

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: DAN MAXON

WHAT DO YOU DO WITH LAKE METROPARKS?

I actually do a number of things. I've been working with the boating programs at Fairport Harbor Lakefront Park since 2000 and I help out with the kayaking, jetskiing and boating.

I also volunteer with the Country Lights programs, play Santa Claus, load wagons, make wooden toys, narrate the Halloween Hayrides and work as a mail courier. I've been volunteering with Lake Metroparks for 11 years. Helping out with the cross-country skiing races, Dryland sled dog races, grooming trails and driving the tractor at special events also keeps me busy. And I'm happy to be on the Volunteer Advisory Committee, a group of nearly 20 that meets quarterly and gives feedback from a volunteer's perspective. I also started driving the support van for Lake Metroparks' bike rides this year and my wife comes along with me as co-pilot. She's been very supportive.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I'm a recently retired teacher with the Euclid City Schools. I taught foreign languages for 30 years in both the junior high and high schools. I was also the assistant athletic director and coached three sports. I'm married to my wife Jan and live in Concord Township. Jan's been very encouraging with all my volunteer activities, as it sometimes takes nights and weekends. For 16 years, I've also volunteered at the Fairport Harbor Lighthouse and have been the curator there for the last three.

WHY DO YOU VOLUNTEER?

I'm happy to give back. The other volunteers are just as eager to help out, so it's a pleasure working with them. The staff at the beach is very accessible, and it makes you want to volunteer. I also love being outdoors. I also feel like a bit of a Renaissance man—I get to try a lot of different things.



WHAT'S A MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE THAT'S HAPPENED WHILE VOLUNTEERING?

I always like working with children—they're a blast. One year I was playing Santa Claus when a girl and her younger brother talked to me about their wish lists. The boy, who was probably around four, told me he wanted a unicycle for Christmas. That kind of stood out because it was an unusual request. As they were walking out the door, his sister ran up to me and asked if Santa could keep a secret. I said yes, and she confided in me that she'd seen a unicycle in the closet her mom had bought for her younger brother. So he did get his wish.