

BY DOUG SAUNDERS

# GIVING BACK

COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS RAISE AND DONATE MONEY FOR CHARITIES UNRELATED TO GOLF

**T**he golf industry is an integral part of charity. In fact, according to the National Golf Foundation, U.S. courses host more than 140,000 fund-raisers annually that generate \$3.2 billion per year for good causes. Course managers understand the importance of these events to their organizers. Managers also balance requests for the use of their facilities with the bottom line in a way that allows them to be good benefactors.

The PGA Tour has developed a strong connection between its events and charities. Throughout the past 15 years, it has raised more than \$1 billion for charity. This type of giving has filtered through the entire industry in many forms.

Most companies are involved in philanthropic endeavors, such as contributing to the Red Cross, United Way or Salvation Army; but many find more personal reasons to connect with smaller charities to improve the human condition.



Throughout the past 15 years, the PGA Tour raised more than \$1 billion for charity. This type of giving has filtered through the industry in many forms. Photo: Dreamstime.com

### HELPING SICK CHILDREN

The spirit of giving has led to a stronger commitment by those who are touched deeply by the causes they embrace. Floratine Co., which went through a management change about eight months ago when younger members of the company took over, wanted to be more involved in its hometown of Memphis, Tenn.

“Our management team is relatively young and we all have small children, so it seemed obvious to us to become involved with St. Jude Children’s Hospital, which is located here in Memphis,” says Brian Goodwin, the 42-year-old president and c.e.o. of Floratine.

But as Goodwin learned more about the 50-year-old hospital and research center that was founded by entertainer Danny Thomas, his commitment to helping its work grew stronger. The research work on catastrophic childhood diseases at St. Jude and the knowledge and protocols it has developed are available to children worldwide.

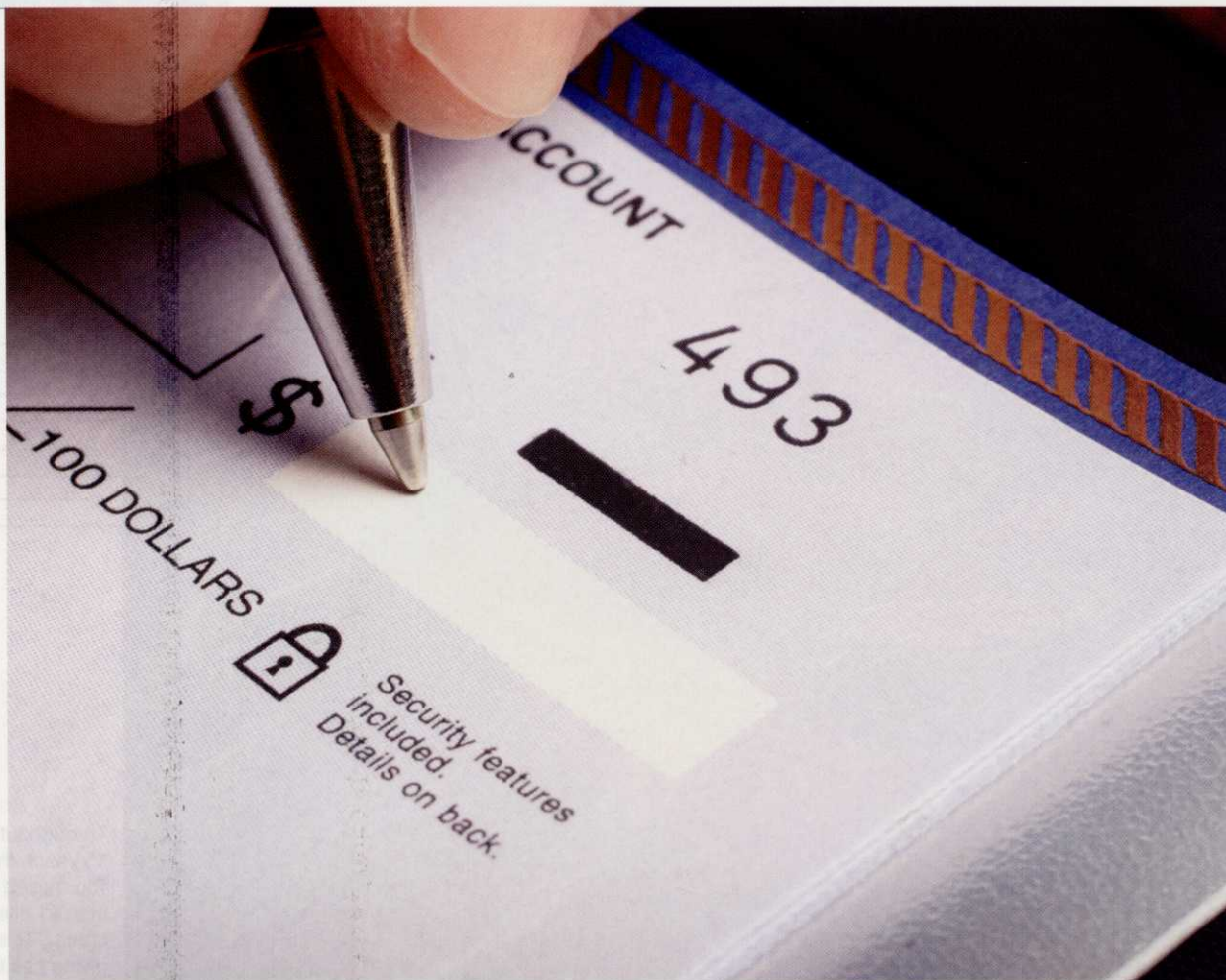
“Its research is an incubator that has helped to treat

children from all 50 states and 70 countries,” Goodwin says. “It has its own pharmacology center to create their compounds quickly. After spending one day at the facility, it helped transform our commitment.”

