

Garden Springs Elementary First Green Field Trip

In partnership with GCSAA and Lexington Parks and Recreation



Founded in 1997, First Green is the only STEM education and environmental outreach program in the United States and Canada that uses golf courses as learning labs. First Green is a Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) program that pairs golf courses with local schools for unique Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) learning opportunities. First Green programs can be found in 28 US states, and on April 21st, 2022 Kentucky will become the 29th state to host a First Green learning lab.

The First Green learning lab will be at Lakeside Golf Course, a beautiful course situated on approximately 185 acres, adjacent to Jacobson Park and Jacobson Lake in Lexington KY. It features large greens, rolling terrain and the longest par-5 in the state at more than 600 yards. On April 21st it will also feature over 50 4th grade students from Garden Springs Elementary, and 3 STEM learning stations run by superintendents from Lexington Parks and Rec.

Students attending this field trip will learn about the cool science tools used to run a golf course, identify the three components of soil and the ideal mixture of those components that supports growth of grass and plants, and learn about kinetic and potential energy through a fun putting game. The learning lab stations are designed to be engaging, interactive, and informative, with students learning important scientific concepts that align with the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards).

This event is made possible through the efforts of the 2021 Kentucky Elementary Science Teacher of the year Shad Lacefield, Director of Programming at Lexington Parks and Recreation Curtis Mitchell, Lakeside Superintendent Jason Nelson, and GCSAA's Great Lakes Regional Representative Shane Conroy. Shad Lacefield was awarded the First Green grant to cover the cost of the field trip for his 4th grade students, Curtis organized several specifics of the trip including the date, location, and superintendents that will participate, while Jason was responsible for coordinating the learning labs and activities for kids with Shane Conroy.

Being able to get students out to one of Lexington's beautiful public courses, expose them to the science behind running a golf course, and do it all for free is such an incredible achievement. An opportunity like this is one many that is planned to be offered in the future thanks to the partnership of Lexington Parks and Recreation and First Green.