



YEAR IN 2015 REVIEW

Annual Report of the
National Hook A Kid
On Golf Program

New Site of the Year: Medinah School District 11

Students attending Medinah School District 11 in Illinois this past year were treated to a special experience: the chance to learn and play golf.

And they loved every minute of it.

“I have played golf since I was in college and have a passion for it and I wanted to find a program that would combine my experience of being a physical educator and passion for the game of golf to pass it along to kids,” said Dan Anderson, a former physical education teacher at the school. “In my eyes it is not only important to introduce kids to the game because it is a lot of fun and a challenge, but it also teaches great character values such as honesty, integrity, communication, overcoming challenges, problem solving skills and being physically active.”

Anderson ran a SNAG program for all 200 third, fourth and fifth grade students during one of the physical education units and a Hook A Kid On Golf Tee Level Clinic for 10 students – six boys and four girls – that were interested in learning more about the game.

The SNAG program took place at the school while the Tee Level Clinic was conducted at the school as well as at a couple of nearby golf courses.

“I wanted to expose the students to different parts of the game as well as facilities so they can learn that every facility and course poses a different challenge,” Anderson said. “During the week we ran the Tee Level Clinic I heard nothing but positive remarks from both the kids and parents. The students really enjoyed that the clinic was hosted at different locations and the activities were different each day so they did not get bored with it.”

Anderson noticed right away how popular the program was with the kids.

“Their eyes would light up each time they hit the ball into the air or when they were able to sink a putt,” he said. “The parents enjoyed the idea of the students being able to be active over the summer months as well as it can be an activity the entire family could participate in. One other thing the students absolutely loved was the idea of them being able to keep and have their own set of golf clubs that they can continue to practice their skills with rather than it be a clinic they go to once and forget about because they didn’t have the proper equipment to continue.”



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Based on how successful the program was at Medinah, Anderson strongly encourages other schools to look at conducting the Hook A Kid On Golf program, too.

“I feel the character values it teaches the kids is just the start and foundation of helping kids learn social skills,” he said. “With me being a physical educator, I feel it is also such a great game and program for schools to run to get and keep kids active. I can only think of positives that can come from running a program like a SNAG or Tee Level Clinic and what that could do for a school or community. It is programs like this that allows the students to be inspired to try new things as well as challenge them in many different facets, which only makes for better students, citizens and

productive members of society.”

While Anderson has moved to Arizona, he hopes he has laid the foundation for future students at Medinah to have the chance to learn and play golf through the Hook A Kid On Golf program.

“I passed along the information to the physical education teacher that has taken my place to hopefully continue to run the SNAG program as one of the units the students learn each year and when they get comfortable with the program to continue to offer the Tee Level Clinics,” Anderson said. “There are so many benefits that I hope the program continues so future students can experience and develop a love for golf.”

Atlanta Pro Duffers teaching golf skills and life values through Hook A Kid On Golf

Since 1996 the Atlanta Pro Duffers have been introducing underprivileged children to golf while preparing them for life, too.

The 2015 Hook A Kid On Golf Site of the Year recipient doesn't just teach driving and putting skills. It also emphasizes core values like integrity, confidence and perseverance to help youngsters become model citizens and lead productive lives.

“It's not just about playing the game – we're talking about getting them ready for life,” says James Jackson, a long-time member of the Atlanta Pro Duffers who has been overseeing the Hook A Kid On Golf program there for the past seven years. “What we want them to realize is that we aren't just talking about a game, we're talking about important values that are good for life and that are to be applied in their daily activities.”

The week-long introductory clinics have taken place at the John A. White Golf Course in Southwest Atlanta since 1999.

“I like being involved with this program because I love the way the kids respond to someone taking an interest in them,” Jackson says. “A lot of these kids are coming from homes where they might not get that kind of attention. Many of them are coming from single-parent homes where the parent is a female. So when men are working with them they get to see men modeling the right type of behavior and I really like to see them

respond to that, and the kids appreciate that too.”