Goodwin set the goal of raising the funds necessary for one day’s operation of St. Jude – \$1.3 million. Floratine also is planning to create a nationwide series of tournaments hosted by U.S. and international GCSAA members as part of the effort.

“Our concept is to hold a series of 50 tournaments throughout the country in which teams will be competing for and have a chance to play in an international championship to be held in Memphis where the winners of events will come together,” Goodwin says. “Our vision is to create a branding effort between superintendents and St. Jude’s. As superintendents and club managers learn more about the center, they’ll want to participate more.

“When you become involved in a cause, you truly learn the meaning of the old saying ‘the more you give



John Deere, The Toro Co., and Floratine Co. are examples of golf industry companies who donate to nongolf-related charities. Photo: istock.com

the more you receive,” he adds. “It’s a lesson that’s good to embrace.”

**MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS**

Companies’ charitable activities usually are based on a distinctive corporate philosophy that defines how funds are spent. An example is the philanthropic work of Toro, which has

Toro donates funds to projects within communities where the company has a manufacturing facility or corporate office. Its donations come in various forms that include equipment donations to parks and open-space projects, volunteer donations and educational support.

“The various donations we make are determined through quarterly reviews where a

pany also gives to smaller organizations, such as the Minnesota Zoo and Minnesota Keystone Program, to make meaningful contributions to local communities. For example, Toro helps bring cultural events such as the Minnesota Orchestra to various towns where the company has manufacturing facilities.

The Giving Program also supports employee volunteerism by making a dollar-for-dollar match to employee groups who do volunteer work for organizations like local sports teams, the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts.

“The Giving Program reinforces our cultural values of respect, integrity and trust,” says program director Stacy Bogart. “We’re committed to enhancing the health and well-being of our communities by active outreach and involvement.”

**“Our vision is to create a branding effort between superintendents and St. Jude’s.”**

**- BRIAN GOODWIN**

been building a legacy of giving since the creation of the company in 1914. The Toro Giving Program handles the dispersing of a fund that represents 2 percent of pretax profits. The program focuses on programs that fit the company’s philosophy, which is geared toward beautifying the outdoors.

grant review committee determines support for organizations that fit within the giving strategy,” says Judson Tharin, community co-coordinator for the Toro Foundation.

Toro’s contributions include donations to turf research and various education programs as well as large donations to the United Way. The com-

**HELP ABROAD**

Deere and Co. has deep roots when it comes to making a difference. Company founders began a legacy of giving since the company was founded almost 200 years ago. The John Deere



Foundation was founded in 1948 to administer its charitable resources better to more worthy causes. Today, that commitment supports many varied organizations, including the FFA (Future Farmers of America), the Global Resources Program and Habitat for Humanity.

The John Deere Foundation's 2007 contributions, totaling \$12 million, were given to an array of programs in the U.S. and abroad. The foundation also consists of the John Deere Foundation of Canada, the European Goodwill Fund and the Funacao (Foundation) of Brazil.

A recent contribution has been helping address poverty and hunger in Africa by developing a relationship with KickStart, a nonprofit organization that helps farmers in Kenya, Tanzania and Mali escape poverty by developing and selling low-cost farm equipment such as irrigation pumps and seed presses. The impacts of these simple tools, such as a treadle pump, can be significant. One pump can increase a farmer's annual income from \$100 to more than \$1,000 and help create a net income for an impoverished village. During the past few years, these tools have helped 47,000 families rise out of poverty and become commercial farmers.

The John Deere Foundation's commitment of \$3 million during the next three years will allow KickStart to expand its programs into three more African nations with a goal of selling 125,000 pumps to impoverished farmers.

#### FINANCE A DANCE TRIP

Individuals, too, can make a difference in their own communities. Mike Brown, CGCS, at Starmount Forest Country Club in Greensboro, N.C., is a father of two daughters who became involved in the On Stage School of Dance, which teaches girls age 8 to 18 all forms of dance. The school develops choreographed dance teams that perform at competitions throughout the Southeastern United States.

"As my daughters reached the level to be able to travel to competitions, I found out some dancers in the organization couldn't afford travel costs for these trips. I wanted to find a way to help send these deserving dancers to competitions, so I created a fund-raiser at my golf course," Brown says.

Five years ago, Brown put together his first golf tournament with help from the various vendors and personal contacts at Starmount. He also received support from the Carolinas

Golf Course Superintendents Association, which helped spread the word about his fund-raiser and helped bring in golf teams for the tournament.

"When I started on the first tournament, I felt it would be a 'one-and-done' event," Brown says. "All of the participants enjoyed the day on the golf course, but afterwards, one of the dance teams from the school put on a presentation that helped showcase their talents and helped people understand what the fund-raiser was about. I was surprised to have so many participants tell me they wanted to be a part of this event the following year."

Brown's event, held in April each year, draws 32 teams by invitation only and receives support from 22 industry vendors who sponsor teams and tees on the course and help to underwrite the cost.

Brown also has brought out local media,

including newspapers and the local television station, to showcase the event as well as the On Stage School of Dance to increase its exposure and the sponsors' exposure. The event is culminated by a black-tie awards dinner that draws sponsors, club members and dancers' families.

Brown found doing this type of fund-raiser on a local level was easier than he expected. If the event is created to help a good cause, it can take on a life of its own and be easier to do each year. **GCI**

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*(Editor's note: We know we're just scratching the surface of nongolf charitable activities by industry companies and superintendents. If you have a similar story, let us know by e-mailing jwalsh@gie.net.)*

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