

OCTOBER 2012

The
Legal
Issue

National Golf Course Owners Association

GOLF BUSINESS[®]

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HAVING
FUN**

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THE FORAY INTO COURSE OWNERSHIP
IS DRIVEN BY A LOVE AFFAIR WITH THE GAME**

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and spirit of the law

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Formalizing agreements
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Focus On the Family

When Palo Alto Hills Golf and Country Club in California undertook construction of a \$12 million fitness center more than two years ago, management viewed it as an opportunity to get serious about the club's commitment to families. To complement the host of new amenities, the club hired Courtney Rebel to fill the newly formed position of youth director.

"Targeting families is the wave of the future," says general manager Dirk Zander. "It's no longer dad golfing and building a pool for mom. You have to have something for every member of the family. Not just lip service. Real investment. Real action."

Rebel, a certified personal trainer who holds a bachelor's degree in

the year. As she set about staffing the new facility, Rebel also made sure everyone she brought in had experience working with children.

Becoming a kid-friendly haven hasn't been without its learning curves. To ensure the offerings are hitting the mark, Rebel surveys parents and kids alike about what they like (and don't like) about their programming. She also formed a youth committee of parents from the membership and solicits input from teenage members about their preferences.

"You have to be age-specific," Zander explains. "Remember that kids of one age aren't going to like an activity that kids of another age will." That's why the club now offers programs geared toward juniors in

four distinct categories: Tiny Tots (ages 2-5), Kool Kidz (ages 6-10), Tweens (ages 9-12) and Teens (ages 12-16).

By almost any measure, the investment is paying off. The club has added an average of 24 golf memberships and 25 social memberships during the past two years. What's more, 85 percent of new memberships from the past 18 months are comprised of families.

"Without getting into specific figures,

let's just say we wouldn't have reached those numbers without our financial commitment to families," Zander says. "You can't be afraid to invest if you're going to see a return. There are ways to do this right, and if you do, it can really increase your membership." —Jeff Barr

kinesiology, has certainly been active in changing the culture at Palo Alto since assuming the post. Her first order of business after joining the staff in October 2010 was to create a Family Guide, a booklet that includes programs and events for every member of the family—every month of



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