

Empowering Change: Toyota Team Members Volunteering to Make a Difference in Their Communities

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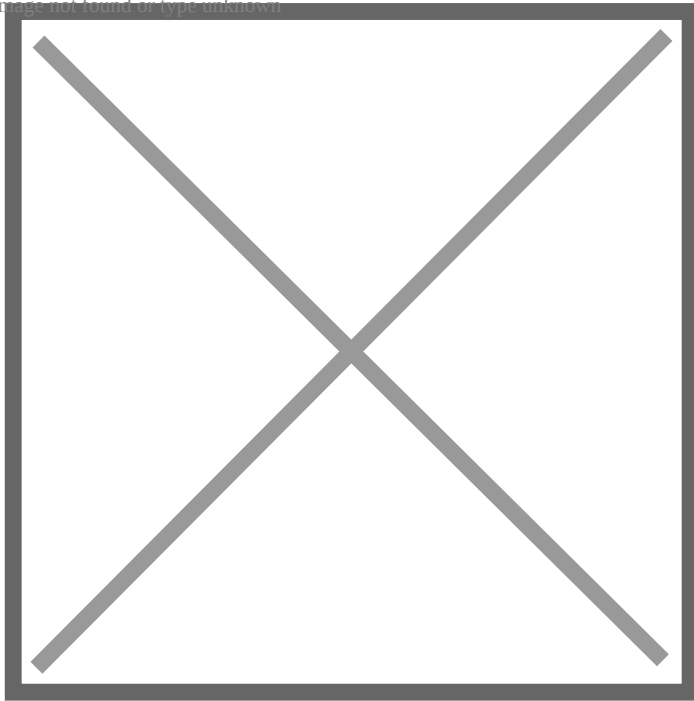
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Toyota supports its team members as they volunteer their time assisting local communities and organizations. Across its offices, manufacturing plants and dealerships, team members are encouraged to get involved in causes they care about.

From STEM education to fighting fires to youth sports initiatives, Toyota team members lend their time to help others. The company's official volunteer program, Toyota4Good, provides structure and support for employees to contribute their time and skills in meaningful ways.

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Building Young Minds

For Ben Kasa, a powertrain engineer in Production Engineering at Toyota in Georgetown, Kentucky, that means educating kids in fun and engaging ways. As the president of the Bluegrass chapter of American Business Clubs (AMBUCS), a group that makes adaptive tricycles for children with mobility challenges, Kasa enjoys helping children.

“For many of these kids, their adaptive tricycle provides a new form of mobility,” he says. “There’s something about riding bikes that makes me feel like a kid again, so I want to make sure every kid has the chance to experience that feeling, too.”

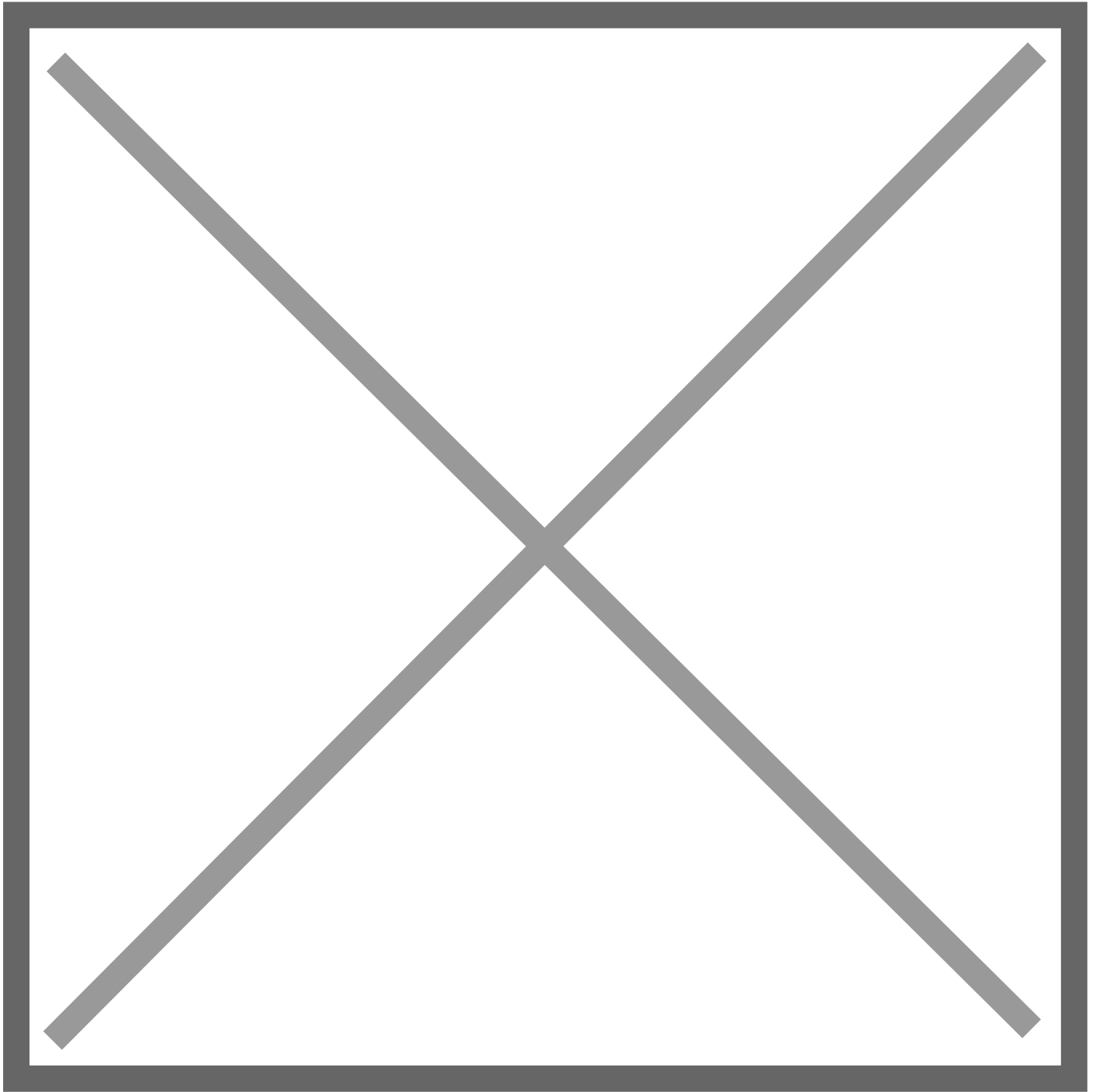
Kasa knows that for some, the best way to learn is by doing. That’s why he chose hands-on instruction for building a bike with Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS) students.

