



Debbie Waitkus

By Susan Lied



The Midas Touch

Golf for Cause is an Arizona grown organization that offers a variety of programs—golf clinics, golf mentoring, business golf leagues, team building and even tournament consulting. CEO, founder and current president of Women in the Golf Industry (www.wigi.info), Debbie Waitkus, likes to say “we help others Turn Golf into Gold.®” What ‘gold’ means to each person can vary; anything from taking time for oneself, business development, being outdoors, giving to a charity, etc. Golf just happens to be the backdrop for all the programs but the emphasis is on fun and opportunity.

With an impressive list of clients, Golf for Cause has made an impact. Organizations like Arizona Commercial Real Estate Women, General Mills, The Hartford, Scottsdale Healthcare and the Thunderbird School of Global Management have all participated in the

cause. But the GFC focus is also on the individual woman who plays or wants to play.

For that, they offer events like Nine & Wine, which is an on-course golf mentoring program for new and returning golfers in a casual atmosphere. Each foursome has a seasoned golfer sharing their knowledge and encouragement. The emphasis is not on the golfer’s skill but rather to put their best effort forward. Once they are shown how to tee up the ball, where to stand, how to drive the cart and other basics of the game, they try to make contact with the ball. After that point, they are free to pick up the ball and drop it on the green to be able to putt with everyone else. After nine holes, the group retires to the clubhouse for a hosted happy hour.

Alongside Waitkus in her endeavor is Char Carson, a graduate of the Golf Academy of America and a member of the LPGA’s Teaching and Club Professionals. Char’s passion is to help others enrich their life through golf. Her teaching philosophy is to understand each student’s objectives (why you do want

to play golf?) and to develop a plan that makes learning to play a fun and comfortable experience. In addition to playing the game, Char believes it is important to develop the fundamentals of the swing.

When asked what she is doing to get women to the course, Waitkus responded, “The best way to get women to the course is to invite them! Help them understand that they’re welcome. One point I make to women is that we don’t need golf for networking with other women. We do that just fine over a cup of coffee, on the phone, on Facebook, shopping, etc. Where golf is powerful, especially in business, is by using it as a vehicle to network with men – to cross over. Golf is a venue in which our male counterparts can get to know us and see us in action. They can see that we’re strategic, respectful and credible – characteristics that transfer beautifully to the business environment.”

Consider this your invitation. For more information on Golf for Cause or the Nine and Wine program, visit www.golfforcause.com. 🏌️

