go for the Greens event is so inspiring for me. Cathy Imburgia introduced Go for the Greens to me and First Tee - Delaware a couple of years ago. I've had the pleasure of going for the last two years. I love chaperoning and working with the girls. I love working with all the students, but especially the girls, because it's like they're sometimes almost like an afterthought to others when it comes to sports. The facilities were great and everyone was welcoming. The students were very respectful to each other. There was a lot of positive energy.

### **What did you like most about the Golfing Experience?**

**Aryana:** I have been playing golf for about six years now. I was introduced to the game by my dad. He is an avid golfer and he got me started with the First Tee Central Florida. I love it and have been playing three years at my high school.

I enjoyed the Go for the Greens Golfing Experience because I loved playing at Disney. It's not everyday that you can get to play at Disney even though I live in Florida. I think the best part was playing with people I had never met before and having the opportunity to converse with them throughout 18 holes. We found connections along the way. It was a fun way to get to know people. One of the guys I played with goes to UCF. We still keep in touch. He gives me advice about college and high school. Without playing in the Golfing Experience, I would never have met him and received his advice and insights.

**Emily:** I have been playing golf for about 10 years. My first year I didn't know anybody and had to get out of my comfort zone. I learned to reach out to others. My second year I got to see some of the people I knew from last year and connect with them and new people as well.

**Charma:** All three of my children went through the First Tee program. Thank God for Title IX and the Go for the Greens Golfing Experience. The event is so inspiring for me. I've had the pleasure of going for the last two years. And just seeing the positive networking, not only with the students, but the women, the Canadian business owners, and the American ladies, and just how they all come together to collaborate, to think of, be creative, and share knowledge and wisdom, and just keep our world better. If women were in charge of everything, our world would be a better place to be!

### **What one improvement would you like to see made to the Mentoring Experience?**

**Aryana:** One thing I would change is the mentees being a little bit more exposed to the larger conference. Most of the time we were in a separate classroom and we didn't really get to interact much with the bigger conference or network as much with the other business owners. But other than that, I wouldn't change anything else.

**Emily:** I would have more mentees from around different areas of the country. It would be fun to get to know people from other areas. I think there was one mentee from California.

**Charma:** I agree one hundred percent with the students that it would be great to have more interaction between the conference attendees and the mentees. The students could participate in the round tables, and it would be beneficial for both groups. Also playing golf with them and meeting them is great, but if we could get more dancing going, it would be so much fun.

### **What would you say to encourage others to be a sponsor for the Mentoring Experience?**

**Charma:** It's so important because you are helping aid our future leaders like Emily' and Aryana. These are great young ladies. Just being exposed to the Go for the Green Mentoring Experience is going to impact their lives and their futures even more so. There is such a diverse group of wonderful, powerful women and women in their own right from all across the country, United States and Canada. I think meeting the mentees, the other young ladies, provides a wonderful chance to collaborate and form partnerships. It's a win-win for everyone involved. It just makes our world better. I just love to see the women and the young, future leaders.

**Aryana:** I think it's so important because it empowers women. I know a lot of companies I work with at First Tee in Florida, like PNC and they have a women's advisory board. So, more companies like that and bigger companies looking to gain women's insight and diversity is important. Just supporting women and Go for the Greens helps empower young and diverse women who will become our leaders of tomorrow. Those companies often look for opportunities to help programs like this and I think that's really beneficial to us and to them.

**Emily:** Like Aryana said, there are a lot of companies that are trying to strive to be better by immersing their culture in diversity and with minorities. I think they should step forward and just reach out to Go for the Greens and see how this could benefit them and us. We need them as great speakers and mentors. You would be helping to develop your future workforce. Look at these young ladies. They could be working for or with you one day!

### **What last thoughts do you have about the Go for the Greens Mentoring Experience?**

**Aryana:** Thank you to Go for the Greens for this opportunity. This is the best. The experience is incredible for young women and for women trying to pull themselves up and out. It empowers us to become more than other people think we can.

**Emily:** I want to say thank you to anyone or mentees who are going to listen or read this that are out there. Like Aryana, I want to say thank you to the sponsors and supporters and to First Tee. This is amazing and I associate it with fun times and really great opportunities.

**Charma:** I am extremely grateful for the program and the women I have met. It is vitally important that all of our young people see positive role models and just have someone who believes in them. Sometimes in this day and age and the crazy world we live in, they don't believe in themselves. So if we can lift somebody up, let's do it. What did Linda [Peria] say? Lift as we climb! I love that so much. And I added to that, lift as we climb and leave nobody behind. Okay, that's going into the glass somewhere. We all have to be here to help each other and support each other. We're all in this together and we have got to help each other so future lives can have a world to enjoy. And that's the truth.

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