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# Helping At-Risk Pinellas Kids Build Confidence through Golf—Shumaker Advisors Partners with Chi Chi Rodriguez Youth Foundation to Reach More Students

**ST. PETERSBURG, FL** — Shumaker Advisors is teaming up with The Chi Chi Rodriguez Youth Foundation to help more at-risk students in Pinellas County build confidence, character, and opportunity through the game of golf. Together, they hope to expand the Foundation's middle school education program and reach even more children across the Tampa Bay region.

The partnership comes at a pivotal moment. Pinellas County graduation rates have declined over the past two years, and a significant gap persists for economically disadvantaged students—particularly Black/African-American and Hispanic/Latino students—who graduate at rates 8 percent lower than their peers, according to the Florida Department of Education (2022–2023).

The Chi Chi Rodriguez Academy is already making a difference:

- 82 percent of students graduate high school, despite being identified as at-risk for dropping out.

"Golf is more than a game. It's a teacher of patience, focus, and integrity," said Alan Suskey, Executive Vice President and Principal, State Practice for Shumaker Advisors Florida. "We're proud to support the Chi Chi Rodriguez Foundation and its incredible mission to help young people discover who they are and what they can achieve."

"Shumaker Advisors has a long-standing reputation for helping organizations make a real difference in our

community," said James Poulter, CEO of The Chi Chi Rodriguez Youth Foundation. "This partnership will allow us to reach more students and give them the chance to build confidence and experience life-changing lessons on the golf course."

Founded in 1979 by legendary golfer Chi Chi Rodriguez, Bob James (founder of Raymond James Financial), and educator Bill Hayes, the Chi Chi Rodriguez Youth Foundation in Clearwater, Florida, uses golf as a powerful tool to engage and inspire children who need direction and encouragement.

Today, the Foundation serves more than 3,600 children annually through in-school, after-school, summer, and outreach programs in partnership with the Pinellas County School District, City of Clearwater, PGA TOUR, and First Tee Foundation.

Key Programs:

- Chi Chi Academy: A privately supported public school in partnership with the Pinellas County School District, serving up to 108 fifth through eighth-grade students who are referred by school guidance counselors.

- First Tee – Clearwater: A youth development program that empowers kids ages 7–17 to be the best version of themselves through golf. Programs are open to the public and offer scholarships for those in need.

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