

STRATEGIES

For fast-growing companies and careers



3RD
BIRTHDAY
SUMMIT

Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Columbus Center, 701 E. Pratt St., Baltimore

Information: volunteeringuntapped.org/events

HOW I...

Made volunteering a social event

VOLUNTEERING UNTAPPED GIVES BACK THROUGH HELPING HANDS AND OPEN TABS



While working with the Business Volunteers Maryland's GIVE Program, Seth Franz noticed that many of

the young professionals there were interested in volunteer work, but didn't know where to start.

"That's a major problem with a simple solution," he said.

Franz created Volunteering Untapped, an organization that pairs volunteers with nonprofits, but with a twist.

On the second Saturday of every month, the volunteers gather from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to volunteer for a particular Baltimore nonprofit. Afterwards, participants and friends are invited for food, drinks and socializing at a nearby bar, restaurant or brewery.

Franz said that the focus on socializing is to engage millennials and young professionals like himself. Although people of any age are welcome to attend.

At the organization's first event in February 2014, Franz said he had to beg nine people to show up. The monthly events now draw about 200 people. Volunteering Untapped has even opened a chapter in Chicago with plans to keep expanding.

While the growth is exciting, Franz said it's becoming more challenging to find a nonprofit and location that can utilize and accommodate a crowd that large.

Why does Volunteering Untapped target millennials? Young professionals are who we go after because that's where I notice the need most. That's a group that has time to put into volunteering. Though they may not have the money to donate to organizations, it's important at a younger age to learn more about Baltimore's nonprofit ecosystem and where they fit in. Then as they grow they can determine where and how they want to give for the rest of their lives.

Where does the name of the organization come from? We're called Volunteering Untapped because we tap into opportunities. We tap into this huge population of young professionals that wants to give back and isn't doing it as often as they



Seth Franz is the founder of Volunteering Untapped.

PHOTOS BY KAITLIN NEWMAN



Volunteers meet on the second Saturday of every month.

would like. We tap into opportunities with nonprofits, and then we tap beers at the bar afterwards.

What does going to the bar after volunteering add to the experience?

What we offer that other volunteer opportunities don't, is 200 like-minded individuals who are around your age who show up with a great attitude. It produces an environment where people become friends. The networking, it's really a big part of it. People laugh when we say networking, but the truth is what does networking really mean? We have people who have found boyfriends and girlfriends at our events. We have people who have found roommates and best friends at our events.

Networking doesn't have to be an exchange of business cards or a hope that a meeting will result in business.

What are the organization's operating expenses? We operate at under \$15,000 a year and put in 5,000 hours of community service a year. Both those numbers go up each year.

What is your next event? In celebration of our 3rd birthday we are putting on a massive summit and charity Tinder volunteer fair where we will feature Baltimore's top social entrepreneurs as speakers and in panels. Congressman Elijah Cummings will be the keynote. Following that, we will have our

charity Tinder volunteer fair where we will feature 30 plus nonprofits each with their own table, and an additional table with a directory with 50 more nonprofits who need volunteers. We are doing this to get people inspired and then get them matched with organizations that need the time, skills and talent that our volunteers can lend.

Why do you refer to it as "charity Tinder?" Like the dating app? We are matching people. We connect people to nonprofits, we connect people to each other and we connect people to their city in a different way than anyone else is doing it in Baltimore. Charity Tinder is like speed dating for nonprofits.

What kind of projects do you do on Second Saturdays? Our programming is varied by design. We want people to find something that they are passionate about and continue on that path. Maybe one month they will plant trees with us, and enjoy it, but not find their passion there. The next month they will be with us when we are helping underserved high school students create their resume and LinkedIn page and they say, "this is for me, this is something I can get behind," and they remain engaged with that organization for hopefully years to come.

— Carley Milligan