

AGC in the Community Throwing a Holiday Party That Matters

MBA of Western Pennsylvania combines holiday cheer with charitable success

By Debra Wood

Not content simply to throw one of the best holiday parties in the Pittsburgh area, the Master Builders' Association (MBA) of Western Pennsylvania Young Constructors combined its year-end revelry with charitable giving. Attendees collected items for Toys for Tots and raised \$5,000 for Casey's Clubhouse, a Miracle League baseball field for special-needs youth.

"We wanted to support a local charity and see the impact we were making," says Brett Pitcairn, business development manager and project executive at P.J. Dick, Pittsburgh, and chairman of the MBA Young Constructors Committee. "Casey's Clubhouse is a local charity. Everyone in the Master Builders' Association of Western Pennsylvania will be able to see and experience this field."

Former Major League Baseball player Sean Casey is raising \$1 million to build the rubber-surfaced field, designed to allow

children in wheelchairs to play the game.

"We were thrilled to get the \$5,000," Casey says. "Other people saw that, and it snowballed. Next thing you know, everyone is helping us out. It was a great thing that they decided to choose us for the gift."

Casey estimates that more than 90,000 families with disabled children live in the region and are eligible to participate in the Miracle League, playing on the baseball field that is expected to open in August.

There are about 140 such fields in the country, with more under construction. An able-bodied volunteer "buddy" from a local middle or high school assists each special-needs child.

"This will be life-changing for so many people," Casey says. "This impact goes beyond families with disabilities and goes into the community to build acceptance."

U.S. Marines attended the event and collected about 200 toys, one from each

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attendee. Altogether, MBA has donated 800 toys and nearly \$18,000 to the Marines' campaign, reports Jon O'Brien, MBA director of communications.

As thanks for the association's contributions, the Marines raised the flag with great ceremony at the 2009 grand opening of MBA's new headquarters.

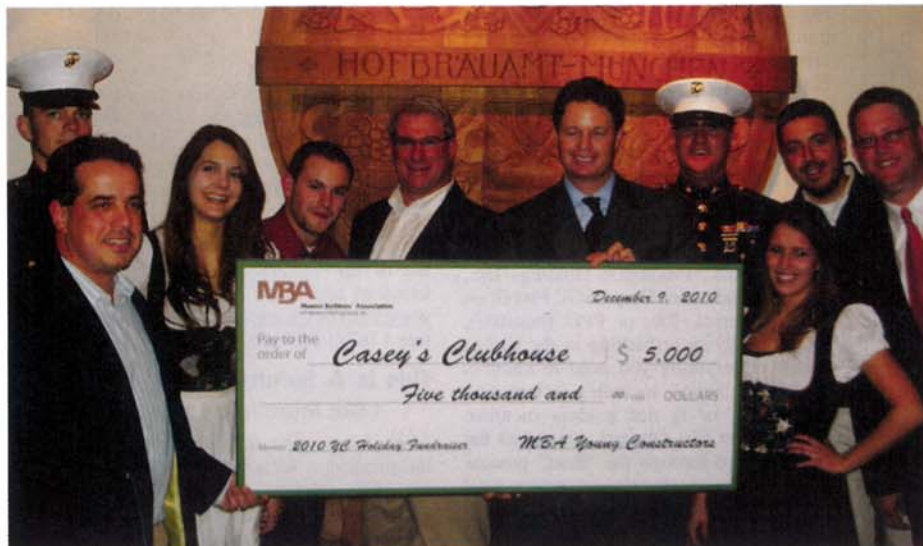
The Young Constructors began the annual holiday event four years ago to fill a void in the Master Builders' Association's networking agenda as well as to support a youth-oriented charity.

The organization created an innovative funding plan to pay for the event. The 15 members of the Young Constructors' Steering Committee solicited at least \$200 from at least five companies. To do so, the committee analyzed past attendance, reached out to companies absent in the past and then issued personal invitations.

"Every year it has gotten bigger and bigger," says Dan Bell, project manager at TEDCO Construction, Carnegie, Pa., and chairman of the party committee.

From jobsite laborers to chief executive officers, people have rallied together to support the cause.

"This event has united the industry and brought together all entities, from owners and designers to constructors. And it has bridged the gap, connecting well-established leaders of the industry with up-and-coming future leaders," O'Brien says. "The overwhelming financial support, the amount of toys and number of attendees are a testament to its success." ■



Members of the MBA Young Constructors Committee along with U.S. Marine Corps representatives present a \$5,000 check to Casey's Clubhouse. Among the participants were (from left): Kevin McQuillan, The McQuillan Group; Dustin Giffin, Giffin Interior & Fixture Inc.; Tom Turner, Gateway Engineers; Young Constructors Committee Chairman Brett Pitcairn, P.J. Dick; Young Constructors Committee Vice Chairman Gino Torriero, Nello Construction, and Dan Bell, TEDCO Construction.

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