



## 2016 Kickoff a successful start to season

The sun shone, the sky was blue and we had a very successful EWGA Kickoff on Saturday, April 16, at Charbonneau Golf Club.

A big thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered and golfed. We raised \$400 in the 50/50 drawing, with \$200 going to The First Tee of Greater Portland and \$200 going to **Kathy Root**, whose name was drawn from those who bought tickets. New member **Linda Dennis** won the drawing for a free membership.

The lovely birdhouses designed and created by **Lily Ravencraft** and baskets donated by our many EWGA committees totaled \$640 in sales, which will be used to benefit our members throughout the year.

Thanks to **Karen Bolin**, who once again kept the program lively and informative as our emcee. She also came up with the idea and found two teen-age girls who have benefitted from First Tee programs to be our keynote speakers.

Madalyn Ardueser, 17, who first picked up a golf club when she was 2, had the audience in awe of her golf accomplishments. By age 13, the Eugene native was the No. 1 girls' varsity player on her Willamette High School team, a spot she kept all four years through the perseverance she learned at The First Tee. She said The First Tee also helped her overcome her shyness – and proved it by presenting a polished talk before nearly 100 EWGA members and guests. She said she developed the confidence to play in a Champions Tour pro-am at Pebble Beach. Her +1 handicap didn't hurt, either. After having several top 10 finishes in state and district tournaments, she will play her college golf for Eastern Washington University.

Sierra Burgess, who graduated last year from Glendale High School, had the audience in tears with the story of her traumatic upbringing – and her ability to get past the tragedy and shine on the golf course and in life. Just barely a year old, her mother's then-boyfriend shook her so hard she suffered a brain injury that left her legally blind. She grew up with drugs and alcohol in her family and just a few years ago her stepfather, whom she was close to, committed suicide. She was put in foster care, but her foster parents were able to find her a place in the Washington State School for the Blind in Vancouver. There, she connected with The First Tee, which taught her golf and gave her the chance to move beyond her disability. "You are more than your handicap," she told us. Sierra was featured in a PGA/CBS video that was televised before a 2014 Tour event. [Watch it here.](#)

With such a great program and the information provided by the League, Events, Education and Member committees, the evaluations were very positive and we think a good time was had by all!

Many thanks,  
**Cherie Maas-Anderson**  
**Karen Bolin**  
**Mary Gilbert**  
**Jodenne Scott**  
2016 EWGA-PDX Kickoff Committee