“I thought, ‘Who wants to watch a 40-year-old guy stand in front of a PowerPoint presentation?’” he says. “How boring. What if I actually had the kids build the bikes?”

He did just that. During the school winter break last year, the entire third grade helped build a bike.

“I have a third grader myself, so I know they are the perfect age for doing this,” Kasa says. “By breaking it down into individual tasks, they were able to all work together on a common goal.”

He adds, “Watching a child’s face light up when they see their new adaptive trike, it’s a flood of emotions every single time.”



Being a Leader and Saving Lives

Paul Campbell wears many hats. In his day-to-day role at Toyota, he’s a production team leader in Weld Quality at the company’s East plant in Indiana. When he’s not overseeing welding projects, he’s putting out fires, literally.

Campbell is a leader in the community of Newburgh, where he serves as the assistant fire chief of the town's volunteer fire department.

His dedication to community service, particularly in firefighting efforts, is a deeply ingrained family tradition.

"It all started with my grandfather, who served as a volunteer firefighter," said Campbell, who has logged more than 40 years in this role, including the past 34 with Newburgh. "My son followed in my footsteps as did my daughter for a short time. I have a niece and nephew who have done the same thing with their fathers. And my five brothers were all volunteer firefighters at one time or another."

What fuels Campbell and his extended family to give back in this way?

