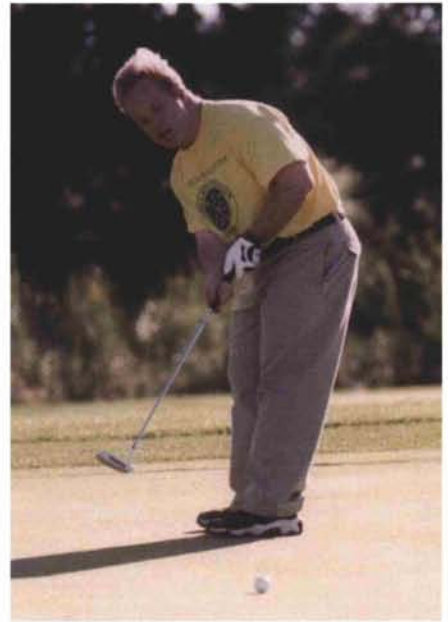


Golf Without Boundaries

You don't know what you have until it's gone!



You don't know what you have until it's gone. What if you never had it; would you miss it? Or maybe you did have it and now it's gone.

I'm talking about opportunity. The opportunity to do things you wouldn't otherwise be able to do without a helping hand from others. This usually derives from a donation of sorts, whether it is money, land, material items or time, simply your presence to assist those who need it.

What are my inspirations for writing this piece? One is my seven-year-old nephew, Tony, who was born with the disease spina bifida—generally defined, an incompleteness of the spine. He is a determined boy who doesn't quite know why he can't do the things that all the other kids are doing, but will keep on trying. Golf and fishing are two hobbies that he wants to pursue, but who and what facility or programs can accommodate him? The other inspiration came from reading an article in the November 2003 issue of *Golf Course Management* titled "Back to John's Golf Course." This was a follow-up to a May 2001 story about Steve and Juana Espinoza, whose son John was born with Cornelia DeLange Syndrome, which can cause developmental disabilities. A course was built and "gives John and other disabled individuals a comfortable outlet to golf without the pressures of a traditional facility." So—what does the

Midwest have to offer?

In fact, a number of programs are offered throughout the year in this region. The CDGA's Sunshine Through Golf Foundation, through facilities at Midwest Golf House, is one of the key players that has much to offer. I recently had the opportunity to speak with Todd Alfred, the CDGA's director of foundation operations, and gain some insight into their mission. Fact: the Sunshine Through Golf clinics, based out of the Midwest Golf House, comprise the largest grass-roots golf program for individuals with disabilities in the country; this year alone, the foundation is putting on some 50 clinics to reach some 700 individuals. Three words summarize this program; therapeutic, recreational and rehabilitative. The program's primary focus is on juniors with

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Sunshine Through Golf Foundation



Seated, some of the 700-plus "members" of the CDGA's new Three-Hole Sunshine Course.

mental disabilities with a minor in physical rehabilitation. Physical disabilities are a secondary emphasis as there are not enough funds to keep a physical therapist on staff. Each clinic is generally five one-hour sessions, providing golf instruction, equipment and the fundamentals of golf, courtesy of the organizers—most clinics are cosponsored by a municipality or park district's Special Recreation Association (SRA) and held at various CDGA member clubs throughout the Chicago District—and volunteer PGA professionals. At the end of each clinic, the more advanced players enjoy the opportunity to play some top golf courses, including Cog Hill, Cantigny, Phillips Park, Oak Brook, Medinah and Glen Oak; everyone partakes in awards and a cookout.

The Sunshine Through Golf program entered a new era on Sunday, June 6, when Midwest Golf House hosted the official formal-dedication ceremonies for the Three-Hole Sunshine Course and its I*Mag*Jen Clubhouse, a completely handicap-accessible facility. Designed by Joe T. Jemsek and built by Wadsworth Construction in 2002, the Three-Hole Sunshine Course is now open to people with disabilities, as well as beginners, juniors, minorities and the economically disadvantaged. It will be home to the Sunshine Through Golf program. Dedication day also marked a name change as the CDGA Foundation became the Sunshine Through Golf Foundation, tying the identity more closely to the flagship clinics.

As most MAGCS members know, the Three-Hole Sunshine course has a dual purpose; it is also a living laboratory for those certain demented individuals (plant patholo-

gists) who welcome any disease they can strum up along with the plant varieties that can resist them. This is obviously very exciting for our profession, to have such a resource in our own backyard. Todd Alfred tells me that the foundation operates on donations. Some of the major contributors include the Jemsek family, which donated the acreage upon which Midwest Golf House and the Sunshine Course are located, as well as Fortune Brands, the parent company of Titleist and Footjoy. Many other corporations and individuals make donations throughout the year. These donations not only help support the Sunshine Course, but they also cover the cost of holding programs at other facilities as well. Participation in the Sunshine Through Golf program is free of charge, making donations a necessity.

