



# Volunteerism: The Ultimate Win-Win

*"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself." —Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*We owe it to ourselves to balance our time, to grow as individuals . . . Volunteering our time is an excellent way to achieve that balance.*

One of the most demanding professions is that of the golf course superintendent. It can be demanding because the hours seem to be endless; we struggle with the uncertainty of the weather; and since it is a business, we must adhere to tightening budgets. I have realized personally that it is far too easy to get caught up in the pursuit of excelling at our careers; we even become obsessed with our careers at the sacrifice of our well-being as people. We tend to be our own worst critics and oftentimes spend too much time to gain too little with only marginal improvements to the product we provide to our golfers. We owe it to ourselves to balance our time, to grow as individuals as well. Time well spent in balance will ultimately prove to be a huge asset to our well-being and ultimately will carry over to our performance at the workplace. Volunteering our time is an excellent way to achieve that balance.

Motivation to volunteer can come in many forms: to help a friend, to feel needed, to get to know the community, for recognition, to repay a debt, to learn something new, to donate professional skills, to be challenged, to explore a career, as therapy, or just plain fun! I have realized benefits along the way that include learning and developing new skills, meeting new people and building self-esteem and self-confidence.

Many opportunities exist through which we can volunteer. There are ways to offer your time and talents with church, school and community. Sometimes we offer our time due to a personal experience with an illness or cause. I have personally been active as a coach with baseball, served on my church council and recently with the MAGCS. Once I started with volunteering, it became second nature; now I would feel as if something were missing if I were to stop.

For those of you with families, like myself, we may find it hard to justify more time spent apart from our families. One suggestion would be to volunteer as a family. Schools, churches and communities frequently need the help an entire family could provide. Because of the benefits I have gained through volunteering, I can achieve the same or better results with less time. In fact, it has proven to be a win-win situation. Those benefiting from my volunteerism have gained, and I have gained personally by improving my performance as an employee. For those of you who volunteer, I'm sure you have your own motivations and personal rewards. If you have not considered volunteering, please give it a try; for those of you who have taken a break from volunteering, maybe your talents could once again be utilized.

