

THE PARK

Shaping up the neighborhood.
Creating new paths for the
next generation—golf attire
not required

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PHOTOS: ADDIEL PERERA



An anonymous local golfer recently quipped, “Finding a great golf course in the Sunshine State is almost as easy as locating one’s shadow.” And I couldn’t agree more. The pro tip is to try them all, but especially The Park.

Once the City’s Municipal Golf Course, “The Park West Palm” is former Mayor Jeri Muoio’s vision to improve the quality and playability of the course and address several issues, including outdated design elements, drainage problems, and deteriorating infrastructure.

In the last two years, The Park has been transformed into a golf hub—a gem in our community, where anyone can experience golf, with no ‘know-how’ necessary. Nestled in the heart of Old West Palm Beach--the ‘33405’ zip code, which borders the city limits between West Palm Beach, Lake Worth, and Lake Clarke Shores--The Park is centrally located and accessible to a large number of families and single adults living in the area.

Muoio saw its significant potential as a special community place and began a movement that brought major investors to the area. Golf course designers Dirk Ziff, Gil Hanse, and Jim Wagner, along with businessmen Seth Waugh and Dan Stanton, were determined to usher in an era in golf. The group arranged with the city to take over the course on a long-term lease. Ziff and Waugh raised over \$55 million from 130-plus donors

with the intention of completely overhauling the facility and soon got the green light to move forward with a project that caught the attention of West Palm Beach City Commissioner Christina Lambert.

Lambert, an innovative leader, endorsed this initiative. Since she was sworn into office as West Palm Beach City Commissioner for District 5 in 2018, she has worked hard toward addressing

one of the city’s greatest needs: shaping neighborhoods for the next generation.

The five-businessmen dream team synced together and rebuilt the courses. They bulldozed over 220 acres, not even saving a blade of grass. The course design changed from front to back and today, everything is completely new and shaped.

Golfers of different generations (below and right) play golf at the newly opened course, The Park West Palm.





The driving range has stayed where it is but was aimed in a different direction. Before there wasn't a par three course or a putting course. Only a small course with a small clubhouse. The team has designed a course that from the outside may not appear to be too different from all the grand golf courses you can find in South Florida, except . . .

The Path

With the intention of making The Park a special place for the community, the team recruited former YMCA executive, Dave Andrews to direct what would become The Path.

"I love helping and serving the community," says Andrews, whose 15-year YMCA career gave him a heart



Kids are matched with professional golfers, who teach them the nuts and bolts of the game.

for kids. “This team has created a golf course like no other, with a masterful mission: ‘an immersive and inviting approach to youth programming,’ which supports kids beyond the game of golf.”

Andrews knows how to build community programs and fundraise to bless the kids that need it the most. “I was a kid on financial

aid—a kid who needed every little help possible to get me through the days from school lunch to the YMCA, to youth sports. If it wasn’t for people who opened the doors to me, I wouldn’t be here today,” he admits.

The Path reflects Andrews’s passion and purpose in life: to serve the community and save lives.

“I believe that everything that we have in this world is related to what you do and how you impact others. I won’t be known for a person who served at the YMCA; I’ll be known for a person who served his community. And I have this healthy addiction to the game of golf with two junior golfers in my family—nine and seven years old. I got involved late in the game, so I’m not your golf pro. However, I’m the person who seeks out the kids in the community and says, ‘Hey, this is for you!’”

The Park is more than a golf course. It is a place to build for a generation to come; a place where kids can come to play whether they like golf or not. “We want to give kids a chance to thrive academically too, giving them a purpose and a path that will forever mark their experience of life,” explains Andrews.

His first challenge was to create community programs that impact local youth and families through education, mentorship, and life skills development. These included homework help, financial coaching,

Ushering in a new era in golf, The Park an all-inclusive operation with enhanced programs for junior golfers and those seeking to learn the finer points of the game. Play golf, paint, eat and drink, enjoy the sunsets...all it’s possible at The Park.

STEM and art workshops, and college preparation assistance. They also have plans to expand their offerings to include paid internships, scholarship programs, and career guidance.

The Path created a partnership with Title I public schools like South Olive Elementary, Conniston Middle School, and Forest Hill High School to help students with any deficiencies they may have in school—from English, ESOL, reading, science, and mathematics classes.

As Forest Hill High School and The Park share a border, The Path created a golf program that combines academics with golf. Here, students can get a glimpse of what it is like to work

for a golf course, through paid internships in either the food and beverage industry or in golf course operations and coaching.

This spring, 44 kids participated in The Path’s after school two-hour program. The students had one hour with a teacher, who broke down lesson plans and homework help, and another hour with certified PGA professionals, who introduced them to golf.

Not one kid who came to The Path had any golf experience but they all left loving the game. Outfitted with cool golf shirts and hats, and equipped with the latest balls and clubs, they had everything to have a good time. “We just wanted them to come with a good attitude and enjoy the game, and they did, but





they also had a good English or math lesson, and the parents loved that!” Andrews says.

The Science Behind the Game

The program also teaches kids the science behind the game. Middle school and elementary school STEM classes focus on STEM golf. The object is to break down the game from geometry, physics, velocity, and atmospheric pressure to tips on how the grass is grown, and how all of that can affect the ball to go further.

“Our goal has never been to have 400 to 500 kids on our annual report to show how we serve the

community,” says Andrews. “We want to do more for less. We want to hand-pick the kids. And so, we work with the principals in the local schools to really find those who need it the most. It’s a referral-based system right now. It’s not an application.”

The Cabana | The House

To keep cool while playing golf, The Park opened an outdoor bar and restaurant called The Cabana. Centrally positioned at the start of Ten, on the cusp of where the putting course starts, the eatery serves refreshing drinks and delicious food at night. With an excellent view of the course, golfers

View of the new terrace with stunning views of the golf course. It provides a comfortable and scenic place for golfers to relax and socialize before or after a round of golf. It is located next to the Gift Shop.



of all ages get a kick out of its prices too! I mean, where can you get a gourmet burger for six bucks?

The Park's director of food and beverage is Lee Morris, former head chef of 1000 North Restaurant in Jupiter. The group has lofty ambitions for The House Restaurant, which opens in July. The breakfast, lunch, and dinner restaurant, which is predominantly seafood, will have the same vibe as The Park—vintage-inspired boundless designs, with locally sourced foods, and cool concepts.

The Park's three-year goal is to

make The House one of the top five restaurants in West Palm Beach. People will drive around and wonder: Is it a golf course, a restaurant, is it a kids' favorite hangout where they can learn and play? A 'Learn to Putt' place? A family fun Friday? A couple's date night?

All of the above answers are correct.

Fun fact: whether you're sitting on the giant patio near Whole 18, or at The House, with its funky design and oversized windows overlooking the course, The Park is not stuffy

or marked as a rich man's turf. Everyone is invited here. Golf attire is not required.

The The Park West Palm is located at 7301 Georgia Ave, West Palm Beach, 33405. The course plays in 3, 6, and 9-hole loops to create maximum flexibility for golfers of all levels of experience.

Online at theparkwestpalm.com