

Bill Sugra was not a meteorologist. But he certainly seems to have a hand in the weather each year on the day of the golf tournament that bears his name.

And this year was no different at the 14th Annual Bill Sugra Memorial Golf Outing Aug. 28 at Green Pond Country Club, Bethlehem Township. The day honors the memory of Sugra – and marks the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001 – and raises funds for those most in need. This year, as usual, the sun was shining as 140 golfers hit the greens.

“This one comes from the heart because of their son and the tragedy – it hits home,” Chuck Kelly said of the event that honors the memory of Sugra and raises funds for those who need it the most.

Sugra, 30, was a network administrator in Cantor Fitzgerald’s eSpeed division on the 103<sup>rd</sup> floor of the World Trade Center when he lost his life on the tragedy that was 9/11.

The golf tournament is the lynchpin of fundraising for the Bill Sugra Memorial Fund launched by his family, parents Bill and El Sugra and sister Tracy Sell. The Sugras have been parishioners of St. Thomas More, Allentown since 1973.

And the day truly is a family event, including Tracy’s husband Steven and their young children, Reagan and Tripp.

The fund began when students at St. Thomas More School – of which Sugra was an alum – raised \$75,000 to assist with Sugra’s medical expenses with the hope he’d be found alive.

El Sugra said the fund gave \$60, 750 to the needy and disadvantaged in 2015, raising the total to \$513, 152 dispersed to worthwhile organizations and individuals in the past 14 years. The fund is a way to honor Sugra’s memory, and grasp a ray of light from the darkness of the tragedy and grief.

Chuck Kelly’s wife Jo-Ann, who joined the memorial fund board in 2005, also volunteers at the tournament. “This is one of the most meaningful things I’ve done in a long time,” Jo-Ann Kelly said. “The Sugra’s are a wonderful family with a deep love for their son and they share that love with all of us.”

“They’re a wonderful couple – everyone who works here is great. It’s like a fraternity,” Chuck Kelly added.

Oblate of St. Francis de Sales Father Daniel Gambet, president emeritus of DeSales University, Center Valley, once again served as co-chair. Joining Father Gambet as co-chairs were this year’s title sponsors, J.B. Reilly, president of City Center Investment Corporation, Allentown; and Joseph Topper Jr. president and CEO of CrossAmerica GP.

“I’m thrilled to be here and participate. Bill and El are warm and loving people,” said Reilly. “It’s a pleasure to be part of the legacy of their son and participate.”

“It’s a joy to be here. I’m honored and proud to be here,” said Sandy Fischl, whose husband Walt is a cousin of Bill Sugra Sr. The couple travels from Greensburg outside Pittsburgh each year for the tournament.

Fischl said the whole Sugra family is great and she’s glad to be part of a great event. “It’s a wonderful organization and I’m proud to say I’m part of this.”

“The Sugra’s are awesome people, and in Bill’s memory they’ve done great things,” Fischl said. “They reap the harvest of what they give others. It’s always been about them giving and carrying on Billy’s name. It’s great to be part of this family.”

“It’s important to be here every year to help keep Bill’s memory alive,” said volunteer Jenn Mangold, whose husband, Ed, went to Allentown Central Catholic with Sugra and plays in the tournament each year.

Sugra was best man at the Mangold's wedding and was at the baptism of their son, Nicholas, months before Sept. 11, 2001. "It's hard to believe it's been so long. Our son is as old as 9/11," Jenn Mangold said.

"It's important to be here. People have a tendency to forget," Jenn Mangold said of that tragic day.

The Mangold's were there with Greg Bealer of New Tripoli, a Whitehall police officer who was Sugra's roommate at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP); and Mike Sophy of Doylestown, a friend and classmate of Sugra and Mangold at ACCHS.

"The three of us have never missed a year," Sophy said of the trio playing in the tournament. This year Sophy's wife Giuliana also volunteered.

Sugra's friends certainly miss him, and it's also good to be able to remember him with a smile. "I love that Bill hated golf," Bealer said with a laugh. "He liked basketball much better."

No stranger to volunteering, 96-year-old Betty Moch – the tournament's oldest volunteer – was also on hand with her daughter, Elaine Anderson.

"I like volunteering. It's better than sitting home feeling sorry for myself, and I can benefit the organization," said Moch, who also volunteers at Bethlehem's Musikfest, Celtic Classic, Christkindlmarkt and Blueberry Festival.

Years ago, Moch was the only woman working in Research and Development at the former Dixie Cup, Easton, and later was sent to Three Mile Island by Metropolitan Edison. "I never went to college, I learned on the job."

Several years ago Anderson, a retired teacher from the Wilson School District, called El Sugra to volunteer after hearing Bobby Gunther Walsh talk about the tournament on the radio. Mother and daughter have been volunteering ever since.

The event concluded with a reception/silent auction and dinner at 5 p.m. Paul Eifler, president of The Fund to Benefit Children and Youth, keynoted at the dinner.

One of the items for auction was a framed Payne Stewart flag from the 1999 U.S. Open signed by the late golfer and donated by Linda Lansche.

"My brother passed away in September in Houston, and Payne Stewart was his favorite golfer, this was hanging over my brother's fireplace," Lansche said. She decided to donate it to the Sugra's for their "wonderful foundation."

Lansche's friend and fellow volunteer Jane Sonne – who has volunteered in the past - introduced Lansche to the Sugra's foundation, and now, "volunteering will be an annual tradition," Lansche said.

Platinum sponsors were Plumbers Union Local 690, Scott Dealerships, Jim and Lynne Finnegan and Gillespie Printing, which donates all the printing for the tournament.

"We're very blessed," El Sugra said in gratitude for the sponsorships.

The day began with a morning event for children from The First Tee Program, Embrace Your Dreams and The Boy's and Girl's Club of Easton, who receive instruction from area golf pros. At lunchtime, the children received a certificate and a gift bag.

The Gilbert's/Sing for America of Palmer Township performed the National Anthem before the tournament's shotgun start.

Past grant recipients include Embrace Your Dreams; Boy's and Girl's Club of Allentown; Lehigh County Conference of Churches; Sacred Heart Hospital, Allentown; Catholic Charities, Diocese of Allentown; Mercy Special Learning Center, Allentown; Camelot for Children, Allentown; the Eastern Pennsylvania Down Syndrome Center; Greater Lehigh Valley Muscular Dystrophy Association; William Allen Chorale of Allen High School; Allentown Ecumenical

Food Bank; Meals on Wheels of Lehigh County, Inc.; and Meals on Wheels of Northampton County.