

April 2021 - Mike Idacavage

Congratulations to Mike Idacavage, our April Volunteer of the Month! Mike has been a volunteer with Atlanta Track Club for the past 24 years, and was named our 2019 Road Race Volunteer of the Year for his exceptional service and leadership. We are recognizing Mike once again for the relentless dedication and support he has provided to the Club through a difficult year. Most recently, Mike has helped us navigate our way through new waters, establishing new courses in new locations (two racetracks!) with new challenges in a COVID world. Having Mike's leadership on the course and his friendship off the course has certainly made Atlanta Track Club a better place to be!

How long have you been volunteering with Atlanta Track Club?

My first volunteer opportunity with the Atlanta Track Club was the 1997 Peachtree Road Race. I was a course monitor and loved every minute of the experience!

What is one of your best memories from volunteering at any race?

The 2015 Peachtree Road Race when one of our water delivery trucks broke down on the course at the half mile point. The water Delivery team and I threw our normal game plan out the window and managed to get every water stop set up and our trucks off the course right before the first runners came through. I lost track of how many changes we made during that morning, but our team was proud of not affecting the race. BTW, that Peachtree was the first one where I took over the fluid delivery duties, so it was a trial by fire!

What is your favorite thing about volunteering with Atlanta Track Club? What brings you back?

My most favorite part of volunteering with the Atlanta Track Club is clearly the people involved. From the outstanding staff to my fellow volunteers, you could not ask for a greater group to volunteer with.



What other organizations do you volunteer for?

In recent years, I have been a crew chief for 2019 Super Bowl LIII, the 2020 canceled College Basketball Final Four, the Peach Bowl and the SEC Football Championship. I also volunteer with a national technical organization as an advisor and mentor for students and young professionals in my field.

You have recently retired. Tell us how your retirement is going and what is keeping you busy!

I seem to be busier now than when I was working full time! In addition to the volunteering I am doing for the ATC, I started a consulting company which is keeping me more active than expected, I am on several company's Advisory Boards and am mentoring a few technical start-up companies. Oh yea, I am also in the final steps of authoring a chemistry textbook!

Do you have any advice or words of wisdom for any new Atlanta Track Club volunteers?

I sure do! My advice would be to enjoy every experience and get to know your fellow volunteers as you will make some great friends over the years. Also be open to trying new volunteer opportunities at the Atlanta Track Club events even though at first, they might not seem super interesting. You will be surprised as to the cool opportunities that they might lead to!

Tell us something interesting about yourself - an interesting fact or story that will help us get to know you...



A lot of people might not know that when I am not having fun at the Atlanta Track Club events, I am a scientist in real life. Although I have around 5 patents, I am most proud of coauthoring a book with the scientist who won the 2010 Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

You are the most positive person we know. How do you stay so positive and what sparks joy for you?

I have a saying that being positive sure beats the alternative! I have found over the years that in almost every situation that pops up in the Atlanta Track Club

events and in daily life that there almost always a way out of any problem. Besides, it is always good to remember that any problem you are having now likely will not be a problem to you in 100 years! 😊

You are probably one of the only humans that has ever been course director on two of Atlanta's racetracks for two major events. Tell us about the unique experience of being in charge of a racetrack course? What were your challenges and what was the best part?

This is such a great question! Running an event out on a course that is on a racetrack is quite different than one which meanders through the community. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges was to keep the experience fun for the course monitors who are on or near the actual racetrack. For the Atlanta 10 Miler event in the fall, we had the added complexity of the runners going through a maze of cones, so we needed every course monitor to be on top of their game. We had outstanding volunteers for both racetrack events which helped things run smoothly. One of the coolest experiences that I had with Atlanta's Marathon Weekend was getting to see the runners faces as they exited out of the tunnel and saw the inside of the Atlanta Motor Speedway.

This past year with a pandemic has been quite challenging for all of us. Did you learn any new skills during the pandemic? What got you through this challenging year?

When I started out 2020 in January, I had no idea I would become so familiar with using Zoom to connect with people every day! I think by focusing on what needs to be done every week and looking for the fun aspect in whatever I do, then the hassles and occasional problems were manageable. Besides, in 100 years, I likely will not be so stressed with 2020 as the year of the COVID-19 pandemic!