

December 2020 - Vanessa Bennett

Congratulations to Vanessa Bennett, our December 2020 Volunteer of the Month! Vanessa has been volunteering with us for over 15 years. She was our Clarence W. May Jr. Award for Community Service recipient in 2014, and was our very first Volunteer of the Month recipient in March of 2015. As we close out 2020, we want to recognize Vanessa once more as she has recently volunteered with us for nearly 100 hours, helping sort and pack AJC Peachtree Road Race virtual kits and volunteering at our in-person Fall events. We don't know what we would do without her. Please join us in virtual appreciation for Vanessa and all she does for not only Atlanta Track Club, but also for the greater Atlanta community.

How long have you been volunteering for Atlanta Track Club?

I have been volunteering for the Atlanta Track Club for approximately 15 years.

Do you have a favorite event and/or favorite volunteer assignment?

My favorite volunteer activity is a tie, because they are all my favorites. My top three favorite events are the AJC Peachtree Road Race, Atlanta's Finest 5K and the U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Marathon.

What has been your most adventurous role with Atlanta Track Club in the recent past?

The PNC Atlanta 10 Miler & 5K in Braselton at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta. My son and I attended the 24 hours Petite Lemans Race at this facility and participated in the pit parade right where I was handing out swag at the PNC Atlanta 10 Miler finish line.



2020 has been quite a difficult year for all of us. How have you gotten through this year?

This year has been a little bit difficult with not only the pandemic but my family being affected by two major hurricanes in Louisiana. This year has made me more humble, patient and strengthened my faith in the power of prayer.

In the past few months alone, you've volunteered at our in-person events and taken on over 20 volunteer shifts in the office and at-home volunteer work, as well. What motivated and fueled you to give likely 100+ hours to Atlanta Track Club, while also working the election polls and packing for Operation Christmas Child? (Wow, we are so grateful for you!!!)

First, I look forward to seeing the smiles on our wonderful volunteer coordinators' faces along with the rest of the Atlanta Track Club staff, members, and volunteers. I really appreciated the calls from the staff; that kept me humbled and focused. I feel like Superwoman when I can get up and help make things happen. One of my best friends in Louisiana who recently transitioned and went to meet the Lord always said "'Can't don't work here."

America's Marathon Weekend, which included the 2020 U.S. Olympic Team Trials - Marathon and Publix Atlanta Marathon, occurred right before the pandemic. What is your favorite memory from that weekend?

America's Marathon Weekend, Whoa!!!! had the best course monitor volunteer team which allowed me to enjoy the Trials. It felt strange to be out there and not chasing a phone line (Vanessa retired from AT&T) like I did for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Seeing the runners come around the corner and up that hill made me feel like I was at the actual Olympics.

What are you most grateful for?

I am most grateful for my family for tolerating being woken up at 3 a.m. when I am leaving for a volunteer event and for my Atlanta Track Club family for allowing me the opportunity to volunteer.

Any other tidbits to share or interesting facts about yourself for people to get to know you better?

I plan to go fishing when this pandemic calms down, so anyone who knows any good fishing spots please contact me.

Do you have any advice or wisdom to share for new Atlanta Track Club volunteers?

Remember "'Can't' don't work here!" Always smile because you are making someone's day, and be flexible and willing to help outside of your comfort zone; you may find out that you actually like that assignment.

Photo Caption: *In 2014 on an October Friday morning, Vanessa broke her ankle on her stairs while prepping for her volunteer assignment at race number pick up. She promised she'd be ready for her Sunday morning crew chief role, and sure enough, she made it happen! She scooted in early that morning ready to lead her start wave team! Vanessa is unstoppable.*