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## **In second year of event, Ascension Charity Classic surpasses inaugural fundraising total**

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The Ascension Charity Classic on Tuesday said it raised more than \$1 million in the second year of the PGA Tour Champions tournament.

The proceeds will go to various charitable organizations, mostly in north St. Louis County, including \$225,000 each to the tournament's



primary beneficiaries: Marygrove, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater St. Louis and Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis.

NATHAN RUBBELKE

Players line up their putts on the 17th hole at the Ascension Charity Classic.

The fundraising total for the event, held Sept. 5-11 at Norwood Hills Country Club in north St. Louis County, surpassed the total raised for the inaugural event in 2021. That tournament collected more than \$800,000, a figure that far surpassed organizers' initial projections.

“Our goal from the beginning has always been to make this the most charitable event on the PGA Tour Champions schedule and with the help of our amazing corporate partners and the St. Louis fans who’ve come out to support this event from day one, we’re exceeding all expectations,” Nick Ragone, executive vice president and chief marketing and communications officer for Ascension, a St. Louis-based Catholic nonprofit health system, said in a news release.

Other charities receiving funding include First Tee of Greater St. Louis and PGA REACH Gateway as part of the tournament's Legends Charity Challenge exhibition, which featured celebrity sports figures such as St. Louis Cardinals legend Ozzie Smith and St. Louis Blues head coach Craig Berube playing alongside famed golfers Lee Trevino and Nancy Lopez. First Tee received \$32,500 while PGA REACH Gateway took home \$30,000 from the Legends event.

This year's event also featured a new charity fundraiser, the RSM Putting Challenge, a nine-hole putting match that raised \$130,000. Recipient organizations were chosen by participating sponsors.

The team supporting Good Shepherd Children & Family Services won the \$10,000 prize, followed by Christian Family Services (\$7,000) and Little Bit Foundation (\$3,000). Other participating charities in the putting challenge were: Marygrove, Hawthorn School, Ranken Jordan, Operation Food Search, Ronald McDonald House of St. Louis, St. Louis Counseling, Make A Wish and Lafayette Industries.

This year's Ascension Charity Classic brings the event's total charitable donations to more than \$2 million, which includes \$225,000 provided to the event's main charities in 2020 despite the event being canceled that year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition to Ascension as the title sponsor, several St. Louis corporations backed the tournament. Other sponsors included Ferguson-based Emerson (NYSE: EMR) as the tournament's presenting sponsor and Maryland Heights-based World Wide Technology as presenting sponsor of Legends Charity Challenge.

Ascension also partnered with Daugherty Business Solutions to bring an Advocates Professional Golf Association Tour event to the region. The APGA Tour is a nonprofit that aims to support Black and other underrepresented golfers. It held a youth clinic during the tournament week at Glen Echo Country Club that featured APGA Tour professionals and area youth.

The 2023 Ascension Charity Classic will be held the week of Sept. 5-10 at Norwood Hills Country Club.

**Erik Siemers**

Editor

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