



## PAR FORE at the



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Professional golfer Peter Jacobsen compared the game of golf to the cycle of life. "One of the most fascinating things about golf is how it reflects the cycle of life. No matter what you shoot - the next day you have to go back to the first tee and begin all over again and make yourself into something." -Peter Jacobsen. Individuals are faced with obstacles in life and hazards on the green but somehow face each hardship and prevail.



In recent years, Somali refugees have fled their native soil in attempt to escape the chaos present in their home country. Individuals coming to the United States have settled in a variety of locations, one of which is Salt Lake City Utah. The refugees must now make a life for themselves and attempt to integrate their culture into their new home. American teens nation wide including the Somali refugees struggle to navigate their way through the turmoil of "fitting in" throughout their adolescent years. Adolescents seeking acceptance among their peers are subject to gang activity as a means of fulfilling the need of "fitting in". Gang membership



supplies members with an occupation that is meaningful within an adolescent's context. It provides recognition among peers, social support and satisfies the need of belonging. Gang involvement is a dangerous occupation and can lead to substance abuse, injury, incarceration and most tragically, death. It is imperative that adolescents be provided with other forms of meaningful occupation within a healthy environment.

PAR FORE is an occupational based gang prevention-mentoring program that seeks to empower youth and aid in the development of moral and ethical character. PAR FORE provides its participants with a productive social network and utilizes golf to bestow values, pride and engagement in health occupations to promote wellness among at-risk adolescent. The program originated in Long Island, New York at Stony Brook University and has now been expanded across the nation to Salt Lake City, Utah. Stony Brook University and the University of Utah are a dynamic twosome seeking to drive away the possibility of gang involvement one swing at a time. With each drive, chip, and putt, participants gain confidence and increase their self-esteem developing essential life skills through meaningful activity.



Professor Yda Smith of the University of Utah's Occupational Therapy Program and Director of PAR FORE Utah has reported the program going extremely well. In fact,

weeks after the release of the Salt Lake City Tribune's article, [On the golf course, refugees learn the game of life](#); the program has seen an increase in adolescent participation from 8 to 15 children.

Like Peter Jacobsen said, no matter what happened yesterday, today you must pick yourself up and do your best to “make yourself into something”. Through partnership with Stony Brook University, the University of Utah's PAR FORE program will continue to grow and instill **P**erseverance, **A**ccountability, **R**esilience, **F**ellowship, **O**pportunity, **R**espect and **E**mpowerment among its new participants.