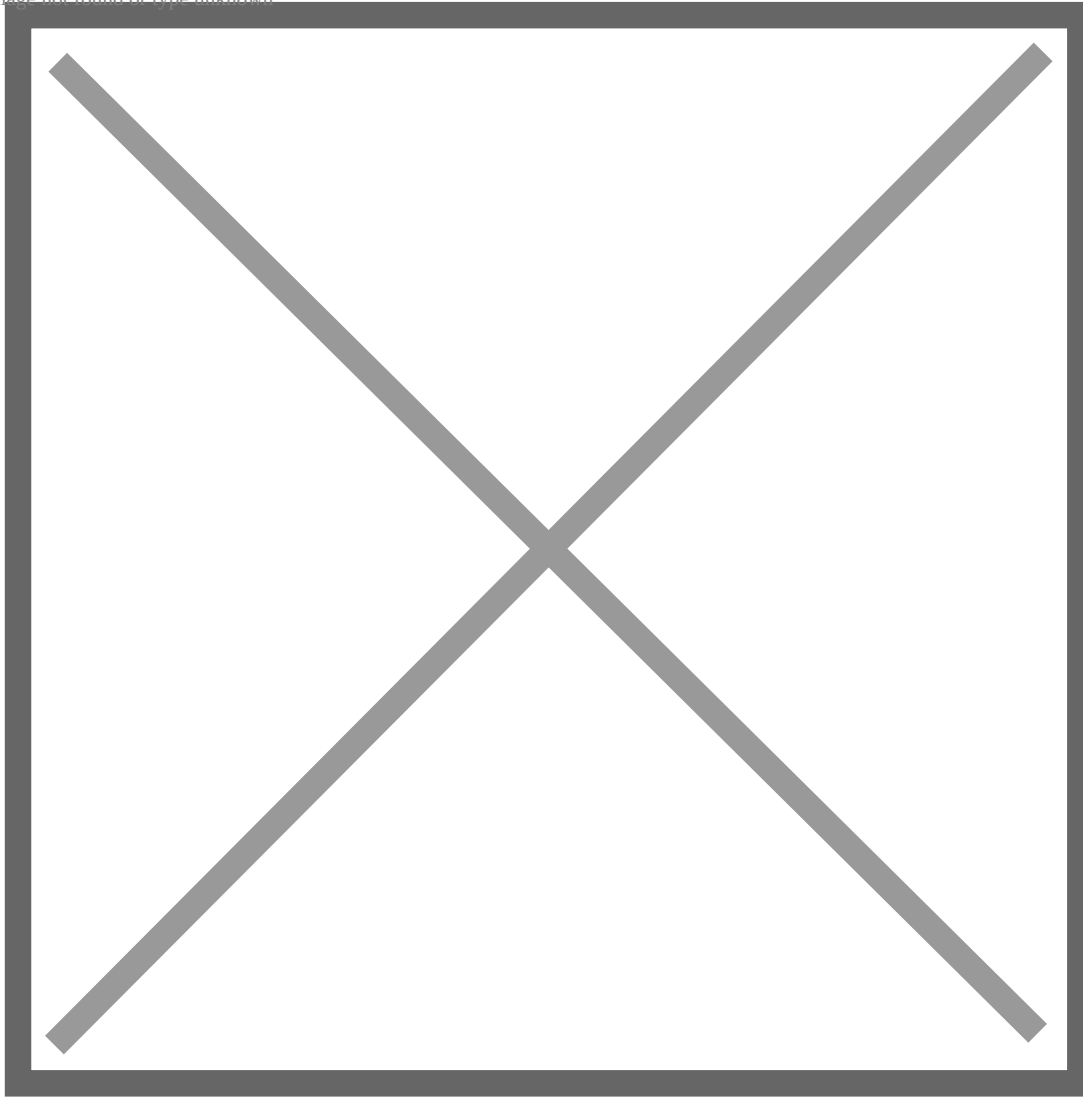
"When you show up at a fire or another type of emergency that has prompted a 911 call, unfortunately you find people who are likely going through the worst day of their lives," he says. "But it's a great feeling to come away knowing that you've given them some relief and hope for the future."

Campbell isn't the only one who contributes this way at his plant. He notes that several fellow team members at Toyota Indiana are also volunteer firefighters.

Volunteerism is a powerful force not just for communities, but for companies and their employees. When Toyota team members step outside their usual work environments to help others, they gain new perspectives, strengthen team bonds and experience a greater level of purpose in their roles.

"There is a deep sense of satisfaction when you see what can be accomplished when you volunteer," he says. "I would encourage every team member to seek out ways to help in a way that means as much to them as the fire service does to me."

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Playing for Keeps

Vicki Cantu, who works as a customer service advocate for Toyota Motor Credit Corporation, uses her spare time to volunteer with Flower Mound Youth Sports in Texas.

