

# Daily Herald

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## If Angels in the Fairway is done, it turned out to be quite a run

Joe Aguilar

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Addressing another packed ballroom at the Grand Geneva Resort in Lake Geneva, Wis., perhaps for the final time, Larry Mix gave a program reminder.

Read it.

Keep it.

Bring home that 8"-by-5" program and thumb through all 30 pages of it.

"I want everyone to save their dinner programs tonight," Mix requested after another largely successful Angels in the Fairway golf outing on another heavenly day last Friday.

"I want everybody to remember what they've been associated with."

Sadly but understandably, the 10th annual Angels in the Fairway outing might have been the last one Larry and Patty Mix hosted — at least until Larry convinces his wife to put on another party for a few hundred of their family and friends.

Ten years ago, the Buffalo Grove couple lost their 3"-year-old son Joey, just six months after he was diagnosed with leukemia. A year later, the Mixes founded the Joey's Angels chapter of the Leukemia Research Foundation and hosted a golf outing, which was their way of honoring their son while also earning research dollars for LRF.

The inaugural Angels in the Fairway outing sold out. Mind you, that doesn't happen. The odds are better that each golfer in a Fairway foursome will hit his first tee shot in the fairway.

"In all the years I participated in golf outings and celebrity fund-raisers, I had never seen an outing that sold out the course for foursomes for the first year," said Andrew Givens, who had done charity golf outings for the American Kidney Fund.

Truth is, Givens, who had worked with Patty's mother for HBO and now works in marketing for ESPN, was sold that a first-year sell-out was possible.

"I wasn't surprised (at the sell-out) because I had an opportunity to see at the services (for Joey) how many individuals that had been touched by Joey," Givens said. "It was really the family, friends and the entire community coming together to support the cause."

A golf outing had taken flight, and the Angels in the Fairway would keep soaring.

The indefatigable husband-wife team of Larry and Patty Mix were on a mission.

In 10 years, they've raised \$1.3 million and change, and through amazingly hard work and dedication have accomplished more than anyone could have ever imagined.

They've inspired other chapters of LRF to hold golf outings for their main fundraising event, they've counseled and helped other families dealing with similar losses of a loved one, they've given people the drive to volunteer for other worthy causes.

Team Mix has even given people who have never played golf the inspiration to swing a club.

Tee it up for Joey's Angels and those JA-logo golf balls will fly high even for novice golfers.

"I don't know how many people have come up to me the last 10 years and told me they really didn't start playing golf until after they attended one of our golf outings," Larry said.

Joey's Angels has touched even those who have never touched a golf club.

Sprint, which has been a corporate sponsor for Angels in the Fairway for eight years, recently allowed 100 people to trial a new high-tech cell phone, with the opportunity to also go on-line and vote for their favorite charity.

Sprint customers said Joey's Angels has a nice ring to it.

Sprint presented Joey's Angels a check for \$25,000 for receiving the most votes in its contest, as it beat out four other charities, including Children's Memorial Hospital.

"It's totally amazing, the money they've raised and the great work that they've done," Givens said of Larry and Patty.

"Not only that, but the visibility that they've given to the research center for children's cancer, that's the most important thing."

Larry and Patty thought long and hard about a theme for this year's outing — they do nothing half-heartedly — and decided on "Mission Accomplished."

Read the program, which includes the names of hundreds of supporters of the cause, and you understand the impact Joey's Angels has had.

"If this was it (the last outing)," Larry said, "it was a great run. It was a great 10 years."

A perfect 10.

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