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# CLUB



## MANAGEMENT

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- Creative uses of technology fill member needs
- Clubs band together to support their communities

**SPECIAL EDITION: COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

# How clubs adapted



**The club world will be different in the wake of the pandemic, but club managers have received support and creative ideas from fellow CMAA members.**

# In time of need

Clubs across the nation band together to support their local communities during the pandemic.

By Robert J. Vasilak

The general managers of America's private clubs have always been supremely resourceful. So, it was all in a day's work when David Bachman, CCM, CCE, reached clear to China to acquire personal protective equipment (PPE) for hospitals in suburban Newark, N.J.

Bachman's quest required the generosity of Spring Brook Country Club's 400 members, the assistance of a florist in Oregon and the blessing of U.S. Customs. Yet in mid-April, Bachman, Spring Brook's GM, took possession of 7,000 desperately needed N95 respirators. He sent half of them to Morristown Medical Center and the other half to nearby Echo Lake Country Club, which passed them on to Trinitas Regional Medical Center.

The procurement of N95s was just one of the charitable endeavors Spring Brook undertook during the initial, stressful days of the coronavirus pandemic. Since late March, when COVID-19 began to put nearly intolerable burdens on New Jersey's health care industry, Spring Brook has delivered an estimated 500 meals and sandwiches, 2,000 bottles of water and hydrating drinks and, via Clif Bar & Co., 1,000 energy bars to Morristown's dedicated medical staffers.

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had needs that it couldn't satisfy," Bachman said. "We brought the two together."

Spring Brook's members were by no means alone in their concern for their neighbors' well-being. The pandemic may have turned the world inside out, but it has brought out the best in America's private clubs, which are helping keep hope alive in their communities like never before.

Many clubs have focused their attention on the doctors, nurses and other

health care professionals who are on the front lines of the battle. But clubs have also gone the extra mile to support police officers, firefighters and local workers who've lost their jobs. And just as importantly, they're looking out for their extended families: their own food & beverage staffers, caddies and other employees who've been financially squeezed by government-mandated stay-at-home orders.

In other words, America's clubs are reacting to the pandemic exactly as



they've done previously to hurricanes, wildfires, floods and other natural disasters. Despite closures and stay-at-home orders, they've engaged in individual and collaborative efforts to ensure that those who've been knocked down aren't knocked out.

"It's not what happens to you that matters," said Don Hunter, CCM, general manager of The Country Club of North Carolina. "It's what you do about it."

From New Jersey to California, private clubs have extended a helping hand to Americans whose lives have been affected by the coronavirus.

In Michigan, Pine Lake Country Club donated 400 dinners to workers at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit. Seawanhaka Corinthian Yacht Club on New York's Long Island sewed masks and contributed 200 meals a week to local hospital employees. Ozaukee Country Club (OCC) established the member-subsidized Ozaukee Cares Fund, which as of mid-April has contributed \$15,000 worth of meals to Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee.

"While OCC is a significant contributor to the Evans Scholars Foundation, we don't generally get involved in other specific charities, as our members donate to many causes on their own," said Jonathan Kruse, CCM, Ozaukee's general manager. "In this instance, however, we seized an opportunity to assist overburdened medical staffers while they continue to be on the front lines for us."

The list of good works goes on and on. The Country Club of North Carolina came to the rescue of Moore County's Meals on Wheels program, which was prevented from preparing daily meals for shut-ins because its kitchen was forced to close. Members of Tampa Yacht & Country Club, via a program called Feeding the Frontlines, purchased family-style dinners that were distributed to three Florida hospi-



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tals. Idle Hour Country Club delivered lunch to 24 fire stations in Lexington, Ky., and Northampton Country Club in Easton, Pa., fed staffers at the Anderson Campus of St. Luke's Hospital.

The Country Club of North Carolina's members united to support staffers whose jobs were threatened when the club was ordered to close. Building off a long-established neighbor-to-neighbor program, they preserved the jobs by adding a 20% markup to the club's pickup and delivery meals. In addition, a member persuaded McCall Farms, a major U.S. food distributor, to donate a pallet of canned vegetables — some 4,400 cans — to the club's employees and to the operators of a local food bank.

Similarly, Old Town Club worked with Second Harvest Food Bank and other charitable groups to provide 300 meals a day for displaced hospitality workers in Winston-Salem, N.C.

In addition, members of several clubs have lent financial support to caddies, many of whom lost their jobs. In California, Larry David, the creator of "Seinfeld" and "Curb Your Enthusiasm," organized a relief effort that raised more than \$130,000 for Riviera Country Club's unemployed caddies, and a GoFundMe campaign begun by members of Wilshire Country Club raised more than \$117,000.

Spring Brook Country Club certainly wasn't alone in its search for PPE. The Club Foundation set out to encourage

clubs to check their supplies for N95 respirators, face shields, protective goggles and disinfectant wipes to donate to local hospitals.

Burton Ward, CCM, CCE, the Foundation’s chairman, effectively summed up the attitude of general managers everywhere in a letter to CMAA members. “The club industry has always banded together in times of crisis,” he wrote, “and I know that today will not be any different.”

Spring Brook’s experience during the pandemic illustrates how small acts of kindness can have large, serendipitous consequences.

The club’s food deliveries captured the attention of cable news, and within days Bachman had teamed up with golf star Ernie Els and Els’ manager, Rob Goulet, to create ClubsHELP, a foundation that aims to establish a permanent connection between private clubs and local health care providers. In a matter of weeks, dozens of independent clubs and private-club networks, including ClubCorp, Arcis Golf and Concert Golf Partners, had adopted medical facilities in their states, and Jack Nicklaus had joined the effort.



**Pine Lake Country Club donated 400 dinners to workers at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.**



and run with it.

In an effort led by Michael McCarthy, general manager of Addison Reserve Country Club, seven venues in South Florida created an Adopt a Hospital program to deliver dinners and desserts to beleaguered staffers at Delray Medical Center. St. Andrews Country Club made a \$4,000 donation — enough to provide 400 meals — to Boca Raton Regional Hospital. With support from the Florida Chapter of CMAA, the PGA’s South Florida Section and other organizations, St. Andrews hopes to expand its initiative to include other medical centers along Florida’s Treasure Coast.

The charitable endeavors being undertaken by clubs these days are greatly appreciated. Every single act of kindness should remind us that clubs are uniquely capable of acting as rapid-response teams that can make meaningful contributions to their communities.

“In a time of immense fear and need,

clubs are drawing us closer together, bringing us back to the feeling that we really are all in this together,” Hunter said. “We’re here to make things better.”

**To support The Club Foundation’s charitable efforts, visit [GetUsPPE.org](http://GetUsPPE.org). For additional information about ClubsHELP, visit [clubsHELP.org](http://clubsHELP.org).**



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“This is more than just members donating their time or money,” Bachman said. “Years from now, when disaster strikes somewhere, we’ll have a network in place that can be activated immediately.”

What’s more, other general managers have taken the ClubsHELP concept