



I'm not sure exactly the timeframe, but I've been volunteering for a long time—at least since Florence After 5 was in a field behind Hotel Florence before the apartments were constructed. I've been volunteering at the Pecan Festival even before that. I started out as someone who showed up and worked a few hours. Now, I come and help to set things up, I show up early for the Pecan Festival or other events, I help transport things wherever they need to be, and I'm over the Pecan Pub. I've gone from just being someone who showed up and did stuff to feeling like I help quite a bit with a lot of the background logistics.

I got the Pecan Pub job by making a statement that you needed to have somebody who was going to be willing to look after everything and make sure everything was counted and not opened up before it needed to be. I got the question back, "Well, you can do that, right?" I really enjoy serving the community, seeing people have a good time, and being a part of it.

[The Pecan Festival] is very busy. It is a lot of work in a short amount of time, and it is physically draining, but I would say mentally it's rewarding. To see all the people out there having a great time enjoying the new downtown area that's not quite so new anymore, then just seeing the diversity of the public getting together—it's just a fun family atmosphere for everybody.

The Pecan Pub overall is a great experience every year. I love how it started as a minimal add to the Pecan Festival. When I say minimal, in the things that we had in there and the things that we offered, it was a tent that you could come in and sit down in, have lunch, and get out of the sun for a little bit, too. Now we offer things like football games all day, we have cornhole to play, and live music in there. I think that everybody enjoys it. It started out as something that was a definite value-add to the festival, becoming one of the things people look forward to and enjoy every year.

I grew up in an atmosphere where we were doing and helping and spending time with

people, and if people needed help, you just helped them, and that way it was. So that translates for me to just wanting to be in my community doing anything I can to serve the people in whatever form or fashion that is, whether it's just helping them to have a good time, pointing them in the direction of where I know things are and any kind of small thing just to help people enjoy, being a smiling face that can answer a question or whatever, just simple as that.

I don't know what the future has for me as far as volunteering. I know that I don't plan to stop at any point. I've always been the person that does what's asked of me. So, whether it's carrying more boxes, running around all weekend, or serving at the Florence After 5 events. I really just enjoy it. The people I'm around are a great, consistent crew now. We've really become friends, but for a lot of us, it's more like a family at this point. Being able to continue serving and spending time with them as much as possible is my motivation.

Tim Griggs, Downtown Florence Volunteer