At the start of the week the kids are introduced to the core values, and there's a poster at the course listing them too so the participants are continually reminded of their importance. The core values are: confidence, perseverance, honesty, integrity, judgment, courtesy, sportsmanship, respect and responsibility.

During the program the children are also required to write definitions of these core value words and write sentences using these words. Points are awarded for how well they do and the best ones are highlighted during the awards ceremony at the end of the week.

At the conclusion of the clinic the Atlanta Pro Duffers host a 3-hole tournament to give the kids a chance to put their new skills to the test on the course. They double the par for each hole to give the kids a better chance of earning a par, so a par-3 hole is a par-6, for example.

“The kids get really excited about that,” says Jackson. “We use this tournament as a carrot in trying to get them to concentrate on the skills we are teaching from Day One by letting them know that this is going to be of value to them when they are in the tournament at the end of the week.”

The festivities on the last day also include a putting contest, where the top three finishers are recognized. The Duffers also select one youngster



from each of the four teams that the kids are broken into to receive a Most Improved award based on their performance throughout the week of the clinic.

“We try to give every child a chance to be successful,” Jackson says.

Parents come out to support the kids and walk along with them. Also adding to the excitement of the day is that club members serve as caddies for the kids to help them out and keep play moving. After the rounds are complete the participants are treated to lunch and awards are given out to the top three finishers, as well as to those kids who excelled in the core values writing portion of the clinic.

“We try to work with all socio-economic levels and races of young people,” Jackson says. “Golf gives them another option. Their mindset

is football, basketball, baseball. They don’t think long-term and golf is a life-long sport that they can play and even incorporate their family with it, both male and female. So we think it has some real life-long value.”

Thirty-one kids participated in this year’s program, which featured golf instruction from head professional Bill Lewis, who has worked with the kids since 1999.

About 40 members of the Atlanta Pro Duffers also came out during the week to assist with the program. The organization strives to promote and encourage interest in golf as well as civic and charitable activities.

“We’re trying to give back to the youth in the community and in the city,” Jackson said.

They’re clearly doing a great job.

Aiken (S.C.) Junior Sports Association shares fundraising insight for Hook A Kid On Golf clinics

The Aiken Junior Sports Association in South Carolina has offered Hook A Kid On Golf clinics for 14 years, providing the experience of golf to more than 2,000 children who may have never played the game otherwise.

A key to their long-term success rests with the deep ties they have created within the community. Attention to fundraising from civic clubs, local businesses and other organizations enabled them to raise \$14,000 for this year’s Hook A Kid On Golf clinics and underwrite two-thirds of the costs to run the clinics.

Participants pay \$50 for a week-long Hook A Kid On Golf clinic. The association offers needs-based scholarships, allowing every child who wants to learn the game of golf an opportunity to do so.

Joe Spencer, president of the Aiken Junior Sports Association, says that their approach to securing funds from local businesses and organizations has developed over time.

“We follow a multi-tiered approach which has evolved over the years,” he said. “We started with funds contributed in memory of a local excellent golfer who wished to create an opportunity for kids to experience golf. The emphasis was to be on kids who would not normally have access to play golf. After the first year of conducting clinics at two golf clubs – at no charge to the kids – we used the experience the next year to showcase the program and expanded to five clinics. We approached members at one of the golf clubs where we were well known at and received many personal contributions in the range of \$100 to \$150. We also approached local civic clubs, the city parks and



recreation department and a few local businesses. We subsequently received grants from the South Carolina Junior Golf Foundation.”

Spencer says that most of these individuals, civic clubs and businesses have continued to support the program over the past 14 years.

“Businesses and organizations can see the type of kids we get involved and the positive experience they have during the week of the clinic,” Spencer

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said. “The organizations are seen as sponsors of a wholesome activity for kids where they are not only taught golf skills but important lessons for their future life. The sponsors are seen as good community organizations interested in the well-being of local kids.”

Personal contact has been important to the Aiken Junior Sports Association’s relationship-building strategy. Every potential contributor receives a personally addressed letter that details the program, information on the participants and cost per child. In addition, contributors receive a hand-written thank you note that shows appreciation for their donation.

