

July 7, 2016

Friends of Rotary,

When Bob Test became President of our club in **2005**, he placed me in charge of the club fund-raising (Club Service A) for the board of directors; we had no fund-raising programs in place. Due to increased security at the airport from the 9/11 attack, we lost the Shootout Drag Race and the Sunburn Grand Prix. With my connections to the Food & Beverage Industry, we developed the revival of Taste of Abilene (TOA) and a partnership with the Abilene Restaurant Association.

I had the idea in **2006** that our club should try to do something different with fund raising and look into disc golf as a club project. Disc golf's popularity with college attendees and educated adults from 18-35 led to my interest to get Rotary involved. Rotary International at the time said clubs should be aware of the aging club members and try to attract younger members. I sought to emulate the TOA idea with the local Abilene Disc Golf Association (ADGA) for an annual disc golf fund raiser. Initially, my plan was to raise money to help develop a "pro course" that would attract players and help create new business for Abilene and put our Rotary club in front of the demographic we were targeting to increase membership.

After a meeting with the City of Abilene's Community Services and Parks Director, Mike Hall, I was encouraged to put together a plan for approval from the Abilene Parks Board for the project. In **2007**, with the ADGA president, Jerry Kingston, we presented and were approved by the City Parks Board to move forward with the park expansion project. Together with the ADGA we executed the fund-raiser called the Cal Young Park Expansion Series in **2007** and **2008**.

In **2009**, I had the idea to tie our event into the Mayor's Council on Physical Fitness. Kayla Christianson served on that board and helped coordinate with the mayor. This would put us in front of more people and associate the event with the city. That year we had the first Mayor's Cup Disc Golf Tournament. We raised enough money to cover our costs to put on the tournament. (Approximately \$3,575.00 gross income) Total money raised with the ADGA as of **2011** was approximately \$11,000.

John Houck is well known in the Disc Golf (DG) community. He is a former world champion and now runs a variety of disc golf related businesses including disc manufacturing and disc golf equipment. He coordinates tournaments every year and also runs Houck Design which is his company that develops disc golf courses. DG enthusiast's respect and follow Houck designed courses for the challenging and unique attributes.

Disc golf course design is what led me to Houck. I first contacted him in 2006 to discuss course development. In early **2012** Rotary and the ADGA retained his services to help us raise funds to develop a course. The actual location of the course to be developed has been elusive; beginning with the Kirby Lake Dam then to Cal Young Park west of the creek. Finally, we began the approval process to develop a course at Lake Abilene inside the Abilene State Park (ASP) in 2012.

Now in 2016, we finally have the TPWD approval to construct the course at Lake Abilene. This has taken four years and many meetings with the local Rangers at the ASP and Texas State officials with the TPWD. John Houck began work at the park driving from his home in Austin, TX to the park to study and prepare requested documentation for the state of Texas. He has spent many hours and driven many miles over the past four years. During this time, he has been very motivated and always believed that this would make a great location for a popular professional disc golf course.

Once this installment is open to the public, our club will be able to continue hosting the annual Mayor's Cup at the course. Our club will help name the course and get top acknowledgement for bringing the course to Abilene. The proceeds from the tournament that Rotary raises will serve our club to raise capital for annual grants to benefit local non-profits and future club projects.

What a great way to show our community how much our Rotary Club of Abilene cares for our city!

Best regards,

Erik Johnson

Active Member

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SUMMARY

2006 We began the process of Abilene Rotary Club and disc golf as a fund raising concept.

2007 – 2008 Cal Young Park Expansion Series

2009 – 2015 Mayor's Cup Tournament

- Total players approximately 50-60 each year
- Total money raised \$11,000 +/-
- Proceeds have been combined to go towards the new pro-course development.
- 2012 Rotary and ADGA paid John Houck \$10,000 to retain his services.

2016 Final approval of course development by the TPWD at Abilene State Park by Lake Abilene. Work begins on clearing the new course. The balance of \$35,000 for the course design and equipment needs funding.

2017-2018 Project estimated to be complete.