Local brothers turn lemons into lemonade at golf event for veterans

They used a lemonade stand to raise more than $60K

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(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Cole (left) and Noah Dingels set up their annual lemonade stand at Olympic Hills Golf Club in Eden Prairie for the Tee It Up for the Troops event in June.

Brothers Noah and Cole Dingels were just 7 and 4 years old when they first set up their lemonade stand at the Tee It Up for the Troops golf event to support veterans and their families. Eager to give back to those who served, they sold cups of lemonade for $2, raising $359 in their first year.

The brothers returned the next year and raised a total of $762, which doubled when another donor generously matched their amount. Every penny earned was donated to Tee It Up for the Troops, a nonprofit organization providing support to veterans and military families through golf events, fundraisers, and outreach programs.

"The boys got the opportunity to interact with veterans, thank them for their service, [and] learn about the sacrifices that all these men and women have made to protect our freedoms," said Angela Dingels, the mother of Noah and Cole. "It just invited a lot of great conversation as a family with the kids about where those freedoms come from and, of course, it was a great opportunity to give back and learn some lessons in entrepreneurship and sales and marketing and all those things, too."

After a successful couple years at the golf event, Noah and Cole decided to enhance the lemonade stand in an effort to raise more funds for veterans. In 2023, the pair added golf balls to their inventory, followed by the addition of candy bars in 2024.

"I love selling candy bars, golf balls, and lemonade to the veterans and our friends," Cole said.

The lemonade stand — which is set up at Olympic Hills Golf Club in Eden Prairie — has become such a recognizable fixture at the event over the years that it gained notable local attention.

In recent years, Noah and Cole have received sponsorships from several community businesses. Sponsors like Costco, Target, and Walmart donated several products to the lemonade stand for the 2026 event, including jugs of lemonade and Arnie Palmer drinks, as well as candy bar options. These contributions have helped the boys collect higher donation amounts.

"Our family put together a PowerPoint and we went out to local businesses in the community and asked for sponsorships," Angela Dingels said. "In the last two years, we've had about 50 sponsors and in the five years that the kids have been doing this, they've raised over $60,000 for veterans, and every single dollar for lemonade or candy bars has been donated back to Tee It Up for the Troops."

On June 8, Noah and Cole, now 11 and 8, raised a total of $23,000 at the 2026 golf event and $33,168 at the 2025 event, with support from their community sponsors.

"At the end of the night, when everybody's done playing their round of golf, there's a banquet and we get to go up during dinner and present our earnings," Noah said. "This year we got a standing ovation."

All money raised by the local patriots is given directly to Tee It Up for the Troops to support various veteran programs, including service dog training and Loops Fore Troops, a nonprofit organization connecting service members to the game of golf.

Their yearly lemonade stand has become so impactful that U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth recently sent the brothers a letter of recognition that commended them for their patriotism and selfless efforts, writing that they were "two incredible patriots."

"It was really special to see that," Angela said. "I mean, Pet Hegseth is a fellow Minnesotan, so that was a special connection. But it was incredible to receive that."

The boys' passion for supporting veterans was sparked by their grandfather Gene Dingels, who served in the Army and National Guard flying helicopters for more than 33 years. While Noah and Cole never got to meet

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(SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Cole Dingels sells items to golfers at the Tee It Up for the Troops event in June at Olympic Hills Golf club in Eden Prairie.

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Gene, they honor him by donating to those who served.

Noah and Cole used a simple lemonade stand to leave a lasting impact on military veterans and their families. Though this year's golf event has ended, the brothers plan to return to the course next June to continue their donation efforts.

For future lemonade stand sponsorship inquiries, contact lemonade@teeitupforthetroops.org.

To those considering a pledge, visit teeitupforthetroops.org.

About Tee It Up for the Troops

Founded in 2005, Tee It Up for the Troops is a national 501©(3) nonprofit organization based in Burnsville, Minnesota. Its mission is to raise awareness and provide support to America's military veterans through golf events, outreach programs and fundraisers. For more information, visit teeitupforthetroops.org.

COMMUNITY BRIEF

Master Naturalist Volunteer Training to be held at Eastman Nature Center

Eastman Nature Center in Maple Grove is hosting a Minnesota Master Naturalist Volunteer Training beginning Aug. 18.

Master Naturalist volunteers complete a 40-hour hands-on course with expert instructors and fellow learners — studying natural history, environmental interpretation, and conservation stewardship. Final certification comes with the completion of 40 hours of volunteer service.

The program offers three courses that correspond to Minnesota's three major ecosystems entitled Big Woods, Big Rivers, Prairies and Potholes and North Woods, Great Lakes.

This class will cover the natural and cultural history of the "Big Woods, Big Rivers" region. The program will provide an in-depth overview of the deciduous forest ecosystem and participants will observe and learn about the variety of plant and animal communities of the region.

Through the course, participants will develop their ability to observe nature and will learn tools to improve these skills. In addition, participants will improve their communication skills by sharing knowledge with other participants and working on a group project.

The class will be held on Tuesdays, Aug. 18 — Oct. 27, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. All -day Saturday field trips are on Aug. 29 and Sept. 19. The Minnesota Master Naturalist is sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension

For more information about the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program and to register visit minnesotamasternaturalist.org/courses/.

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Sully O'Sullivan is available at The Bond Between. Sully has been vet checked, spayed/neutered, wormed, tested for FIV/FeLV, has distemper and rabies shots. For further information go to www.thebondbetween.org/cats-for-adoption . Type in Sully's name to find more information.