Although most of their financial support comes from local companies and



organizations, the Aiken Junior Sports Association also receives funds from the South Carolina Junior Golf Foundation and the Palmetto Amateur and Heritage Classic Foundation.

“It is important to support your program from multiple sources,” Spencer said. “Changes in economic climate and available funds from foundations will shift with time. Volunteer support during the clinics

spreads the word about the program and generates contributions from other groups such as men’s and women’s golf associations. Talks at civic clubs also can be useful as well as publicity in local newspapers and television coverage. Newspapers and television stations love to showcase positive activities with kids.”

Hook A Kid On Golf clinics

Youngsters who participate in Hook A Kid On Golf clinics in two Alaskan cities are able to tee it up for a week of fun, learning and lifetime memories all at no cost, thanks to the generous support of the local communities there.

“None of the kids in the clinics pay anything,” says Bob Sizemore, who has been running incredibly successful Tee Level Clinics in Kenai and Soldotna since 2005. “I like junior golf and the whole purpose of the program is to initiate kids into the game.”

In Kenai, that initiation to the game has been made easier by the likes of the Kenai Golf Association, local businesses and private individuals who have stepped forward to offset the entire cost of participating; and in Soldotna children have been able to go through the program for free there as well thanks to the Birch Ridge Golf Association and a private individual who has lent financial support.

And the giving doesn’t stop there. Once children complete the HAKOG program both local golf courses set aside one morning each week where the kids can come out and play a round to work on their newly learned skills – again at no cost.

“It’s a great set up for the kids,” Sizemore says. “And a lot of times our senior golfers will partner up with the kids and take them out.”

It’s easy to see why the programs have become so popular that there is a waiting list to get into them.

“We operate all three programs on a lottery basis because we get so many applicants,” says Sizemore, who also conducts a HAKOG clinic in New Rockford, N.D., every year.

This past summer 24 kids participated in each of the clinics in Kenai and Soldotna while 16 learned golf skills, rules and etiquette at the clinic in New Rockford.

“It’s not just me,” Sizemore says of the work involved to put on successful clinics that the kids love. “It’s the instructors and all the people behind the scenes that put these on.”

At Soldotna, three certified PGA teaching professionals share their expertise with the kids. “They’re just super guys who know the game so to have three professionals at a nine-hole course in a town of about 5,000 is pretty unique,” Sizemore says.

And in Kenai, along with a pair of certified teaching professionals who work with the kids the program has flourished thanks to a large group of retired teachers who volunteer their time to assist.

“Everybody has a good time with it,” Sizemore says. “It’s fun to do just because the kids have such a good time and it’s fun to see the progression with these kids. They come out and for the most part they haven’t done anything with golf so it’s fun to see the progression from day to day after they’ve been hitting balls all week and learning the technicalities of the golf swing.”

The week-long clinics culminate with a fun day both on and off the course. The kids are treated to a mini tournament on the course while their parents walk along with them to watch them in action. Afterward, there is a picnic and graduation ceremony to congratulate the kids on completing the clinic.

“I make graduation certificates for the kids and we make a big deal about it,” Sizemore says. “We really enjoy working with the kids and all the parents say it’s a great program. Everyone has a great time.”

Hook A Kid On Golf summer program in Carbondale, Ill.

The majority of the children who participated in the Hook A Kid On Golf program this summer in Carbondale, Ill., did so at no cost – thanks to the tireless efforts of Michael Day and dedicated volunteers in the community.

“It’s getting tougher and tougher to get funding,” says Day, who has been involved with the HAKOG program for nearly two decades and is the head golf professional at Hickory Ridge Golf Course, as well as its manager of golf operations. “But if one funding source kind of dies on you then you just have to get out there and beat the bushes some more.”

Those relentless efforts paid dividends, as Day estimates that 80 percent of this year’s participants were able to participate at no cost.

Thanks to local donors and generous contributions from a foundation, coupled with the Carbondale Park District’s support, Day and his group provided another fun-filled week-long clinic for children in the community.

