

Getting Involved

By SCOTT LARSON

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Throughout my 12 years as a Golf Course Superintendent I have read with great interest, the Hole Notes and Golf Course Management publications on a regular basis. A while back there was a drive encouraging superintendents to become more involved in volunteer organizations or other activities that might enable us to become leaders in serving our communities.

Finding a balance between our jobs, our families, and volunteer activities can be very difficult for us in this industry because:

Our jobs require long hours during the season, which is often the season when our family members may be more demanding of our time as well.

The free time we do have is usually spent trying to rest up for the next day we devote to our job.

It is difficult to spend time away from our job without thinking or worrying about things such as Irrigation, Weather, Personnel, Work Scheduling, etc.

Many of us in the MGCSA have taken it upon ourselves to become coaches for our children's athletic teams without regard to our schedules; not only because there are a shortage of volunteers to fill these roles, but because the nature of our job inspires us to become involved individuals.

I have been a member of our local Fire department for 19 years and have been able to balance work, family, and free time. When our associations encouraged involvement in these types of organizations, it really hit home with me

because I truly believe there is not an organization with more camaraderie than the Fire department or EMS service. While providing a valuable service to the community, I have gained personal benefits as well.

Volunteers with the fire department are forced to use instincts that are used daily on our jobs. These include things such as running the fire pumps on the trucks (which are similar to our irrigation pumps), working together at a fire scene, or using first aid or CPR at an accident. The relationships and trust that are built within the department are second only to family bonds.

It can be very easy to incorporate family time into the fire department. My entire family, including my wife, five children, and my dogs have been a part of my membership in the fire department.

Their involvement includes tasks such as cooking, cleaning or washing fire trucks, attending picnics, participating in parades, or just plain getting to know people and build friendships that last a life time. Other activities that fire departments and their families might participate in include fundraising efforts, 4th of July festivals, and benefits for special causes, just to mention a few. Public education on fire safety has the potential to bring us into the schools where we could take the opportunity to educate others about environmental issues and turf benefits on our golf courses as well.

Although participating in the fire department has been very inspirational for me and I am extremely proud to be a member of this organization; I have also been exposed to many of the not so good parts of life as well. These stumbling blocks are similar to the hurdles and challenges we face daily in our tasks at our golf course as we deal with members and others in our industry and are well worth the effort. I encourage the members of the MGCSA to get out and join some of these great organizations in our communities that make it a better place for everyone to live.

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