



Dave Altfather – Dublin-Adopt-A-House volunteer

Sixteen years ago, Dave was energized to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity after learning about the organization directly from Habitat’s founder, Milliard Fuller. Dave’s church pastor at the time had asked him to go in her place to attend a meeting with other pastors from Columbus, to hear Milliard Fuller speak about Habitat. This experience left Dave with the impression that Habitat is “a worthwhile organization with the right approach to helping people get affordable housing.”

When Dave first started out at Habitat MidOhio, he organized Habitat volunteer days a few Saturdays a year for his church. Later on, Dave decided to join the Dublin Adopt-A-House partnership, which led to further involvement on Saturdays. Since retiring five years ago, Dave has become a regular volunteer with the Dublin Adopt-A-House partnership’s Tuesday and Thursday crews.

When it comes to building a home, Dave enjoys the whole construction experience, “I like the variety of jobs that volunteers can work on at a Habitat build – carpentry, window and door installation, siding, painting, flooring, caulking, etc.” A particular memory that stands out to Dave is working, “up the attic, blowing in ceiling insulation during hot days.” Dave added that for less experienced volunteers there are many experienced crew leads that can help guide their work. Dave also mentioned the home dedication ceremony held at the end of a home build, once everything has been completed and the keys are ready to be handed over to the partner family, “This never gets old. It’s the final result of everything done from start to finish.”

Before becoming a Habitat volunteer, Dave volunteered at Ohio State Nature Preserves, helping with trail maintenance, boardwalk construction, and invasive weed control. Some may be surprised to learn that Dave worked at the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for 35 years as a water quality scientist, evaluating water pollution issues in rivers and streams in Ohio. His work included sampling fish populations using electricity, a method known as electrofishing. One perk of Dave’s work is that it led to him knowing where a lot of great fishing spots are around Ohio!

In his free time, Dave enjoys woodworking, gardening, reading, running, and traveling. Over the last couple of years, Dave and his wife visited three islands in Hawaii, and Yosemite, Kings Canyon, and Sequoia National Parks in California. Currently, Dave is working on a few major remodeling projects at home.

Reflecting on his volunteer experience, Dave said, “It has been a great pleasure to work with the Tuesday and Thursday group of volunteers from a combination of the Worthington, Dublin, and Clintonville-Beechwold-Adopt-A-House partnerships. High quality workmanship, friendship, laughs – really makes for a great experience.”



Samuel Collier Jr. – Membership and Marketing Chair on the Habitat Young Professionals Board

When talking to Sam, it’s hard not to get excited about volunteering for Habitat. He is not only passionate when describing the experience he’s had as a volunteer and the tangible benefits he’s seen come from the work, but he is also quick to mention the larger impact that having a safe, decent, and affordable home has on a family and the community.

The first time Sam volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, he was 19-years-old and serving in the United States military. At the time, he was on active duty and taking care of critical patients, his fellow soldiers. Sam’s sergeant mentioned there was a need for volunteers on a local Habitat build. Sam recalled that he was a little nervous the first time he came out on site. However, he described his first impression of a Habitat build as having a “family atmosphere”, a no-pressure environment where everyone is there to help each other out. On site, Sam found a home away from home, something that was especially important to him during his time living abroad.

Years later, an opportunity to volunteer with Habitat MidOhio came up. Sam once again decided to lend a helping hand, and found himself getting more passionate about the work. This was right around the time Habitat MidOhio’s Habitat Young Professionals (HYP) was being established, and Sam took the opportunity to step into a leadership role and join the HYP Board as the Membership and Marketing Chair.

At Habitat MidOhio, Sam once more found a supportive and collaborative environment. Just recently, Sam mentioned he was painting a wall and a base board and accidentally painted both the same color. Sam noted that despite his mistake, everyone at the site, Crew Leads and experienced volunteers, reassured him it wasn't a big deal and he was reminded that being out on site is a learning experience. Sam also talked about the tangible impact of Habitat, "You *see* the need", and the memorable way the end of each partner family's journey is commemorated with a dedication ceremony.

Sam continues to volunteer with Habitat because it's a constant reminder that you can start with nothing, and build something great. He talked about the day-to-day affect being an engaged community member can have on a person and their perspective on life. Sam mentioned that there are people who think that going to college will make them well-rounded, and then once they graduate, the personal growth stops. Sam believes that being an engaged citizen and being involved with an organization like Habitat for Humanity can cause a person who goes through the same routine at work day after day, to change their perspective on life, and even look at their cubicle in a different way. Sam attributed this to the personal and professional growth that comes with being a volunteer; the leadership skills you gain from building people up, and the relationship and networking skills you develop from working alongside others.

One event that Sam is looking forward to is this June's Rock-the-Block, sponsored by HYP. When several new builds are starting on one street, Habitat "rocks the block" by cleaning up litter, removing graffiti, and offering light landscaping services to residents living nearby. With a community cook-out held in the middle of the day, a Rock-the-Block also gives Habitat partner families a chance to meet each other and their soon-to-be neighbors. One thing Sam emphasized was the larger goal of a Rock-the-Block, "It takes the whole environment to make something successful – it takes a village. It shows Habitat cares about the community. We're not just coming and going."

The larger impact of more and more families having safe, decent, and affordable housing is another reason Sam believes in the mission of Habitat, even citing Habitat as the key to the new middle class. "Housing is such a core part of all of our lives", Sam reflected as he highlighted that housing has a direct effect on education, security, and economic equality, giving the example of a someone being able to take out a home equity loan in order to help cover the cost of getting an education.

Being an engaged citizen isn't just a philosophy Sam preaches. Before getting involved with Habitat, Sam served as the Membership Co-chair on the Columbus Urban League Young Professionals board, recruiting young professionals to be active in their community. Today, Sam continues to stay involved with Columbus Urban League in addition to Habitat for Humanity. Outside of volunteering, Sam works as a Respiratory Therapist at The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center. He also recently earned his real estate license and works as a realtor for Caldwell Banker King Thompson. In his free time, Sam enjoys reading and traveling, as both interests expose him to new worlds. An interesting quirk some may not know, is that Sam has a dislike for towels.

One final thing Sam hopes everyone remembers is that Columbus is a city many opportunities, and making sure those opportunities are extended to everybody, is why you should volunteer. Helping those with less resources in our community, helps us all, and that everyone in our community is our neighbor.