

REACH for the stars

PGA REACH WAS BEGUN AS AN INITIATIVE TO BENEFIT YOUTHS IN THE ST. LOUIS AREA, BUT WITH THE HELP OF PGA OF AMERICA CHAMPIONSHIPS, IT WILL BE PROMOTED AND EXPANDED NATIONWIDE

BY BOB DENNEY

The city of St. Louis and Bellerive Country Club's combined support for hosting a major championship is a story that extends beyond the perimeter of a proud golf facility and its membership. In March 2011, a community-wide initiative, PGA REACH, was born in the metropolitan area that is the "Gateway to the West."

A coalition of Bellerive Country Club members and the leadership of the Gateway PGA Foundation took a major step forward to effect meaningful change and improve lives in the St. Louis area through the game of golf. The PGA of America elected to adopt PGA REACH — the acronym stands for Recreation, Education, Awareness, Community and Health — as a national



program, with similar models affiliated at future Championship sites nationwide.

In 2010, the Gateway PGA Foundation added an important leader to the mix, naming St. Louis Cardinals Hall of Fame shortstop Ozzie Smith, one of the city's most

Championship coming to Bellerive. What is exciting to me is that we are holding their attention because of the early impact we are having on at-risk youths."

Taking the helm of the Gateway PGA Foundation, says Smith, "is a responsibility to impact our

include adding a "relationship manager," enabling more youths to be a part of after-school activities, including a job training and education program. Urban K-Life strives to blend benefits of relationships and activities to measurably improve graduation rates.

"St. Louis is such a giving city," says Smith. "Time and again, St. Louis has proved that the community cares about the problems that we face. Early on, we illustrated to

The PGA that St. Louis was ready to help us in the PGA REACH effort. They have not let us down as seen by the new record hospitality sales for a Senior PGA Championship." Additionally, two local corporations, National Car Rental and Express Scripts, have directly impacted PGA REACH.

Bellerive will donate 10 percent of the proceeds from this week's Senior PGA Championship presented by KitchenAid directly to PGA REACH.

"The generosity of

Bellerive is yet another great example of giving back," says Smith.

"We are fortunate to have the 2018 PGA Championship at Bellerive," says Ed Glotzbach, Bellerive treasurer and the committee chair for PGA REACH. "By that time, we are hoping to have a permanent set of activities with an endowment to support them."

The day following the 74th Senior PGA Championship presented by KitchenAid, Bellerive Country Club will host "Play Like the Pros," with all proceeds benefiting PGA REACH. The post-Championship event allows amateur participants to compete from the same set of tees and hole positions as the world-class field of professionals. Based upon what has transpired in a short period, St. Louis already is filled with a proud subset of giving professionals on and off a golf course.

Bob Denney is the senior writer for The PGA of America.

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popular athletes, as its president. Smith brought immediate public awareness to a goal to measurably improve and advance opportunities for St. Louis area youths to succeed in life.

With an average high school graduation rate of 65 percent within greater St. Louis, PGA REACH drives forward "Beyond 18" for youths – beyond 18 years of age. Success will be measured in programs that have demonstrated a positive impact upon by increasing classroom attendance and graduation rates, enhancing the long-term health of young men and women through education, activities and recreational programs; and by improving career options available to youth.

"PGA REACH is resonating with the community, our outreach partners and, most importantly, the youths we are serving," says Smith. "We have gained the attention of our local golfing and business community with the Senior PGA

community through this global event. We have started something special in St. Louis and are very fortunate to have a philanthropic community that is known to rise to the occasion. We have identified a need that impacts us all."

PGA REACH partners include Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri, the Boys and Girls Club of Greater St. Louis and Urban K-Life. Two full sessions of the PGA Sports Academy programs have been completed at Boys and Girls Club of greater St. Louis.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri receives funding for a staff position to help implement ABCToday, intervention with youths experiencing medical issues that prevent them from fully attending school. The program is focusing on improving Attendance, Behavior and Classroom success measured through progress in reading and mathematics.

The needs of Urban K-Life