

## **Kids & Dad Founder's Golf Marathon**

### **A Personal Story:**

Golf has played a major part in my life and Father's Day makes me think even more about the game as part of my life. My father introduced me to the game at the age of 8. I lived close to a famous Toronto Golf Course called St. Andrew's and every spring I would sneak onto the course during March break and probably do irreparable harm to the greens. However it was a ritual.

At this time Don Valley Municipal Course was built (before the 401 existed- gives you my vintage) and my summers were spent playing at every opportunity for 50 cents per round + 5 cents for insurance.

I was a lucky youngster. My dad had returned from WWII after serving 4 years overseas. He had missed being dad to my older brother during those crucial early years and he was dedicated to giving me every opportunity (for better or worse).

He stopped playing when he and my mother decided to buy some Crown land and to erect a cottage. I moved my junior golf home to Uplands in Thornhill and enjoyed a wonderful, clearly spoilt adolescence.

As I grew older, married, had children and moved to Kitchener, golf remained a mainstay in my life.

Later on, my dad and I started meeting at the Georgetown Golf Club (half way) in mid-week and we spent many wonderful times together in his latter work years.

Golf provided the opportunity that was probably the most important happening in my post separation life. My son and I were struggling during his adolescent years and this became even more difficult during the early years of my family's separation. After a few years had passed of a hit and miss relationship I thought there were signs that we could rebuild our wounded relationship. I suggested a trip to Myrtle Beach, a five-day excursion.

To my son's credit, he agreed and off we went.

It was all I could hope for. We left our differences from the past behind, enjoyed our present and looked to the future.

I still remember the magic moment on the way home; my son and I looked at each other and gave each other a big hug. It was each of us saying silently that what was now important to each of us was to build on our love for each other and I suppose to forgive each other for what we each perceived as our grievances. They no longer mattered!

I have often written about those moments when you and your child are struggling. There are opportunities that come with risks, but they do happen. Our enjoyment of the game of golf facilitated an opportunity to breakdown unimportant obstacles and to connect as dad and child, whatever our ages.

As I attempt to do our Founder's Golf Marathon, I am so happy that my son is driving down from Sudbury to play the last round with me and to help his old man up the 18<sup>th</sup> hill at Elmira.

I believe that is what it is all about!

Barry Lillie