



Coach of The Year Manny Gallardo - 2024

Quotes from Parents, Coaches and Participants:

Participant – Josh T

I have been in First Tees for 3 years, and no one, outside of my family, has taught me more about what matters in life than Coach Manny.

He taught me what true devotion means and the importance of setting goals. He's someone I can trust and look up to. When I'm contemplating and navigating a challenging situation, I find myself asking, "What would Coach Manny do?"

Most importantly, he's more than just a coach. When my school had a Grandparents and Special Friends day, Coach Manny showed up for me and made me feel like I belonged. Without him, I would have been alone and laughed at because I had no one.

I know his influence has helped me to steer away from some negative things that have captured the attention of my peers.

He's more than just a coach. He's a mentor, friend, and someone whose impact and presence will be with me as I journey through life.

Parent - May

Coach Manny has consistently shown patience, respect, and empathy to every one of his students, including my son. He listens and gets to know each enrolled student, building each child's self-confidence and meeting them where they are. What makes him a great coach is that he WALKS THE TALK. All the life skills that are discussed in class he displays every single day. He is why I recommend First Tee to other parents - I know that every child enrolled will feel like they are part of something valuable, and that they are valued. And they will have FUN! My son's enthusiasm has remained through four years of enrollment, and shows no sign of waning. I am personally grateful that Coach Manny is there every Saturday morning to greet my son and all the other kids, and to provide them with a caring role model. He really is amazing!! He's one of those people that when you meet him and see him working with kids, you can tell he's doing exactly what he should be doing. Like it would be a shame if he wasn't working with kids.



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Program Coordinator & Coach - Phoenix

I've seen Manny go out of his way to develop training plans for participants who want to take that next step. This isn't something he has to do, it's something he is happy to do, supporting the participants in any way he can. He is reliable, making sure to keep his word and be there for others. He remembers seemingly every detail from conversations he has, and makes sure to follow up on whatever he commits to.

Participant & Junior Coach - Josh

I feel Coach Manny truly embodies giving back to his community. Like myself, Coach Manny grew up in the city of Gilroy. He has been a First Tee coach at our local Gavilan Golf Course for a very long time and also coached the local high school's girl's golf team for a bit. The longevity and reinvestment in our community that I have seen Coach Manny demonstrate has really emphasized for me the importance of community and how we really are capable of making a large difference. He also remains cool in the face of adversity which I feel allows him to really gain the respect and admiration of his students - the students want to listen to Coach Manny.

Board Ambassador & Coach - Alex

He is for many not just their coach, but a mentor that volunteers and participants actively approach for feedback and advice. For example, one student recently selected Coach Manny as his mentor for his school presentation.

Participant & Junior Coach - Alexandra

Manny makes an effort to get to know students and learn more about them, which makes the environment feel inclusive and safe. Because of that, I feel confident participating in our class discussions even when I don't know the right answer. I don't feel ashamed if I take a bad swing because I know that I'll receive positive feedback from Coach Manny that will help me improve and learn. He supports students like me by checking in with us individually during class and ensuring everyone is doing well and having fun. Even when coach Manny teaches multiple classes in a day, he maintains the same happy energy in all of his classes.

Program Coordinator & Coach - Tanner



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When I first started with First Tee, Coach Manny showed me what it takes to be a good mentor. He was always the first person I would go to when I had a question. He makes all of our participants and coaches feel involved by collaborating with them to better our games each season.

Parent & Coach - Stefan

My three sons volunteered for the FTSV even after they exceeded the required school service hours, because they learned the concept of "giving back" and loving/caring for the local community from Coach Manny. I started volunteering for FTSV a couple years ago. Since then, I have become a better parent and a coach, and I would give all credit to Coach Manny as I learned how to manage a wider variety of situations such as supporting kids with PTSD or autism. I am grateful that I am working by his side as I am continuously learning many life skills from him.

Participant & Junior Coach - Li An

Coach Manny has been a role model of mine since the third grade, and now I am a senior in high school. He was my first coach with the First Tee and inspired me to continue with the program. He never failed to make class exciting, and to this day, I still remember playing Mario Kart range games, and chipping at water balloons during the hot summer seasons. Around middle school, I used to be the only girl in class, which was difficult because I did not always feel included, and I wasn't able to make friends as easily as the boys could. Nevertheless, Coach Manny always ensured that I felt welcomed and encouraged me to be my best self. Now, I have the privilege of working alongside him as a junior coach.

Participant - Joey

Coach Manny motivated me to become a better version of myself. He would emphasize the life skill lessons and remind us First Tee is much more than just golf all while also keeping the class entertaining.

Participant - Natalie

Coach Manny is one of the most supportive coaches I know. He has helped me gain confidence by guiding me through goal setting. He is so genuine and also encourages me in my ACE class participation and Girls' Golf volunteering.

Parent – Linda and Brent



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Coach Manny's approach to working with the kids is exceptional. He combines fun, kindness, and care with a commitment to encourage, challenge, and hold the students accountable. He genuinely cares about the well-being of our children. When they go through tough times, he is always there to help them talk about it, helping them maintain a positive outlook on things they initially find negative. He also celebrates their successes. His impact on our family has been profound, and he exemplifies the qualities of an exceptional coach through his dedication and excellence.

Coach - Jack

Coach Manny has been my main mentor the past 6 years. I'm constantly amazed at Manny's interchangeability between the skills needed to successfully manage multiple classes in different locations, and adapting his coaching each week as needed due to staffing, student attendance and weather.

Manny's coaching style is disciplined, engaging and entertaining. I am so fortunate to have been with Coach Manny all these years. I know that the kids have also benefited greatly from Coach Manny and his safe, informative, experienced and fun manner. Manny is an asset in so many ways for The First Tee, and absolutely deserving of the National Coach of the Year Award.

First Tee Trustee, Board Ambassador, Coach – Ron

As a fellow coach – Manny is fantastic to work with as a fellow coach. He is always prepared, positive, patient, welcoming, an excellent listener and open to new ideas among his many attractive coaching attributes. This makes him approachable for participants, parents, coaches and volunteers alike. He is both well-liked and respected by all with whom he interacts.

He builds the character of our participants and builds strong relationships with parents, school leaders and the broader South County community, all of which helps build our First Tee reach and network.

I love to watch participants and their parents interact with the coaches and volunteers. But with Coach Manny, it's just different. The joy he brings the



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participants is infectious, and his interactions with the parents serves to strengthen their commitment to First Tee.

It's an honor to submit this glowing recommendation in support of Manny Gallardo for First Tee Coach of the Year.

CEO – George

Manny has been a dedicated, productive, influential, and caring member of FTSV for over 10 years, making him our second most-tenured employee. He is responsible, consistent, unassuming, humble and fair. As such, Manny is a rock — a stable mentor and employee, who is respected and beloved by many. He is a model First Tee Coach, who has made a tremendous difference in the lives of FTSV's kids, and a model employee, who has grounded other program staff over his over 10 years with FTSV. He is a quiet humble leader who doesn't expect accolades or recognition, but he deserves this award! I have a heartfelt appreciation and gratitude for Manny.