

Duo hopes to put 600 golfers through course in 1 day

Event could break record while raising money for charity

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

Bryan Dearsley and Jim Darlington want to set the record straight and they want to see it go into the Guinness Book of World Records.

The two Barrie residents will set out to make history July 11 when they launch what they hope is a world record golf event at Angus Glen Golf Club in Unionville.

The pair will attempt to have the most number of golfers play on a single 18-hole course in one day.

The existing record for the greatest number of golfers completing a round on the same course on the same day, on foot, is 491, set in St. Andrews, Scotland June 8, 2003. Mr. Dearsley and Mr. Darlington are aiming for 600.

Besides the notoriety, they are doing it to help Mercy Ships Canada, a global charity operating hospital ships serving the world's neediest countries.

In particular, they want to raise funds and awareness for the Africa Mercy, the largest non-governmental hospital ship in the world. It's being renovated in Newcastle, England.

The Africa Mercy ship has provided aid to Honduras, Jamaica, Madagascar, Gambia, South

Africa, and many more nations, offering free medical care.

Staff assist locals with cataract, orthopedic and cleft-lip and palate operations, as well as other facial disfigurements.

This ship is the largest of its kind with a length of 501 feet and a weight of 16,000 tonnes. A crew of 474 volunteers lives on board with a 78-bed hospital featuring an intensive care unit and six operating rooms.

Their goal is to help one million people a year.

A fellow wants to fly in from California to play so he can win our prize for the farthest distance travelled.

"This unique event will do just that and will provide golfers with a great tale to tell for years to come," Mercy Ships Canada spokesperson Lorraine McDonald said.

The event was originally slated for Rolling Hills Golf Club in Gormley, but was switched to Angus Glen, which played host to the 2001 Canadian Women's Open and 2002 Canadian Open, due to the amount of positive feedback from Markham individuals and corporate sponsors.

"Bringing the event to Markham was, in the end, an easy decision to make. We sought advice from corporate sponsors

on board from Markham, as well as the Markham Board of Trade, and everything just seemed to fall into place," Mr. Dearsley said.

Enthusiasm generated by Angus Glen vice-president Kevin Thistle was another factor in the decision.

"As recently as last week it was suggested to us that Kevin wanted to talk about the possibility of holding any future attempts at his facility," Mr. Dearsley recalled.

"I spoke to him and we arranged to meet. Bolstered by Kevin's enthusiasm and the excellent reputation of Angus Glen, we made the decision to make the change."

The Scottish record holders are attempting to rewrite their record in mid-June. Because of this, Mr. Dearsley and Mr. Darlington elected to wait until July to see what they had to beat.

Potential participants must raise at least \$500 to take part

"But it's a tremendous cause, as funds will help ready the Africa Mercy provide hope and healing to an additional 450,000 of the world's neediest populations each year," Ms McDonald said.

To date, Mr. Dearsley said the response has been tremendous.

"A fellow wants to fly in from California to play so he can win our prize for the farthest distance travelled," he noted.

For further information, log on to: www.mercygolf.com

—With files from Elizabeth Koning



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Volunteers and participants, including Ron Kyle (rear) and Tren Kilner and Thanh Campbell (front), gathered to promote a giant fundraising event in July at Angus Glen Golf Club in Unionville. With them is Marilyn Meyers at the wheel of one of the golf prizes, a Mini Cooper. Funds raised from the potential record-setting golf day go to Mercy Ships, a global charity operating hospital ships serving needy countries.

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