

Fix-Up Festival “Call To Action” Presentation

Sunrise Rotary Club Member Project Managers’ and Home Adopters’ Testimonials:

1. What led you to become involved volunteering as a FUF Project Manager or Home Adopter?

“I enjoy working on home improvement projects and this is a great way to give back to the community.” *Keith Nathan*

“I originally joined Rotary because I felt Rotary was a group that actively gave back to the community. I felt FUF was a good avenue for me to utilize my skills in a way that was meaningful to someone in need. FUF is a way to help members of our community in need, live a better and safer life.” *Gene Kuntz*

“I was approached by the committee, probably because of my engineering project management background.” *Dave Crawford*

“My business partner, Tim Rote, is in Sunrise Rotary. Our company was looking for a worthy charity event. FUF was a good fit.” *Kevin Sullivan, Tim Rote’s business partner*

“Opportunity Bank’s history with Rotary through former member Lee Oldenburger was my first introduction to the organization and Fix Up Festival event. I enjoyed the first event and have been a part of it through the bank’s project-adoption status for the last 9 years.” *Bert Bartle*

“I feel very blessed to live in this vibrant community that has been very good to me and my company. I wanted a way to give back to the community and this is a perfect fit – a construction company fixing up neighbors’ homes that are less fortunate.” *Peter Lee*

“I wanted to do a hands-on public service project that allowed me to use my construction management skills.” *Bob Farrington*

“I started just helping as a runner, then working on an adopter crew and serving as assistant PM. After I became more comfortable with the scope of the projects, I thought they would be a good opportunity for our students from MSU so I took on the role as a PM.” *Craig Woolard*

2. What is it about being a Project Manager or Home Adopter that has kept you involved?

“The gratitude expressed by the homeowners and the fun working with enthusiastic volunteer crews keeps me motivated.” *Keith Nathan*

“As a PM you get close to real people in real need. You learn not just about the door that need to be fixed or the deck that needs to be replaced, but about how what we do affects their everyday lives in a positive and meaningful way. The people we choose to help often have no other place to turn to help them keep their houses in working condition.” *Gene Kuntz*

“I like working with the construction team and homeowner.” *Dave Crawford*

“It’s a rewarding day for all of us involved. The FUF organizers are easy to work with.” *Kevin Sullivan, Tim Rote’s business partner*

“I enjoy a hands-on experience and project. I work at a “desk job” so it is nice to get outside and work with my hands more. I also love seeing the transformation of the projects from start to finish. But the most impactful part is seeing and hearing the appreciation the homeowner or family has for Rotary’s support.” *Bert Bartle*

“Being a PM has more flexibility. I have had conflicts on the actual FUF day. As I have done all the work up front, I can find a substitute leader for the day and the work still gets done. It is best when me and my construction teammates can assist the home adopters, but I don’t have to count on that to help a neighbor.” *Peter Lee*

“The great experiences with volunteers, homeowners, and fellow Rotarians. Seeing the joy on homeowners faces when we finish the project just cannot be beat. You really feel like you made a difference in a person’s or family’s life.” *Bob Farrington*

“The ability to help a homeowner and provide a service-learning experience for our (MSU) students.” *Craig Woolard*

3. *During event days, Project Managers and Adopters can both have many interactions with the homeowner and all the other volunteers that create lasting impressions, often leading to personal stories. Can you please describe one or two of your personal experiences or stories that you are willing to share with other club members?*

“My homeowner this year, Pam Corbett, was one of the most gracious ladies I have ever worked with. She was VERY happy with the work that the Opportunity Bank crew accomplished before and during Fix Up Day.” *Keith Nathan*

“I was the PM on a home of a veteran that was in very poor health. His lung capacity was severely depleted. He had to use a walker just to move from his living room to a chair on his front porch. This was the extent of his travels. The front porch, where he spent most of his summer days had several large holes in it that he had to maneuver his walker around, always with the danger of falling. He lived in a mobile home that had aged and was looking every bit of its years.

The man was told by the mobile home park that he would need to fix up the outbuildings around his home and paint the mobile home or be evicted from the park. He obviously had no financial or physical means to make the repairs. He would soon be evicted from the home he had lived in for years.

Over the 2-3 months I spent planning out the job I got to visit with the man several times. His ever-growing gratitude to see someone care about his plight gave me more than enough energy to pull together a team of co-workers and take on the job.

