



My main reason for volunteering was to have an opportunity to interact with the people of Florence. As someone who had witnessed the transformation of downtown, I had a different view and a different outlook on what Florence was becoming. Volunteering allowed me to talk about downtown, which many people didn't know much about. It gave me the chance to share the history and the significance of the changes that have come downtown.

In my six years of volunteering downtown, I have witnessed many transformations, but the biggest one, in my opinion, was Hotel Florence. I was impressed by how they transformed a building that once was a department store into a hotel and kept the architectural look of that building, making it appealing to people who visit Florence. When I'm volunteering, we usually have people from out of town who come to our events downtown. They're always asking what's special about downtown like this? This event is really nice. But what else is happening down here? That allows me to talk about what was and what is now, and they like that.

Volunteering allowed me to interact with all types of people and made me feel like I was representing my city. I always tried to make a good impression and showcase what the city had to offer. I have gained many friendships from volunteering, and I love seeing these people all over Florence.

One of my most memorable experiences was at an Oktoberfest event where it was just my husband, another volunteer Eddie, and me. There was a band from Myrtle Beach playing some really good music, and we just started dancing in the street. It was so much fun. Not that I don't have fun at the other events, but that was the most fun. I love dancing and good music. Good beach music.

I encourage anyone and everyone to volunteer for one event. See how you like it. And don't overthink it. Just have a good time. Understand what the theme of the event is and enjoy yourself. Overall, volunteering has been a fulfilling and enjoyable experience for me.

Stacey Rowell, Downtown Florence Volunteer