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Partnering promotes golf to inner city youth

St. George's Episcopal Church in Germantown is partnering with Memphis Athletic Ministries (MAM) and the Emmanuel Episcopal Center to teach at-risk, urban youth, who attend the Center's after school program, life skills, leadership and Jesus through the game of golf.

Thanks to mentors, like Jim McLaughlin, Bob White, and Brad Black, members of St. George's Church, Coach Lee Brown with the Emmanuel Episcopal Center and the staff at MAM, these 12 young men are learning not only how to face the challenges on the golf course, but more importantly how to face the challenges that life brings.

"As members of St. George's, we were looking for an outreach ministry and turned to Louis Holmes at the Emmanuel Episcopal Center for some ideas," states Jim McLaughlin, one of the three volunteer coaches. "Since golf is a skill that we all have, Louis suggested teaching golf to some of the boys who go to the after school program at Emmanuel."



Front row (left to right) Students from Vance Middle School are Terrell Diggs, Latrell Diggs, Devon Leonard, Gregory Bell, and Jerome Johnson. Back row (left to right) Coach Brad Black, St. George's Church volunteer, Coach Tony Pinson, MAM volunteer, Kevon Eskridge, Overton High School, Coach Lee Brown, Emmanuel Episcopal Center, and Coach Jim McLaughlin, St. George's Church volunteer

"Being very familiar with the MAM golf program for inner city youth, the Christian values that the kids are taught, and MAM's successful mentoring practices, I encouraged the St. George's volunteers and Coach Brown to partner with MAM." said Louis Holmes, Emmanuel Episcopal Center Sports Director. "I wanted these young men to learn the fundamentals of golf from Vince Alfonso, Jr., PGA professional, and MAM's other coaches in an uplifting, encouraging environment."

Once these young men master golf fundamentals and are comfortable on the course, they will play golf year-round and participate in golfing activities with three other Memphis elementary school programs held at the MAM Park Golf Course. The plan is for these boys to learn golf well enough to be able to participate on a Memphis city school golf team.

"Exposing these kids to golf gives them another healthy, wholesome after school activity," states Vince Alfonso, Jr., MAM Director of Golf and PGA professional. "Together, MAM, St. George's, and the Emmanuel Episcopal Center are committed to helping these young men not only become golfers but more importantly, godly young men who are better students, better brothers and better sons."

And the benefits of partnering recently flourished as the MAM golf program received a donation of \$1,000 raised at St. George's Episcopal Church spring golf tournament.

To learn more about the MAM golf program, go to www.mamsports.org.