The Sunshine through Golf Foundation will hold its fourth annual fundraiser on Monday, September 13 at Rich Harvest Farms with Ben Crenshaw as its keynote speaker. This day will also celebrate the 90th anniversary of the CDGA and the 60th anniversary of the CDGA (now Sunshine Through Golf) Foundation. For more information, contact Todd 630-257-2005 or e-mail him at talfred@cdga.org.

Also in the Mix

The Sunshine Through Golf Foundation works with two other organizations I would like to highlight. One is the Marianjoy Foundation and the other is Cantigny Youth Links.

Founded in 1972 by the



Formal dedication of the Three-Hole Sunshine Course took place June 6.

Wheaton Franciscan Sisters, the Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital, located in Wheaton, IL, provides rehabilitative medicine. The range of rehabilitation services is wide, so I will focus only on golf-related offerings. They offer two programs: one is therapeutic golf for people with physical disabilities, the other is golf medicine for people whose game is affected by injury or pain such as arthritis, sprains and joint replacement.

The therapeutic golf program is available to people with a physical disability and includes individuals who are disabled or recovering from an injury or pain that causes discomfort while playing golf. The focus is to educate people how to properly exercise to strengthen affected muscle groups, how to implement the use of adaptive equipment such as a single-passenger cart or a walking device, and how to adjust swing and stance to alleviate the pain while playing golf. Monthly clinics and play events are organized for those of any age or skill; these take place at multiple golf courses and driving range facilities, with a tournament capping off the year.

Golf medicine focuses more on the effect that pain and injury have on the golf game. The analytical process begins with meetings with physical therapists and physicians who will pinpoint the program for individual needs. Marianjoy does have a golf professional onsite who will examine and alter a golf swing to prevent playing with pain. Marianjoy staff also provide clinics to area PGA professionals on how to teach those with disabilities to play and/or adapt to the game of golf.

For more information on Marianjoy, call 630-462-5580 or e-mail Donna Strum at golf@marianjoy.org.

Mike Jones, Cantigny's PGA professional, and Cantigny Golf work

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Among the MAGCS members or affiliates attending the formal dedication were (L to R): Tom Voigt, Tom Fermanian, Bob Easter, Lee Miller, Jon Jennings, Mike Bavier, Dan Dinelli, Renny Jacobson, Carl Hopphan, Dave Nadler, Don Ferreri, Wally Fuchs, Rusty Stachlewitz, Randy Kane, Eric Nadler and Luke Cella.

with both the Sunshine Through Golf Foundation and the Marianjoy Foundation. Mike informed me of the many programs that they put on throughout the year. The programs are not limited to people with physical disabilities but are also offered to people with mental disabilities. One of the Sunshine Through Golf programs that Mike puts on is in conjunction with the local SRA. It consists of a five-series class that starts out with instruction and the basics of the game of golf. The participants are shown how to hold and swing a club and start out by hitting and putting tennis balls, gradually working down to hitting regulation golf balls. He educates them on club selection for each shot, how to read a green and basic golf etiquette. At the end of the clinic, Mike holds a scramble where at least two of the disabled participants' drives must be used during the round. Mike also provides instruction for those with physical disabilities on how to adapt to the game of golf with the aid of single-passenger carts and walkers. Cantigny does have a yearly


charity event to help raise funds for the various foundations with which they partner. For more information regarding the Cantigny offerings, contact Mike Jones at 630-260-8191.

Outside the Links

Golf not your gig? Let me introduce you to "Fishing Has No Boundaries Inc." It is a nonprofit organization "whose goal is to open up the great outdoors for people with disabilities through the world of fishing." FHNB was founded in 1986 as a single group in Hayward, WI and has grown into a national organization with more than a dozen chapters in nine states. I was not aware that such an organization existed until my intern hit me up for a week off in May last year. He told me that he had been a volunteer for this event for the past 16 years. This is one of many events that cater to people with any disability, physical or mental. The Hayward chapter holds its event every spring and relies on volunteers for boats, fishing gear, dock hands, fishing guides and so forth. I know what

you're thinking, how does a person with no arms fish? They do it with the assistance of an electric reel. Fundraisers take place throughout the year, ranging from chili cookoffs (which I entered for the first time last winter) to raffles, with one of the strongest supporters being the Lions Club. For more information on FHNB, e-mail info@fhnbinc.org.

Support These Causes!


The common denominator for the success of all of the above programs is ample donations and the spirit of volunteerism. Don't do it because you want to make yourself feel good, do it because you want to! There may be a time when you will be walking in their shoes. 

References

"Back to John's Golf Course." *Golf Course Management*, November 2003

Marianjoy Foundation Web site

FHNB Web site



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