

signed up for the inaugural qualifying round held last May. But momentum quickly built as word spread among city golfers and on social media. The second qualifier filled up, while both the third and fourth events sold out weeks in advance. A full field of 125 players met last year at Trinity Forest on July 21-22 for the first annual championship.

“To play at Trinity Forest, normally you have to be a member or be invited by one. It’s an aspirational experience for a lot of Dallas golfers, but through our event, we’re making it possible to tee it up at a place that many only dream of,” says Molayo. “For Trinity Forest, which sits right in south Dallas, opening the gates to public play sends a strong message to the community. It helps ingratiate them to the city and the surrounding neighborhoods.

“For us at Cedar Crest, we’re able to attract golfers who otherwise would not venture this far south of the city,” continues Molayo. “With the chance to play Trinity Forest on the line, we were able to attract players from all around Dallas to come see what we offer at Cedar Crest. Once they see our course, our level of service and attention to detail, we can bring them back. It’s been amazingly impactful from that standpoint alone.”

Molayo’s I AM a Golfer Foundation was the event’s presenting sponsor, with proceeds from the Dallas Amateur Championship going to support the charitable cause. The foundation provides free junior golf programs to underprivileged youth, supports a scholarship through the Northern Texas PGA Junior Golf Foundation, provides internships at Cedar Crest and delivers free clinics to veterans through PGA HOPE.

Building a Bridge

While the relationship between Cedar Crest and Trinity Forest is just taking off, The Bridges at Ran-

cho Santa Fe has built its bond with Colina Park Golf Course and Pro Kids/The First Tee of San Diego over the last 18 years.

Al Severson, a successful banker and financial advisor, is a community stalwart in San Diego. He served as a board member for Pro Kids and is a member at The Bridges. His connection spawned the initial relationship between the two antipodal facilities.

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As is the case with many exclusive clubs, The Bridges’ guests are not permitted on the course unless accompanied by a member. With a goal of doing more than writing a big check, the initial challenge was figuring out how to get youngsters from Pro Kids to experience The Bridges and be introduced to a world beyond their wildest dreams. The answer was Home & Homes. In these events, a select number of members would travel from the manicured landscapes of Ranch Santa Fe into the gritty bustle of City Heights to play alongside a junior golfer at Colina Park in a team format. Then the members would team with the same juniors back at The Bridges for a second day of competition.

“For anyone who spends 10 minutes at Pro Kids, or 10 minutes with any of the young people in that program, you realize how special and unique it is,” says Rick Peters, PGA Professional Emeritus at



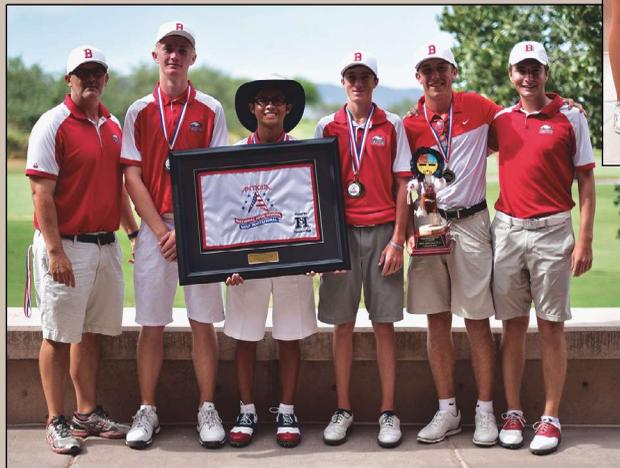
The Bridges at Rancho Santa Fe supports a Ryder Cup style event for junior golfers from Pro Kids. The trophy was crafted by the renowned Scotty Cameron.

COURTESY OF PRO KIDS/THE FIRST TEE OF SAN DIEGO

Antigua High School Invitational benefits thousands

Approaching its 10th year, the Antigua High School Invitational has impacted the lives of thousands of competitive young golfers. At its core, the Arizona-based tournament brings together the best high school teams nationwide on a championship golf course to deliver a memorable experience.

"We want people to be as excited about golf as we are, and understand that it's much more than a game," says Antigua's Tommy Scott, the company's Arizona sales rep. "The Antigua Invitational is a great example – the camaraderie and life lessons that come from that one week are invaluable to the participating young people."



High school teams from around the country gather in Arizona for the annual Antigua High School Invitational.



The field is always geographically diverse, with schools coming from virtually every state and even Canada. Thanks to the support of Antigua, entry fees are kept as low as possible to help offset travel costs. The company also provides apparel packages to participants, a touch that isn't always seen at the high school level.

Whirlwind Golf Club, a private club in Chandler, Arizona, with a resort component, has hosted the tournament for the last three years. The course is also home to Web.com Tour Q-School.

"The players have been excited to test their games against a course the pros play," says Tournament Operator Steve Kanner, golf coach at nearby Hamilton High School. "It's great that the staff and members come out to support the players that week, as well. We want an experience that inspires and propels these young golfers to do great things on the course and in life."

The Bridges. "They are changing the lives of these kids, and once you experience that, all you can think about is how you can help."

As the membership grew and availability of the course became more limited, the Home & Home events became less frequent. To take their place, Peters worked with Pro Kids to develop a Ryder Cup-style event with The Bridges hosting the final matches. The two teams are comprised of juniors from Colina Park and Oceanside (the second Pro Kids site). Team Severson, named in honor of the man who helped build the bridge between the two facilities, takes on Team Eggleston – named for Bridges member Kim Eggleston, a member of the Pro Kids Vision Council who has contributed to numerous projects, including the construction of a new artificial turf practice area at Colina Park. The iconic Scotty Cameron crafted the trophy specifically for this tournament.

"When that trophy is sitting in the golf shop at Colina Park, where it is right now because they won this year's matches, our goal is for the younger kids to look up at it and see the names of people they know. Kids who grew up in their neighborhood that are off at college or getting ready to be there, and it motivates them to do the things that they need to do to make the team and mirror that path," says Peters. "At Pro Kids, 85 percent of the program is unrelated to golf. It's all about school, working towards college, what type of citizen you are and how you volunteer in the community. They are

developing great people, and I'm thrilled our little tournament is a small part of that."

Peters can tell many stories about being involved with Pro Kids for 18 years. He remembers playing golf with Elise Polk at the first Home & Home – she barely said a single word for 36 holes. Now she's a UCLA graduate, has a Masters degree from UC San Diego and has spoken at national conferences on behalf of Pro Kids and The First Tee. There was the time that 10-year-old Annabelle Lee made a hole-in-one to win a playoff during the Junior Legacy – another Pro Kids event done in conjunction with The Bridges. There was the young man whose golf clubs were stolen, so Peters worked with Callaway Golf to get him a brand new set for free. The stories are countless, and the impacts on those young lives are eternal.

"Every time we go to Colina Park, I tell our members: 'In your mind, you have this landscape of all the golf experiences you've had in your lifetime. When you look back on your day here at Colina Park, this is going to be the tallest mountain on that landscape,'" says Peters. "It's been true every single time."

The Bridges commitment to Pro Kids runs deep. In addition to the tournaments and donations, there are two former Pro Kids on staff at the private club. Outside Services Manager Nico Garcia was one of the original Pro Kids participants, and PGA Assistant Professional Jason Timlin was a Pro Kids instructor before joining The Bridges. Their commitment extends well beyond the gates. ■