

Pay to Play Paves Way Toward Goals

By Margaret Waage



L to R, Barista Bryan Nance, Dr. Diane Keen co-founder of Circle of Friends, Kaitie Griggs Coffee Shop Manager, are presented with a fundraiser check from Tom Cameron Cherokee Senior Softball Association Golf Tournament organizer, and Norm Thiem, Cherokee Senior Softball Association Commissioner from the 2022 Charity Golf Tournament June 23, 2022 event raised.

The Circle of Friends: Living With Purpose non-profit was one of two recipients of the 2022 Cherokee Senior Softball Association (CSSA) Charity Golf Tournament, which took place June 23rd at the Towne Lake Hills Golf Club.

The voluntary CSSA organization established in 1995, has held several charity events since its formation. According to their blog, the June tournament was its most successful ever, with 64 golfers of all ages who played with gusto and helped raise money for two charities, the Circle of Friends: Living With Purpose and the [Cherokee Family Violence Center](#) (CFVC) whose mission is to provide a variety of free services to domestic violence survivors and their families. CFVC seeks to enhance the safety of those impacted by intimate partner violence and empower victims while advocating for a community standard of zero tolerance for violence in the home.

CSSA organizer Tom Cameron said the charity events were initiated to include all CSSA members. "We had six different leagues at different times and days, it was a way to join all of our leagues for one day and get to know one another and promote fellowship amongst the group. We decided upon golf as we already have two softball seasons per year and golf is much more casual than softball."

Cameron said most of the CSSA outings have been on or around Veterans Day. "Each Veterans Day outing, we take the opportunity to introduce our veterans and the branch in which they served. In addition, they receive a ceremonial golf ball as a small token of our appreciation. Our next golf outing will be on November 10, 2022." CSSA is currently researching veteran outreach programs to benefit both male and female veterans.

The golf tournament's creative fundraising methods included mulligans for a fee. A mulligan for those who don't know is a 'do-over' swing when the first attempt didn't quite land on target. Since the purpose of the tournament was to benefit the selected organizations that work so passionately to help others, charging for a second try was a win-win for all with a net total of \$5,260.00 raised.

The Circle of Friends: Living With Purpose (COF) has a steadfast goal of raising enough money to purchase land in Cherokee County to build an inclusive community to fulfill three needs: socialization, supportive employment, and supportive affordable housing for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), older adults, and college-age students. These goals point to a larger societal need for community support.

The COF's co-founder and board chairperson Dr. Diane Keen saw firsthand the benefits of an intergenerational community from her research studies as a doctoral student and seeing her adopted son Haden work through some developmental delays and social challenges he faced. Haden experienced full inclusion through his involvement with Hickory Flat United Methodist Church's youth group.



L to R, Tom Cameron Cherokee Senior Softball Association Golf Tournament organizer, and Norm Thiem, Cherokee Senior Softball Association Commissioner look with Dr. Diane Keen, DNS, RN, CNE, and Co-Founder & Chairperson of the Circle of Friends non-profit, at the goals Circle of Friends has for the future.

Another goal for COF is to secure a second location to have their own coffee shop, “so that everyone has a place and that together we flourish.” The Circle of Friends Coffee Shop provides supportive employment by employing adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a rented spot located in “The Circuit” building, on the Chattahoochee Technical College campus in historic Downtown Woodstock, GA.

For COF’s history and upcoming events visit: <https://circleoffriendsinc.org>

For more information on the Cherokee Senior Softball Association visit:
<https://teampages.com/organizations/2042>