Over the course of a single day the team we assembled painted the entire home, repaired two outbuildings, fixed major holes on his front deck, and covered the tongue of his trailer per the requirements of the park. We had met all of the needs of the park and secured the man’s place in his home. A year and a half later he is still living in his home and now enjoys sitting on a safe deck watching the neighbors go by.” *Gene Kuntz*

“This year, Betty Johns was just so thankful to have her windows replaced. She couldn’t thank the team enough. She asked if she could have a Fix-Up Festival T-shirt, so after the festival I stopped by her house and dropped one off. She gave me a hug and again thanked us for helping her.”
Dave Crawford

“All the homeowners are just very appreciative which makes the effort worthwhile.” *Kevin Sullivan, Tim Rote’s business partner*

“With our last project (2022), the homeowner was so appreciative of the help that she had her daughter go out and purchase candy and cupcakes for the team to make sure they had something sweet to enjoy throughout the day. She wanted to find a way to show her appreciation and you could tell that that little gift was her way to saying thank you.

We have also taken part in a couple projects where our team had to re-skirt the trailer. This required team members to get under the trailer in many cases to remove previously material or reframe for new material. It became a running joke with our team on who would get to get under there. So, the team building and camaraderie that we built are memories all of us carry from year to year.” *Bert Bartle*

“I have been involved for 13 years as either a home adopter and/or a project manager. Two stories that come to mind are: one, helping a military veteran. When I met him at his house, he had no heat, no electricity, he used a sleeping bag to stay warm in his bed, his food was under the bed, and he used a kerosene heater to keep warm in the winter. First thing I did was got his power turned back on. Then I asked a plumber friend if he would install a hot water heater. He did. Then we set up to put insulated skirting around the vet’s trailer. By the time we left, he had heat in the house, could take a hot shower, put his food in the refrigerator and live in his house normally because it wasn’t freezing.

Another story was meeting a “retired” park ranger. He lived in a glorified garage with an outhouse. He had become a hoarder such that you could only move thru his home sideways as there was so much stuff in the home. He had a wood stove for heat. He kept his bed next to the stove as none of the windows in the home would close all the way. We replaced all the windows in the home, and I convinced him to let us throw out a bunch of his hoarded junk around the property. I ran into him 6 months later and he told me it was the best winter he had spent in the home.

I could go on with a lot of great stories where we have had a meaningful impact on our neighbors, and this is why I keep coming back – to make a difference in our neighbors’ lives.” *Peter Lee*

“I remember a single mom and her wheelchair-bound 8-year-old son. The boy could not get out his back sliding door to play in his back yard. The threshold of the slider was raised up so that the young boy could not get the wheelchair wheels over it without assistance. The deck next to the back door was in terrible shape and could not be safely traversed due to rot and stairs down to the lawn that prevented wheelchair use. His mother would have to lift him out of the wheelchair, set him in a lawn chair near his swing set, then move his wheelchair downstairs and over for him to get in.

We got several great carpenters to augment some enthusiastic volunteers. We got some donated paving stone, found a ramped threshold adapter for the back door at half price, and worked 8+ hours to rebuild the deck and install an accessible ramp with a paver landing down to the lawn. Volunteers that said they would work for 4 hours ended up staying the full 8 hours. I had

volunteers say that it was the best service project they had ever worked on. The payoff though was when that 8-year-old took his wheelchair, unassisted from his kitchen out onto the new deck and down the ramp. The smile on his face was all I needed to know we had done a good thing! That is what keeps me coming back each year.” *Bob Farrington*

“The homeowners are always very thankful for the help. In many cases, making a few minor repairs to their home have an immediate impact on their quality of life. So, its satisfying to help them.” *Craig Woolard*

4. What do you think is the best thing about Fix-Up Festival?

“The freedom to do what is right for each homeowner and then have a great time with the volunteer crews who are really excited to make each project a success!” *Keith Nathan*

“The aid you give to your fellow man in need is of course the biggest aspect of FUF. Many will undoubtedly discuss this in their responses. I will talk about an ancillary benefit that I have seen every year in the day of FUF that is often overlooked.

Through work, I sponsor a house every year. As part of that I ask the people I work with to join in the day’s repairs. The benefits the company gets from this donation far outweigh the cost. After a day working together in fellowship in a non-traditional work environment, I see how it builds further team unity and lets everyone get to know each other on a completely different plane. They take this experience back to the workplace and spread the word among the other coworkers. How they felt great working with each other to give back to their community. As a result, over the last 3 years we have had more and more people each year join us for the day’s activities.” *Gene Kuntz*

“Working together and getting to know some of the other community groups who also want to help the people in our community.” *Dave Crawford*

“It’s a good group of civic minded people, helping out our less fortunate neighbors. It’s what community should be about”. Kevin Sullivan, *Tim Rote’s business partner*

“The extensive, and positive, impact the projects have on the homeowners themselves.” *Bert Bartle*

“Really making our community more vibrant - real impact.” *Peter Lee*

“Between the Adopters, Vendors, Volunteers, Homeowners, and their neighbors the community sees what we do. That is the best advertising for Sunrise Rotary and Service Above Self that you could ask for.” *Bob Farrington*

“The ability to make a meaningful impact on the community with a short, focused effort.” *Craig Woolard*