



Difference Maker: Mark Cousley Encourages Community Service

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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ALTON - Every community has a few people who make a major difference wherever they go. In Alton, Mark Cousley is one of those people.

Cousley is a familiar face around town, as he spends a lot of time volunteering with different organizations and mentoring young people in the area. He encourages everyone to do what they can to help, and he thanks the people who work alongside him to make the community a better place.

“The community is what you make it,” Cousley said. “I think if anybody who can volunteer time or resources to help people who may just need a hand-up versus a handout, basically help people make their lives better, make the town better. We all live in the Riverbend area and work and play, might as well do everything we can to make it and its citizens, to put them in the best light possible or the best position.”

Cousley currently serves as the vice chair and the finance committee chair for the Salvation Army. He will become the chair of the Salvation Army in October, and he’s looking forward to it. He is also the advisory board president for the Catholic Children’s Home, where he has volunteered for ten years. He has been the co-chair of the Piasa Bird District Boy Scouts of America Friends of Scouting campaign for four years, and he also serves as a mentor with the Edwardsville CEO program.

All of this community service is in addition to his full-time job as the Vice President of Commercial Banking with the Bank of Madison County. It’s a busy schedule, but Cousley has always made the time for volunteering because these organizations mean so much to him.

“Everybody has a different road through life, and frankly, some will come in a little easier than others and some have instances, through no fault of their own, that kind of caused roadblocks,” he explained. “Anybody who can help them get past that, it makes everything better.”

This is why Cousley will always be an advocate for community service. He encourages people to help out wherever possible, but he understands it can be a little overwhelming for those who don’t know where to start.

There are several volunteer opportunities throughout the Riverbend region no matter what your interests are. Cousley tells people to make a phone call and simply see what help is needed.

“I would just encourage people to join an organization. Just be involved and see what other people do,” he said. “Just join the organization and go to meetings and see what they do and then you’ll meet people who have the same interests and you’ll find yourself working on projects that you didn’t even think of. Just sitting at home and thinking things should be different doesn’t solve anything.”

Cousley also noted that the Salvation Army is still collecting money for their Red Kettle Campaign. You can mail donations to 525 Alby Street in Alton or [donate online](#) at the [official Alton Salvation Army website](#).

