

October 2025

Growth of the Game

Chair: Kelly Kuhlman and Player Development Coordinator/ PGA REACH Michigan Activities Director Madison Maurier recapped a few items:

Player Development Grant summaries are Due by December 1st. An email was sent this morning with the instruction and forms to complete your summary report. Please make sure to get your summaries in on time. This will impact whether you get a grant in 2026.

Grants were reformatted in 2025 to align with the 3 pillars of PGA REACH Michigan: Youth, Military, and Inclusion.

The amounts awarded for 2025 were:

2025 Junior Grants Awarded: \$30,400 (36 grants awarded)

2025 Inclusion Grants Awarded: \$11,750 (14 grants awarded)

2025 Military Grants Awarded: \$3,700 (4 grants awarded)

The Program of the Year Award recognizes members and their facilities with a program that has utilized a grant and made an impact on their community. The 3-step process was implemented this past year and culminated with the Award winners being recognized at the President's Dinner.

2024 Youth Program of the Year: Lynn Janson, PGA, The Legacy at Hastings

2024 Military (Adult) Program of the Year: JT Aude, PGA, Gaylord Country Club

The subcommittees within the Growth of the Game committee to help further implement and improve the committee and help with the foundation board in areas of need within our section.

Junior PGA Championships: Junior PGA Championships were held this year for the Girls at Bedford Valley Golf Course on June 18th-19th. 30 participants played with the overall Champion being Lillian O'Grady from Grand Rapids and runner-up Mia Melendez from Ann Arbor. For the Boys Championship, they played at Bedford Valley Golf Course on June 26th-27th. Despite weather delays and the cancellation of the second round, 106 participants competed, with Max VanderMolen of Richland being named the overall champion and AJ Gasper from Flushing as runner-up. All four individuals advanced to the National Junior PGA Championship on July 29 - August 1 at Birk Boilermaker Golf Complex in West Lafayette, IN. Max finished T9 with an overall score of 276 (-9) after four days of competition.

Drive Chip Putt: We hosted 16 local qualifiers and 2 sub-regionals with a record number of 1,520 juniors in attendance.

A big thank you to the staff at:

Bay Meadows Family Golf Course
Binder Park Golf Course
Boyne Mountain Resort
Currie Municipal Golf Course
Fox Hills Golf and Banquet Center
Harbor Shores Golf Club
Hawk Hollow Golf Course
Ferris State University Katke Golf Course

Milham Park Golf Club
Pheasant Run Golf Club
Rouge Park Golf Course
Salem Hills Golf Club
StoneWater Country Club
Twin Lakes Golf Club
Warwick Hills Golf & Country Club
White Lake Golf Club

A shoutout also goes to Amy Pollack at Boulder Creek Golf Club and Jeff Stalcup at The Orchards Golf Club for hosting Sub-Regionals.

Applications for host sites in the 2026-2027 season are now open and will close on November 7, 2025.

With all of your help and use of your facilities, our Drive, Chip and Putt program is able to be so successful! THANK YOU!

PGA Jr. League: Our Section Championship was hosted at Binder Park Golf Course on August 7-9. This year, we had a record number of 27 13u teams and seven 17u teams, each made up of 8 players.

Our 13u Champions were the team from the Flintstones League coached by PGA Professional Nick Korn. Our 17u Champions were the team from IMA Brookwood coached by PGA Professional Joe Simpson.

Both teams had an impressive showing at the Regional at Belmont Hills Country Club in St. Clairsville, OH, making it to the Semi-Finals.

The 13u team from Milham Park, coached by PGA Professional Dean Marks, also advanced to the Regional through the All-Star Play Day route and finished in 5th place.

PGA HOPE: In 2025, we hosted 48 sessions across 23 locations with nearly 500 Veterans becoming graduates! Thank you to the following locations for your unwavering support with PGA HOPE:

Auburn Hills
Battle Creek
Bay City
Bellaire
Belmont
Big Rapids
Comstock Park
Flint
Gaylord
Grand Haven
Grand Rapids
Harrison
Lansing
Livonia
Midland
Mount Pleasant
Pierson

Plymouth
Rochester
Royal Oak
Schoolcraft
Taylor
Troy

Two big events happened this fall with PGA HOPE:

PGA HOPE CUP was hosted on September 3rd at The Fortress with 17 professionals and their team of 4 PGA HOPE Graduates playing in an 18-hole scramble. John Sommerville's team won the 2025 PGA HOPE CUP. While the weather did not end the way that we hoped, the friendships and memories that were made were well worth it! Overall, 68 Veterans were part of the event making it a huge success.

Operation: Hero Challenge was hosted on September 18th at Bedford Valley with 41 teams (82 Veterans) participating. The teams competed in an 18-hole scramble along with a Drive, Chip and Putt skills competition, showcasing the skills they learned throughout their PGA HOPE session. Additionally, they were tasked with recruiting pledges to support their team, resulting in the PGA HOPE Graduates telling their story about their PGA HOPE journey and ultimately raising over \$21,000 for PGA HOPE Michigan.

Thank you to Kyle Martin at The Fortress and Dan Wilson at Bedford Valley for hosting our PGA HOPE post-program events this season!

The inaugural **Birdies Fore REACH** event occurred on October 7th at The Pines at Lake Isabella where we had 9 teams of 2 Michigan PGA Professionals and Associates participating in this 72-hole 2-person scramble. Our Professionals generated pledges for every birdie their team makes in this 72-hole event, raising both awareness and support for PGA REACH Michigan.

Thanks to the efforts of our PGA Professionals and the generosity of their donors, we raised over \$20,000. Special congratulations to Ryan Bayer and Tyler Kaptcia of Kent Country Club for being the top fundraisers of this year's event, bringing in over \$5,000.

Thank you to John Sommerville for hosting and generously donating the use of the course at The Pines at Lake Isabella!