

Mercy Circle's Irish Classic: a new tradition of support

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Mercy Circle's Irish Classic presenting sponsor Bob Miller, president, Jan-Pro Franchise Development for Northern Illinois (left), checks in with Tom Ramsden, development director of the senior-living community, to talk about plans to raise funds at Mercy Circle's golf outing on Monday, Sept. 22, at Ridge Country Club. (photo by Marc Monaghan)

Chicago doesn't lack for traditions. But, there's always room for one more.

On Monday, Sept. 22, Mercy Circle will sponsor its first "Irish Classic" golf tournament at the Ridge Country Club in Beverly. The daylong event "aims to become a South Side tradition," in the words of Mercy Circle's director of development Tom Ramsden.

The event takes place "halfway to St. Patrick's Day." And while there won't be a literal pot of gold at the 18th green, Ramsden aims for this year's outing to net \$50,000, with 90 to 100 golfers in attendance. Non-golfers also are invited to purchase tickets to attend the post-tourney dinner.



"There's still time for golfers to reserve their place and for sponsors to support our benefit event," said Ramsden, who can be reached at (773) 253-3621. To register or to learn more, visit mercycircle.org/events.

While previous golf outings have also benefited Mercy Circle, new this year is a hole-in-one "shootout" in which several participants will have the chance to win a golf trip for four to top golf courses in Southwest Ireland. "Five randomly selected golfers will each get to take one swing on the 18th green—it's about 165 yards—which can be watched from the clubhouse," Ramsden said.

"We're very blessed to have the tournament right here in our neighborhood. Ridge Country Club is a well-maintained course, challenging but fair," said Ramsden of the nearly 125-year-old club. "A lot of people would love to play Ridge, but that's not easy, because it's a private club. So this gives area residents that chance."

Ramsden christened the event the Irish Classic to specifically honor the Sisters of Mercy, founded in Dublin in 1831. His mother lived for 18 months in Mercy Circle's memory care community, Baggot Street, which gets its name from the address of the first House of Mercy, established in 1824 in Dublin.

"My siblings and I were so very grateful for the service and loving care that she received here," he explained. Having seen the Baggot Street staff in action, Ramsden jumped at the chance to become Mercy Circle's new development director, after a career spent raising money for highly regarded Catholic high schools.

He was drawn to the field by his own experience growing up. Ramsden's family "received a lot of emotional support and guidance" from the Sisters of Mercy, the priests at St. Barnabas and the Marist Brothers when he and his brother attended Marist High.

"Now," he added, "I'm fortunate to make a living by giving back."

Registration for the Irish Classic opens at 11:00am on Monday, Sept. 22, followed by lunch and then a shotgun start at 1 p.m. Cocktails and dinner begin at 5 p.m.

About Mercy Circle

Mercy Circle is a not-for-profit senior living community with a no-entrance-fee policy. Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, it is the only faith-based retirement community in the Southwest sector of Chicago. Mercy Circle offers spacious residences for all levels of care, along with thoughtful amenities, life enrichment activities, Mass and other religious services and programs, and social opportunities.

For more information or to schedule a private appointment, call (773) 253-3600 or visit MercyCircle.org.