

Volunteer efforts help kids, promote golf's rewards

The Sticks for Kids Foundation can leave an impression on a kid for the rest of his or her life, and members of the Golf Course Builders Association of America are behind efforts to do just that.

The GCBAA established the Sticks for Kids Foundation in 1996 to provide the tools and opportunities necessary to allow as many junior golfers – age eight to 18 – as possible to enjoy the game. The mission of the foundation is to provide as many children as possible with:

- A set of clubs to use while learning to play the game;
- A set of clubs to use as many times as they want while deciding to purchase their own set;
- A chance to experience a sport that teaches etiquette, discipline, integrity and honor on competitive courses; and
- A chance to earn a scholarship to further their education in the field of their choice.

Steve Shoemaker is the president of the Sticks for Kids Foundation and also executive vice president of Alliance Golf, a company that installs lakes, water features and hardscape on golf courses and an associate member of the GCBAA. Shoemaker has been president of the foundation since 2000 and is in his second three-year term. The president of the foundation serves two three-year terms.

"Course construction has been good to all GCBAA members, and all the members have an interest in golf,

so the builders were looking for ways to give back to the game," Shoemaker says.

"There is a segment of the population that doesn't have resources to play the game, so the builders decided to help those kids who are disadvantaged," he says.

"Golf has all the attributes that help create better people. It's something that anybody at any age can develop good characteristics from."

About 20 SFK programs exist throughout the country. There are four requirements to be a part of the program for participating golf courses. They are:

- Each participating golf course must have an active junior program, and the program may establish, enhance or replace a current program;
- Each golf course that receives new clubs or monetary support from the foundation must have the ability to store the clubs for use by junior golfers;
- Each course is expected to promote the program through the use of posters and displays; and
- Each course is expected to work

with local media and businesses to promote the SFK program.

"We wanted our members to be hands-on instead of just giving money or clubs to a program and sitting back and letting someone else run it," Shoemaker says. "The clubs don't go to an individual child, they can go to anyone who is signed up in the program."

The foundation provides 20 to 40 sets of clubs per program, and each one is different. For example, some are after-school programs and others are summer programs.

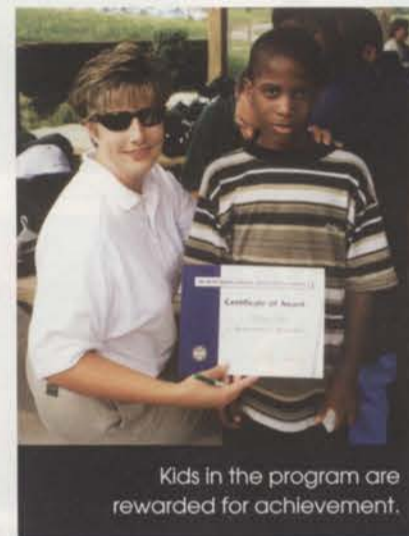
The program awards two to four scholarships a year – \$10,000 college scholarships given to those qualify kids who go through the program. They're nominated by a person who oversees the program of which they're participating.

Those that want to contribute to the program can in several ways:

- Donate funds that can be used to purchase junior sets of clubs;
- Donate time and energy to support established facilities;
- Donate equipment, merchandise and services that will



Clubs are provided for kids to use.



Kids in the program are rewarded for achievement.

enhance the programs; and

- Help find young kids who would like to experience the game.

Shoemaker says the program needs to be re-examined every once in a while to make sure it continues to head in the right direction.

"We'd like to see more programs operating that impact more kids' lives in more geographic areas," he says.

GCN



Participants listen to volunteers talk about golf's attributes, which can help them develop personal characteristics.

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