



DOUG WAGNER, RON KISHONY, DOUG DURBIN, JOHN DURBIN, TOM DURBIN, AND DAVID SUNDHEIM

GOLFING FOR GOOD

TEXT BY JENNA SCHUBERT
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Polish your golf clubs and practice your swing because the 28th Annual Lambs Farm Golf Day is quickly approaching. The golf outing, which will take place on July 17, is the largest fund-raiser of the year for Lambs Farm, a not-for-profit organization in Libertyville that provides housing and jobs for more than 250 people with developmental disabilities. The event has become an important and meaningful opportunity for many local people, including Doug Durbin, whose brother, Tom, lives and works at Lambs Farm. This year marks Doug's fourth year of serving on the Golf Day planning committee. "I see it as a huge opportunity to reach out to people and groups that I have influence with—to not only make them aware of how Lambs Farm has changed my family's life, but, more importantly, to make them aware of the impact that Lambs is having on the participants of their program," Doug says.

Tom Durbin has worked at Lambs Farm for nearly 20 years and has lived in the program's housing for about three years. Like many of Lambs Farm's residents, Tom leads a very busy and fulfilling social life (which includes membership on eight of the farm's nine Special Olympics teams). Over the years, Doug has noticed that one of the benefits for the residents is the opportunity to lead independent lives while still playing important and productive roles in the community. "They're doing things such as banking, going shopping, cooking together, doing chores around the group home, and providing for one another," Doug says. "Tom is allowed to live a life that is dignified, and he's contributing and making a difference in other people's lives. It gives him a sense of purpose."

Last year, Lambs Farm celebrated its 50th anniversary. When it was founded in downtown Chicago in 1961, it was the first non-shelter business in the United States to employ people with developmental disabilities. Today, the farm serves about 250 people through residential services, vocational services, and social-recreational activities. The campus contains 11 housing opportunities, five businesses, and a full-sized gymnasium. Lambs Farm also owns and operates six off-campus houses.

With its array of professional, social, and recreational opportunities, Lambs Farm offers a unique life for each of its participants. "Our new tagline is 'Where People Grow,'" says Lambs Farm President and CEO Dianne Yaconetti. "So what we try to do at Lambs Farm is to find out what it is that our participants want to do with their lives, and then we work with them to make it happen. There are no two people at Lambs Farm who have the same life."

Another beneficial aspect of the environment at Lambs Farm is the opportunity for visitors to get to know the residents. "Our participants simply want to be treated with dignity and respect, just like the rest of us. And as simple as that sounds, it isn't always the case today," Dianne says. "So that's one of the reasons why we have this campus setting and business community in the front where people can work—because not only does it expand the knowledge of the general public about people with developmental disabilities, but it also gives our people another opportunity to interact with them and tell them about their lives."

Visitors can also interact with some of Lambs Farm's participants at the annual Golf Day, as members of the farm's own Special Olympics Golf Team will play alongside the other golfers. This year's event will begin with the first shotgun at 7:30 a.m., followed by lunch and Dianne's introduction of the Special Olympics golfers, and a second shotgun at 12:45 p.m. The day will then close with a cocktail reception, and all proceeds from the event will go to Lambs Farm's programs. Though the golf itself will be a source of enjoyment, perhaps the best part of the day will be the chance to learn about the productive and full lives that Lambs Farm participants lead. As Doug says of Tom, "He could not be happier."

The 28th Annual Lambs Farm Golf Day is on Tuesday, July 17, at the ThunderHawk Golf Club in Beach Park. Check-in for morning golfers is at 6:30 a.m., and check-in for afternoon golfers is at 10:45 a.m. The entry fee is \$400 for individuals or \$1,600 per foursome, with additional sponsorship opportunities available. For more information, contact Lambs Farm Director of Development Nikki Bonamarte at 847-990-3733, or visit lambsfarm.org.

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