

The Met Golfer

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EXTRA



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This page: The 10th hole at Country Club of Darien in Darien, Conn., which is ready for its spotlight as Ike host, August 10-11. See more on the 2020 MGA season on page 4.

A NATIONAL IMPACT

In the past several months, ClubsHELP, a 501(c)3 National Charitable Foundation, has paired hundreds of golf facilities with their local hospitals to support frontline workers battling the coronavirus pandemic with supplies

and food. We spoke with David Bachman, General Manager at Spring Brook Country Club, who shared his thoughts on how a grassroots effort quickly made strides to help communities nationwide.

Why was Spring Brook Country Club so willing to give back to its community and how did this start?

Six years ago, we made a charitable organization at Spring Brook. The membership was always willing to give back in any sort of organized fashion. When this pandemic began, we found out through members, especially hospital workers, were working 12-hour shifts. They were unable to get a break or go to the cafeteria to get something to eat. Sue McGahan, the current president of our Foundation, was looking to help the community. Our president had a one-on-one relationship with someone in the emergency room [at Morristown Medical Center] and we made 50 sandwiches for the hospital on Friday, March 27. By that Sunday, we delivered four truckloads of water, soda and Gatorade. That Sunday, I got a call from Fox and Friends hearing about what we were doing... On Wednesday, I received a call from Rob Goulet, who's the manager for Ernie Els. He got together with me and asked me if I wanted to take this nationwide.

How quickly did ClubsHELP change in just a few weeks?

We now represent over half of a million club members. Those relationships have helped us grow. We bought 7,000 N95 masks from a florist in Oregon. That was from a member who knew someone. We're already on our third version on our website [laughs]. We have over 12 people on our council across the country. Jack Nicklaus, Ernie Els and Annika Sorenstam helped put out statements. We have some backing.

How has this program helped strengthen the relationship between clubs and local communities?

You look at local sports arenas supporting charities but not to the extent that golf does. I think we as private clubs and golfers don't always do a great job of letting everyone know how generous we are. ClubsHELP is really putting a positive spin on golf and private membership.

Where do you see ClubsHELP moving forward after this?

This isn't just a COVID-19 drive. We're helping food banks. Whenever there's a natural disaster, we can now mobilize. We can get product to a hospital near that area in 24 hours and that's really the key. I see this a year or two from now helping a firehouse receive a new fire truck or continue supporting a nursing home. I see this as an ongoing enterprise.



From Morristown, N.J., Spring Brook has led the charge in uniting a charitable movement by golf clubs across the country.



Following ClubsHELP's encouragement for clubs to adopt local hospitals, members from Beacon Hill Country Club in Atlantic Highlands, N.J., prepare donations for nearby Riverview Medical Center.