

Brian M. Zatkovich

Service

Service is an integral part of being a balanced individual, enabling oneself to enrich the lives of both those around them as well as their own spirit. I have strived to perform service in my community whenever presented with the opportunity, often meaning that I find myself in a wide variety of situations. Each new experience provides a wide variety of challenges, each proving to be an opportunity to assist the community in some way. From pet therapy at a young age to the more recent charity walk/runs, I tend to find that variety is indeed the spice of life.

I first discovered community service around the time I was three years old and often traveling with my mother on her various deeds. She was a volunteer for the pet therapy program that visited nursing homes and hospitals with animals, in the hopes of raising the occupant's spirits. As the years passed and I grew up, I continued to take an increasingly active interest in the program, to the point where I would even be the one to bring the selected animal around the hospital. This was truly one of my first experiences with a major service organization, and would definitely not be my last.

In more recent years, my involvement with different charities and projects has increased significantly. Perhaps some of the most prominent groups include Habitat for Humanity and the Susan G. Komen Foundation, both of whom are established groups with upstanding histories in service. I have presently had the chance to work on three Habitat home sites, performing tasks such as nailing hurricane ties and raising walls. There is a special feeling involved with such tasks, having the knowledge that one's own sweat and labor will someday soon be the house for an underprivileged individual. Since working on the sites, I have seen two of the homes completed and moved into, allowing for a bit of satisfaction in the knowledge that I had indeed helped build that house.

Perhaps some of the most fun I have had performing service though was at the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation events, held in the river district of Fort Myers. For the past two years I have participated in their October walking/running event, created as a way to raise money for the research used to try and find a cure. Through this event, I had the opportunity to meet a wide assortment of persons, all there to have a little fun after doing a lot of fundraising. This year's event rose over \$150,000, causing little to doubt just how effective the event truly was. At a more personal level though, the team I was involved with raised over \$1500 of that money... A mark I hope to at least get close to with the upcoming March of Dimes event. As one of the team organizers, it is my duty to see that we have a successful fundraising drive in order to see the most money possible.

All in all, I see service to the community, whether through the local Rotary Club or as part of a larger group effort, to be an important piece of the puzzle that is a balanced lifestyle. Without such service, there are so many events, achievements, and developments that may yet to be realized, if ever at all. I have tried to apply myself whenever possible to such endeavors, attempting to lead a virtuous life in all aspects. Simply put, the sense of accomplishment felt from helping others is a feeling that can't be matched, and is one I wish to experience for many years to come.

