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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – DRAFT FOR REVIEW

**Freedom Golf Association Hosts Annual Golf Outing at Cog Hill June 9**

***Event highlights group’s achievements in making golf a reality for people with special needs***

*CHICAGO (April 2017)* – Illinois’ growing momentum in advancing the adaptive golf movement, which makes playing golf a reality for persons with special needs, will be on center stage Friday, June 9 at the Freedom Golf Association Annual Golf Outing at Cog Hill Golf & Country Club in Lemont, Illinois. The Annual Golf Outing teams up special needs golfers with able-bodied golfers and serves as an inspiring showcase for the great strides that have been made in the adaptive golf movement.

An estimated 200 people—50 foursomes—are expected to participate in this annual tournament, described as a “fun gathering of FGA friends” that is organized by the Freedom Golf Association. Able-bodied and special needs golfers from the Chicagoland area, age 10 and above, are encouraged to take part in this tournament, organized as a shotgun, best ball tournament played on Cog Hill’s #2 course (Ravines).

The tournament registration and warmup period runs from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. After announcements at 7:45 a.m., the shotgun tournament begins at 8 a.m. Following the tournament, a cocktail reception, awards ceremony and luncheon begin at approximately 2 p.m. If the weather is inclement and the tournament is cancelled, rain checks for play at Cog Hill will be distributed, or a new date will be announced at the event.

Individuals can join a foursome (four able-bodied golfers plus a special needs golfer) for $200; full foursome packages are available for $700. The reception, awards ceremony and luncheon is included in the price. Those who would like to cheer on the golfers from the gallery and attend the reception and lunch can reserve their seat for $50. There will be raffle awards, event awards, plus a live and silent auction.

Golf outing reservations can be made at <https://campscui.active.com/orgs/FreedomGolfAssociation#/selectSessions/1844101>.

Volunteers are welcome! Anyone who wishes to help run the tournament June 9 should call FGA at 630-455-6018.

**Understanding Adaptive Golf**

Adaptive golf is the term that encompasses a growing number of local, state and national initiatives to make golf available to persons who have physical, intellectual, or sensory challenged individuals. Included among these are “wounded veterans,” many of whom suffer from PTSD.

To make it possible for people with disabilities to play golf, a variety of adaptive strategies have been adopted. Among them are Single Rider carts for the non-ambulatory, adaptive golf clubs, golf courses that have been made more accessible, changes in rules as written by the USGA. Golf swings, grips, and prosthetics may be also needed to allow the disabled to play the game.

On a national level, the United States Adaptive Golf Alliance (USAGA) was formed in 2014. Presently there are 17 chapters across United States, speaking with one voice, and bringing adaptive golf to over 10,000 disabled individuals annually, of which approximately 23% are wounded veterans.

**An Opportunity for Sponsorship**

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are 57 million disabled persons in the country. 18 million of them want to play golf, according to the PGA Foundation. This makes supporting organizations such as Freedom Golf Association very attractive and rewarding for organizations, as there is a large number of potential golfers among those with special needs. The growth of the adaptive golf movement underscores the need for more funds to support these types of programs.

FGA receives support from thousands of donors. Major golf and sports-related companies and organizations who have supported FGA include FootJoy, Titleist, Bridgestone, Ahead, Under Armour, BMW Championship, Encompass Champions Tour, and the Tiger Woods Foundation. Corporate sponsors and partners include Hinsdale Bank & Trust, Molex, Comcast, AlphaGraphics, Rytech, Buddig, RIC, GE Capital and, ATI. Foundations that support FGA include Amvets, the First Non-profit Foundation, the National Alliance for Accessible Golf, Wadsworth Golf Charities Foundation, Kids Golf Foundation, and The First Tee of Greater Chicago. Golf facilities that partner with FGA include Cog Hill Golf & Country Club, Downers Grove Golf Club, Naperbrook Golf Course, Meadowlark Forest Preserve Golf, Rich Harvest Farms, White Pines Golf Dome, MQ’s Golf Dome, Buffalo Grove Golf & Sports Center, and River Bend Golf Club.

FGA works with corporations and organizations to tailor their support. FGA acknowledges sponsors through website exposure, media, newsletter and more. For more information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Sally Ruecking, **Director of Development and Personnel,** by [email](mailto:playgolf@fgagolf.org?subject=FGA%20sponsorship%20opportunities) or by telephone at 630-455-6018.

**About Freedom Golf Association**

Freedom Golf Association (FGA), a 501(C)3 non-profit organization, is the leading adaptive golf organization in Illinois and is a charter member of the United States Adaptive Golf Alliance. FGA was founded in July 2012 by Edmund (E.Q.) Sylvester. E.Q. is a director of the Western Golf Association (WGA), member of the United States Senior Golf Association (USSGA), and a triple amputee. FGA is dedicated to bringing joy and a sense of freedom to the special needs community through their inclusion in the game of golf.

FGA believes that all special needs individuals deserve a chance to accomplish the same things as any others do and work towards bringing a positive transformation to their lives. FGA contributes to the positive development of those with special needs through the magic of golf.

FGA works to assist individuals with disabilities in many ways:

* Provides professionally run instructional clinics and golf events
* Engages children, adults and veterans with special needs in FREE golf instruction with other classmates
* Conducts adaptive golf training workshops to increase the number of qualified golf coaches to instruct individuals with special needs
* Provides leadership and collaboration with nationally recognized organizations on how to expand/grow adaptive golf programs

Based on its growing understanding of the needs of disabled golfers, the FGA has developed a ground-breaking Adaptive Golf Enhancement Program™ that increases the golfing ability of special needs golfers. FGA’s golf coaches learn this six-step process, which helps them to better understand and enhance the capabilities of special needs golfers.

To assist coaches and special needs golfers in determining what adaptive measures would be most beneficial, FGA recently invested in what they call a “personal swing sensors and computerized program” to 1) measure the disabled golfer’s initial swing path and limitations; 2) develop an appropriate exercise program to improve flexibility and range of motion; and 3) to chart the golfer’s progress, using the initial swing measurements as a baseline.

In 2016, FGA provided more than 1,300 adaptive golf lessons. In the same year, 110 special needs golfers went out and played on the course. Ten individuals became trained FGA Adaptive Golf Coaches, growing the total number to 42.

79 cents out of every dollar received goes to FGA’s special needs golf programs and events. FGA has helped 40 Chicagoland courses become accessible to the disabled community.

For more information about the Freedom Golf Association, please visit the official website at [www.fgagolf.org](http://www.fgagolf.org). Contact FGA by phone at 855-342-4465 or 630-455-6018, or by email at [playgolf@fgagolf.org](mailto:playgolf@fgagolf.org). Donations to Freedom Golf Association can be made at [www.fgagolf.org/donate.html](http://www.fgagolf.org/donate.html).

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