“One of our parameters is if a child is eligible for the free lunch program at school then they are eligible for this program absolutely free,” Day says. “We tie it to the schools to make sure we do get kids involved in golf and the message we are trying to bring.”

And that message is delivered through an impressive line-up of guests that Day sets up throughout the week of the clinic.

Police officers come out to speak to the kids. “They share a very important message with the kids about choices and decisions and the consequences when we don’t make the right decisions,” Day says. He also has members of the Carbondale Fire Department come out and even local elementary school principals.

“I really try to tie into the elementary schools and make sure that I get a principal out here because that’s a face that a lot of these kids are going to recognize,” he says.

And of course one of the highlights of the week is when the golf course superintendent brings out some of the equipment that they use to maintain the course. “They absolutely love that,” Day says.



For Day, his passion for the program never wavers as every year provides those special moments of connecting with kids and providing them with opportunities that they will treasure for the rest of their lives.

“The most rewarding part, and it never gets old, is when the kids are able to take their clubs home at the end of the week and you see the excitement and the looks on their faces,” he says. “But more so than that, most of the time they come up and give you a hug, and if that doesn’t melt you then you are in the wrong business. It just touches your heart.”

And clearly, the HAKOG program has touched the lives of countless children in Carbondale, and will continue doing so.

Hook A Kid On Golf National Program Overview



Aiken Junior Sports Association, Aiken, SC
 Ajo Youth Sports, Ajo, AZ
 Atlanta Pro-Duffers, Atlanta, GA
 Birch Ridge Golf Course, Soldotna, AK
 Boca West Foundation, Boca Raton, FL
 Carbondale Park District, Carbondale, IL
 Caro Moose Lodge, Bad Axe, MI
 Cascades Golf Course, Bloomington, IL
 Cherry Point MCCS Youth Sports, Cherry Point, NC
 Chicago Roadkings Golf Club, Chicago, IL
 City of Galesburg, Galesburg, IL
 City of Tempe Recreation Department, Tempe, AZ
 Colchester Parks and Recreation, Colchester, VT
 Dayton Ridge Golf Club, Ottawa, IL
 Derby Recreation Commission, Derby, KS
 DuPage AME Church, Naperville, IL
 Elks Lodge #1376, Ponderay, ID

Evergreen Park Police Department, Evergreen Park, IL
 Flint River Golf Course, Albany, GA
 Fon Du Lac Park District Junior Golf, Washington, IL
 Golf Tech, Urbana, IL
 Isle of Wight, Carrollton, VA
 Kenai Golf Association, Kenai, AK
 King George Parks and Recreation, King George, VA
 Kiwanis and CYI, Dillon, MT
 Lakeside Golf Course, Gladwin, MI
 Loudoun County, Leesburg, VA
 MCAGCC Youth Sports, Twentynine Palms, CA
 Medinah School District #11, Medinah, IL
 New Horizon Steel, Chicago, IL
 New Rockford Golf Club, New Rockford, ND
 Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL
 Palmer Golf Course, Palmer, AK
 Peoria Park District, Peoria, IL

Pine Hills Golf Club, Ottawa, IL
 PLCCA, Maywood, IL
 Richmond Parks and Recreation, Richmond, VA
 Ruston Parks and Recreation, Ruston, LA
 School District 159, Matteson, IL
 Shelbyville Parks and Recreation, Shelbyville, IN
 Shenandoah County Parks and Recreation, Woodstock, VA
 South Suburban Home School and Gym Group, Chicago Heights, IL
 Stanton Community Center, Annapolis, MD
 Suffolk Parks and Recreation, Suffolk, VA
 Town of Essex, Essex Junction, VT
 Town of Hamburg, Lakeview, NY
 Town of LeRoy, LeRoy, NY
 Town of Miami Lakes, Miami Lakes, FL
 Wichita Parks and Recreation, Wichita, KS
 YMCA at Waycross, Waycross, GA



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Meet The Staff

ANDY PARKER
Director
Youth Development

HEATHER LAFLAME
Programs Assistant
Youth Development

RYAN JOHNSON
Shipping Director
Youth Development



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