

Birdies on the Green golf tournament raises money for Irvine Nature Center



By **Jacob deNobel** · Contact Reporter

Community Times

MAY 4, 2016

Between eagles, birdies and the albatross, golf has always been a bird's game. For the fourth year, Irvine Nature Center will bring the relationship between our fine-feathered friends and the famous Scottish sport to the forefront with their annual Birdies on the Green fundraiser.

The event, held at Spring Valley Hunt Club golf course in Owings Mills on Tuesday, May 24, brings together more than 100 golfers for a day of sports, entertainment and educational opportunities.

The day will begin with a boxed lunch, before teams take to the golf course to shoot their 18 holes. According to Beth Lacey Gill, marketing coordinator with Irvine Nature Center, each hole on the course will feature facts and figures about a variety of birds from around the area and why they are so important to the region.

She said they wanted the golfers to have a sense of the kinds of animals they were preserving by taking part in the fundraiser. Laura Soder is the animal exhibit coordinator at Irvine Nature Center, and she works closely with the birds there. She said it's important to highlight the area's native birds, which are often overlooked by residents.

"These birds are facing the troubles of habitat loss, light pollution and being poisoned by pesticides," Soder said. "This gives an insight into the lives of these birds, to hopefully give people a greater appreciation for them. The more you know the more you care.

In addition to the educational signs, Irvine's red-tailed hawk, screech owl and barn owl will be present at the dinner after the event. Soder said these birds of prey are eye-catching because of their size and rarity.

"We like to highlight them because they are important in the web of life," Soder said. "They facing issues of being hit by cars and losing their

habitats. People don't often get the chance to see them in their own back yards."

Irvine Nature Center is a nonprofit environmental education center in Owings Mills. The center takes in more than 70,000 visitors a year, to explore the nature center, take part in a variety of outdoor activities and visit the animals housed on site. The site features 116 acres owned by the center, with an additional 1,200 acres of preserved conservation land where guests can visit, explore and see the wildlife in its natural habitat.

"Events like this end up funding our general operating support," Gill said. "It helps feed and care for our animal ambassadors here. It helps fund things like the school programs that allow for field trips here as well as our group and public programs as well. It keeps us open as a free community resource."

Last year Irvine was able to raise more than \$35,000 from the Birdies on the Green fundraiser, including registration fees and the post-game auction. Gill said auction items have been chosen yet, but in past years items have included golf trips to Fishers Island and Caves Valley.

After the game, golfers retire for a dinner and the awarding of prizes. Prizes will be awarded for players who shot a hole in one, the longest drive for men and women, the closest to the pin and prizes for the top four teams. Prizes include gift certificates to the Green Spring Valley Hunt Club.

Jacob.deNobel@carrollcountytimes.com

410-857-7890

[Twitter.com/Jacob_deNobel](https://twitter.com/Jacob_deNobel)

If You Go

What: Birdies on the Green

When: Check-in begins at noon. Tee time is at 1 p.m. Tuesday, May 24

Where: Green Spring Valley Hunt Club, 30 Greenspring Valley Road, Owings Mills

Cost: \$375, includes cart and all fees

For more information: Visit www.explorenature.org or call 443-738-9227.

Copyright © 2016, The Baltimore Sun

This article is related to: [Golf](#)