



University of Missouri

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Around the Columns

Making connections on the links

Golf fans may have noticed an overwhelming number of international up-and-comers on the global golf scene. That may be due, in part, to the sport's dwindling popularity among young people in the United States.

John Weston, BS Ag '78, MS '83, hopes the Columbia Golf Foundation can begin to reverse that trend here in mid-Missouri.

In 2009, after learning about the Joplin (Mo.) Golf Foundation's work to jumpstart the golf scene, he wondered, "why isn't Columbia doing this?" So he assembled a board of directors, researched similar, nearby organizations and landed a grant from the US Golf Foundation. Now the CoMo version is introducing youngsters to a game they might not otherwise have explored.

"It's a game for life," Weston says. "It's based on sportsmanship, courtesy, respect, integrity, calling rules on yourself, and it opens up an entire network of new relationships for people."

The nonprofit organization holds free clinics at local parks and golf courses. Events are available for children ages 7–15, and local golfers provide instruction, including Rock Bridge High School Coach Melissa Melahn, BA '01, M Ed '03, EdSp '06, and Mizzou junior Chris Johnson.

They even recruit from the local Boys and Girls Clubs and Big Brothers Big Sisters.



Youngsters from the Columbia area are learning to love golf at an early age thanks to the Columbia Golf Foundation. Photo courtesy of John Weston

“You don’t have to have a 40-inch vertical, you don’t have to run a 4.3 40 and you don’t have to throw a 98 mile-per-hour fastball,” Weston says. For more information, email columbiagolffoundation@gmail.com or call 573-356-7059.

Upcoming events:

April 29 — Columbia Golf Foundation fundraiser golf tournament at A.L. Gustin

April 30 — Evans Scholars caddy day at Old Hawthorne, proceeds go to CGF

June 6, 13, 20 and 27 — USGA free golf camp at L.A. Nickell golf course

June 28–30, July 5–7, July 12–14, July 19 — LPGA-sponsored girls golf camp at L.A. Nickell golf course.

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