

FEATURE II

Doug Myslinski, *Jacobson Golf Course Design*

MAGCS Members Are Everywhere



Brad Helms and his son after a victorious day on the diamond.

As volunteers on the MAGCS editorial team, we all hope to contribute informative, educational, and/or humorous editorials to our fellow members. As I struggled to come up with a topic that all of you would find useful, the idea occurred to me as I sat in a Village of Palatine Planning Commission meeting. Odd you say? Indeed! But as I took my assigned seat on the volunteer/appointed commission forum, I noticed a name plate from a councilman that occupied that seat during their regular meetings. The name on that plate was Brad Helms, who happens to be a Certified Golf Course Superintendent at our local Palatine Hills Golf Course and a volunteer/ elected councilman for the Village of Palatine. I began to wonder that if the two of us in the business of golf are volunteering our time and knowledge, how many others in our industry are doing the same. And most importantly, why should we? With the likes of superintendents, architects and consultants, there is vast experience with environmental issues, permitting, budget management and people management to list a few.

Brad summed it up so well by saying, "As a superintendent I strive to provide the best golf experience for our customers while also enhancing and protecting our environment to the best of my ability. As a volunteer councilman, I try to promote a good experience for our residents while also considering the environmental impacts each decision carries." Despite the differences in these two jobs, Brad is able to find the balance pleasing people and maintaining good environmental practices, all while tending to his family.

Very few people in this world today are as environmentally versed as active golf course superintendents. The only other professions that interact daily with our natural habitats are the environmental governing agencies such as the Army Corp of Engineers, DNR and Wildlife Conservation and the EPA.

Brian Green, CGCS, MAGCS and Superintendent of Sunset Valley in Highland Park, often volunteers with the "Friends of the Chicago River" where he has the opportunity to educate all those who care about the environment and about the role of a superintendent. In his words, "I discovered through volunteering that I was able to strengthen our relationship with the governing bodies by showing them that there is a common bond in both of our efforts in preservation." Brian is doing us all a favor by volunteering his time and

knowledge to help eliminate the misconception that golf is an environmental imploder.

By volunteering to share our expertise with the environment or assist in balancing a local village budget, or even coaching a youth baseball team, we also reap the many ancillary benefits that come from being a volunteer. These benefits may include making new friends, learning a new skill or advancing a career, all while enhancing our mental and physical health.

One of the best reasons to volunteer is to help strengthen your community where you live. Unpaid volunteers are the glue that keeps a community together and are often involved in developing plans to improve it for everyone. Becoming involved offers you the opportunity to connect to your community and make it a better place. Most people don't realize that volunteering is a two way street. It can also benefit you and your family just as much as the cause. Volunteering increases your self-esteem, confidence and sense of accomplishment. It gives a sense of pride, especially when many receive the fruits of your labor. Life's views become more positive and future goals are set higher when you are involved in the big picture. Furthermore, it can strengthen a family bond if volunteering includes family members. Start your kids out early with you and chances are, when they become adults, they will positively impact their community too. **-OC**