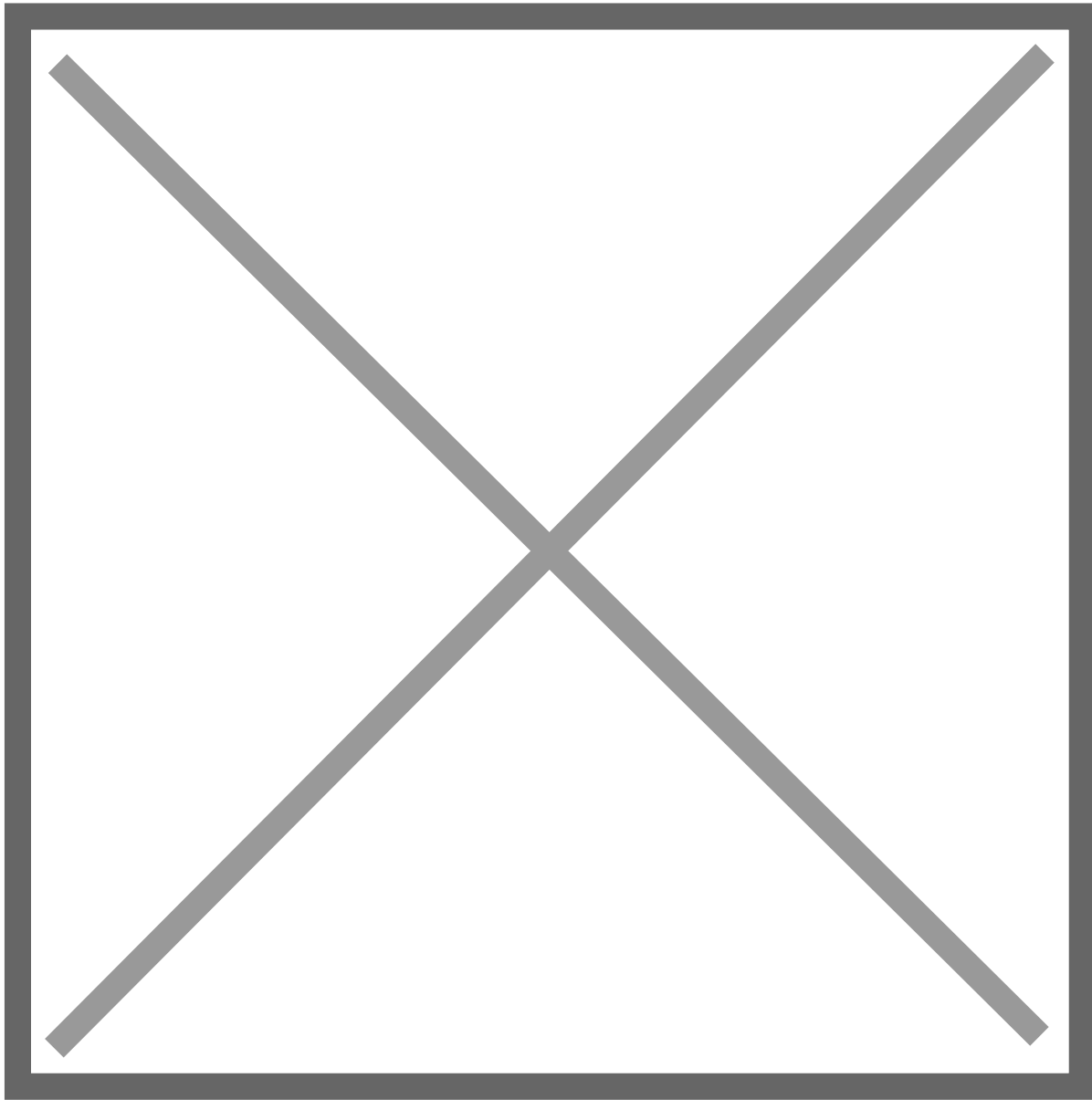
She knows firsthand how playing sports can impact a young person's life.

"I have three daughters, who all played softball throughout the years, and two of them went on to play college softball," Cantu said. "The sport has played such a big part of their lives; it's shaped them into the people they are today and helped build strong leadership skills."

Cantu volunteers as a 14U assistant coach. Her duties during practice consist of feeding the pitching machines, throwing wiffle balls and catching throw-ins. During games, she is the dugout coach filling out the lineup cards and assisting the girls on where they're playing defensively each inning.

"I volunteer my time because I love seeing the smile on the young girls' faces, especially when they're able to hit a home run over the fence," she says. "It's amazing to see the young ladies' hard work and practice pay off with their performance in the games."

In addition to her work with Flower Mound Youth Sports, Cantu is also an advocate for Donate Life America, a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the number of donated organs to save and heal lives through transplants. In 2018, Cantu made the incredible decision to donate one of her kidneys to someone in need.



Scoring a Win Win

Like Cantu, Weston Jenkins, a plastics production engineering manager at Toyota Kentucky, uses his free time to volunteer with the Georgetown Baseball Club.

His contributions to the club are a win-win. Volunteering with the baseball club allows him to support and give back to his community at the same time.

“Dating back to my son’s early childhood, he would constantly be either entertained or want to play some type of sport, majority of the time baseball,” Jenkins says. “Once he reached the age for organized and competitive sports, my wife and I knew it would only be a matter of time before we would be involved in select teams and

travel.”

Jenkins said volunteering his time at the baseball club brings him joy. That’s why he ended up volunteering with the Georgetown Baseball Club where he’s been coaching for two years.

“Giving back to your community and volunteering to help or make a difference in any aspect gives one a sense of pride and joy knowing that you or your team improved someone’s life for the better,” he said. “Nothing beats seeing all those smiles.”

Earlier this year, the club kicked off a tournament in their hometown but made sure to include some volunteering the night before. They packed food donations for Feed My Starving Children at a local church.

“One simple task or guideline that can be used in any aspect of life is when you’re able, lend a willing hand to anyone that needs it,” he says.