

Linda Gaudi, PGA
Country Club of Fairfax
Fairfax, Virginia

While it's evident that Linda's work experience is vast, it has been her time spent at Country Club of Fairfax that has given her the opportunity to inspire the future of golf through her development and support of youth programs. She coordinates three distinct programs at CCF and regularly supports Section youth programs like PGA Junior League Golf, Junior Interclub, and the MAPGA Junior Tour. Her ability to inspire and her motivation to teach have made her the deserving recipient of the 2014 Youth Player Development Award.

Linda Gaudi was born on June 24, 1958 to Paul and Dora Gaudi in Jeannette, Pennsylvania; only 30 minutes from Latrobe, Pa., the hometown of golf great Arnold Palmer. She has two sisters, Marcia and Doreen, who reside in Jeannette and one brother, Jerry, who lives in Baltimore. For 20 years, her father was the golf coach at Jeannette High School and when Linda was 12, he introduced her to the game that would inspire her to pursue a career filled with a lifetime of rewards.

Following high school, Linda ventured one hour north of Jeannette to Slippery Rock, Pa. where she attended and graduated from Slippery Rock University with a degree in business administration. Even though Slippery Rock did not have a women's golf team, Linda continued to play and keep her game intact while in college. She would even hit balls in an open field on campus. This practice paid off as she became the three-time women's club champion at Valley Green Golf Course near her hometown of Jeannette. A few years after college graduation, Linda focused again on her future in golf and made the decision to turn professional. She started by playing on mini-tours in the late 1980's, and worked as a Tour Official/Sales Representative for the Gold Coast Tour in Orangevale, California. She continued to hone-in on her game and earned a spot in the LPGA's 1991 Phar-Mor Classic. Later, she would return to the LPGA Tour to play in the 2000 and 2001 First Union Betsy King Classic.

Linda made her way back to Pennsylvania in 1992 to work for the Golf Club at Hidden Valley; starting as an assistant then earning the Co-Head Professional position. In 1993, she earned Class A status with the LPGA's Teaching and Club Professional division and took her talents to Nemaocolin Woodlands Golf Academy in Farmington, Penn. Following a one year stint at Nemaocolin, Linda moved south to Virginia and accepted an Assistant Professional position with her current place of employment, the Country Club of Fairfax (CCF). She became a PGA member in 1996 and is now the Director of Instruction at CCF. While working at CCF, she has coached the McLean High School Golf Team for two years, the George Mason University's Men's Golf Team for six years, and has been an instructor at the Every Body Golf School in Oakton, Va. since 1998.

Linda's role as Director of Instruction at CCF has made an impact on many young golfers and given them opportunities to challenge their abilities. On a Section level, she was one of four MAPGA Professionals who spear-headed the growth of PGA Junior League Golf (JLG). She hosted a team in 2012 and shared her experiences with colleagues to help grow the program from four teams in 2012 to 61 teams in 2013. As one of her three junior programs at CCF, Linda created a JLG JV Team at that would develop the skills of younger players who would eventually become members of the traveling JLG team.

The Country Club of Fairfax under Linda's guidance has also been an active participant in the Frank Emmett Junior Interclub for the past 20 years. The club has maintained teams for both the 9 and 18-hole divisions and Linda has served as the 9-hole Division Commissioner for the last two years.

At the club level, she runs three distinct junior golf programs. The first is the JLG JV team mentioned previously. The second is a weekly summer program for children ages 7-17 that incorporate not only golf instruction but also movement skills influenced by the PGA Sports Academy and the Titleist Performance Institute. As part of this program, Linda incorporates the CCF Cup that mimics the FedEx Cup of the PGA Tour. Students in the CCF Cup are awarded points for their skills, on-course conduct, and performance. A leaderboard is posted each week and winners are awarded prizes at the end of the season. Approximately 90 juniors participate in this program and each participant advances through the program utilizing the U.S. Kids Skills Testing booklet. To conclude the program, Linda coordinates a child-parent tournament and hosts a fun awards banquet.

Linda's third program, the CCF Golf Team, is designed for youth golfers who are more serious about the game and plan to play at a higher level; whether that is on their high school golf team or a college golf team. The team completed its third season at the end of 2013 and in that year, the program helped launch the careers of six players who either made their high school teams or elevated their games as members of a current team.

In her community, Linda started working with the golf teams at both Chantilly High School and Paul VI High School and assists with the Capital Area Golf Tour as a Tournament Director and Rules Official. A proud moment for Linda was seeing the progress of the players at Paul VI. They went from a 6-3 record in 2012 to winning their conference tournament and finishing third in the state of Virginia in 2013. The Chantilly Chargers also won their conference tournament and Linda helped four of the girls qualify for their Zone Qualifier.

Though this is her first MAPGA Award, Linda has been recognized by the LPGA and other golf organizations for her work on teaching and coaching. In 1999, she was awarded Professional of the Year by the LPGA's Northeast Section. The Northeast Section also recognized her for her coaching abilities with a Coach of the Year award in 2000 and 2005. For three years in a row (2010-2012), Linda made the honorable mention list for U.S. Kids Top 50 Kid Teachers.

Linda has constantly been a strong professional in growing the game of golf and is continually seeking ways to inspire others to get involved. She gives a sincere and honest effort to each individual and has a deep passion to see her students succeed. Her main goal is to make golf accessible to anyone who desires to learn and enjoy this wonderful life-long, life-teaching sport.