

Featured Woman Leader: Share Your Journey

SHEENA PRANTE



Sheena Prante is a PGA Associate at Salish Cliffs Golf Club in Shelton, Washington.

I played my first round of golf at age seven, started playing in tournaments at eight and continued through my collegiate years at Eastern Washington University. I eventually got burnt out from the daily grind, practicing and tournament life, so I pretty much quit the game after college and would hit the driving range usually once a year and that was it. I took various jobs trying to find my way in life, but none of them felt right in my heart. I knew had to get back into athletics in some form at some point, but didn't know how. I worked to get my master's degree in Athletic Administration and continued to look for work in that area. I never really wanted to be a PGA Professional, and thought I was not cut out for it. I then took a part time job at Salish Cliffs Golf Club, still trying to find my "dream job." I loved it there but knew I probably did not have a future there just being part time, so I kept looking and applying for jobs in the field of recreation. Then one

day, the Head Professional asked me if I wanted to get into the PGA program. I remember being hesitant and asking him, "Do you think I would be good at that?" Because I sure didn't know! I had been away from the game for many years and knew I would be in a male-dominated industry and that made me really nervous. But, I jumped in and am so glad I did! I love it.

Being at Salish Cliffs Golf Club has felt like the perfect fit for me. It is a tribal resort golf course and with my dad's side of the family being Native American, I felt a connection to the course, the people and the atmosphere. I thought it was the coolest thing in the world!

I have spent a lot of my time focusing on working with the Native American youth and working to create a golf program for them at Salish Cliffs. I knew this was something I wanted to be involved with almost immediately. I used to write a lot of my college papers on golf programs for Native American youth so this felt almost natural to start out in this direction. We have started small but are making steps forward with the kids. I have been going up to the neighborhoods to do golf sessions with the kids a few times during the summer and are making plans now to work with some of the kids once a week starting in July. I also have been working with our Squaxin Island Police Department, Natural Resources officers and Animal Services personnel to get them involved with the kids, meeting them, playing golf with them and becoming familiar with each other. In addition, I want to continue to work with our tribal council to keep them involved with the kids and get them out there whenever possible. I think it is beneficial for the youth to get to know leaders in the community, meeting them, playing golf with them, and just building those relationships that they can carry with them in the future.

I think golf is a great game to get the kids involved in, and starting golf while they are young is really important as well. I am excited that we recently received grant money to purchase SNAG golf equipment for the kids to be able to use on a daily basis. I am looking forward to continuing to build relationships with the kids, community leaders and hopefully getting many of the kids to fall in love with the game of golf.

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