



It's a Full House at the Midwest Golf House

Around 1998, after nearly 20 years of residency in Oak Brook, the Chicago District Golf Association was beginning to look for a new home. It was during a meeting between CDGA personnel, Frank Jemsek and Nick Mokolke of Cog Hill, that the seeds were planted for the Midwest Golf House. After a \$1.4 million land donation by the Jemsek family (owners of Cog Hill), planning and fundraising for the 22,000 square foot facility began. Throughout the duration of the project, a fund of nearly \$5 million was raised by the CDGA Foundation in a campaign dubbed "Sunshine Through Golf" (which later became the Foundation's moniker). The Midwest Golf House opened for operation on April 16, 2001.

But what goes on there? Who all resides in the Midwest Golf House? Did you know that there are almost thirteen organizations that have offices there? But who are they? Where are they – upstairs? downstairs? Who runs them? What do they do? I have grouped these organizations to help answer some potential questions and to try and clear up any confusion.

Chicago District Golf Association

Robert Markianni, Executive Director, and the CDGA staff are located on the first floor.

Most everyone knows who the CDGA is, but if you don't, it's a non-profit association of member clubs and individual golfers in Illinois and parts of Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan. The CDGA has five different programs that assist their members. Among them is the Turfgrass Research Program which is directed by *Dr.*

Derek Settle. This is the program that conducts and provides research to member clubs in order to assist superintendents with maintaining and improving the health of their golf turf.

The Turfgrass Program is broken up into two areas Pest Diagnostics/Consulting and IPM on the web. On the web is Interactive Turf (interactiveturf.com), which is a fee-based program consisting of five sections: pest bulletins, historical database, pest alerts, a pest newsletter, and sponsored research.

Sunshine Through Golf Foundation

Brittany Ottolini, Manager of Foundation Operations.

The Sunshine Through Golf Foundation, which is part of the CDGA, brings the benefits and resources of

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the game of golf into the lives of beginners, juniors, individuals with disabilities, minorities and the economically disadvantaged throughout the areas served by the CDGA.

Christopher Painter is the Golf Course Superintendent for the three hole, par 3 Sunshine course. The golf course was designed by Joe T. Jemsek and built by Wadsworth in May of 2002. It plays from 450 yards for parents to just 200 yards for kids. Along with the three golf holes, it features both a chipping and putting green, and test plots for the Turfgrass Research Program.

Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents

Luke Cella, Executive Director, is located on the second floor in the recently expanded back half of the Midwest Golf House.

The MAGCS is a 501(c)(6) professional trade association. And as a refresher, the it exists to provide networking, education and career advancement opportunities to those who facilitate the growth and enjoyment of golf.

Illinois Turfgrass Foundation and Illinois Turfgrass Endowment

Luke Cella, Executive Director

The Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (ITF) is committed to funding turf research and education in Illinois. It is a registered 501(c)(5) not-for-profit professional trade association and is also the sole sponsorship of the Illinois Professional Turf Conference and trade show. The Illinois Turfgrass Endowment (ITE) is the fundraising arm of the ITF and designated by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit group. The ITE focus on funding turfgrass research well into our future.

Midwest Sod Council/Sod Growers Association of Mid-America

Rusty Stachelwitz, Executive Director/Executive Secretary, is also located in the newly added second floor offices.

The Midwest Sod Council is a group of sod farms that contribute to a group promotion program. It is very similar to the beef or dairy councils that are behind slogans such as "Beef its what's for dinner" or "Got Milk?" Rusty is working to expand and promote the fact that turf is great and sod is the quickest way to a full stand.

The Sod Growers Association of Mid-America is a trade organization for sod farms located in Illinois and Indiana.

Illinois Junior Golf Association

Carrie Holub is the newly appointed Executive Director as of January 17, 2007. She and all IJGA staff are located on the second floor.

IJGA is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit junior golf association that provides playing opportunities, educational clinics, and events for its membership. Any person from age 7 through 18 is eligible for a membership.

American Junior Golf Association

Lee Pinchouck, Vice President/ Midwest Regional Director, is located on the second floor within the IJGA office suite.

The AJGA is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to the overall growth and development of young men and women who aspire to earn college golf scholarships through competitive junior golf.

The First Tee

Mark Lowry, Senior Director of Chapter Management, is located on the first floor.

The First Tee's mission is to impact the lives of young people by providing learning facilities and educational programs that promote character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf. As Senior Director of Chapter Management, Mark is responsible for facilitating several Chapter based programs.

University of Illinois Extension

Greg Stack and *Richard Hentschel*, Educators and Extension Specialists, located in the newly added second floor offices.

The Extension provides updates for professional horticulturists through grounds maintenance clinics, professional growers meetings, and pesticide clinics. The Extension also works closely with professional associations by providing expertise on programs the associations organize. Consultation services are offered to assist growers and horticulture maintenance professionals with pest identification and management, culture, and plant selection.

United States Golf Association

Scott Hoyde is the Manager of Course Rating and Handicap Education for the USGA. He has worked for the USGA since 2000 and has recently moved his operations to the second floor of the Midwest Golf House in August of 2006. His main responsibility is to develop educational materials on both the USGA Course Rating System and USGA Handicap System. These materials help supplement Handicapping seminars he conducts around the country to help clubs meet certification requirements and further educate club representatives. In addition, Scott also conducts Course Rating seminars to train current and potential course raters from authorized golf associations. He also conducts research to help support any changes to the Course Rating or Handicap System. His most recent projects is to develop USGA Course Rating Software and provide technical support for users.

I hope this article organized all the different associations that are currently based out of the Midwest Golf House. Next time that you are at the Midwest Golf House, take a look around and notice how nice a facility it is, and to see if there are any new associations housed there. The CDGA has open their doors and truly created the Midwest Golf House.

