

GraceWorks volunteer Brent Moelker works hard, provides free service and is super-dependable.

But Brent has something extra that makes him one of GraceWorks' stand-out volunteers who labored daily to provide food, shelter and support to more than 11,000 people last year.

Brent has the ability to fully fulfill GraceWorks' mission statement of "Neighbor serving Neighbor."

"His personality has the desire to connect and have other people connect with each other," said his staff supervisor Mark Short, GraceWorks Food Distribution Manager. "When we have occasional down time, he's the one that will strike up conversations to get to know other volunteers and staff. His goal is to fill community, not to fill up time. That builds a stronger team."

And when the GraceWorks' waiting room is full, and volunteers are working at full speed, Brent is an oasis of confidence and calm, Mark said.

"He can be calm when there so many balls in the air. He's our tallest volunteer, and even though he could seem imposing, he is not. He consistently carries and handles himself in a gentle manner."

The joy and the care Brent takes with his work allows Mark to entrust him to be a mentor to new volunteers in showing them the ropes and communicate his delight in service.

Brent first volunteered at GraceWorks in December 2015, but a job opportunity prevented his ability to volunteer. He retired last January and returned to the volunteer service he had loved so much. He works in the GraceWorks Food Pantry to help Neighbors needing food to select their items for their pantries at home.

"I love being able to meet folks and see the smiles on their faces when we provide assistance with food," Brent said. "One lady laughed out loud when she couldn't believe how much food she was getting."

"It just warms my heart to see people who want to be prayed for," he said. "When you just ask them if they want a prayer, you can see the skies open up for them in their eyes."

The joy Brent takes in serving led him to volunteer three half-days a week. So far this year, he has given 263 hours of his time to help others. That time translates to a value of more than \$7,500, according to the federal volunteer service rate..

Brent is diligent about showing up to work and is quick to substitute for other volunteers who cannot make their shift. He jumps into any task needed, no matter how menial it is.

"He doesn't think he's higher than someone else," Mark said. "He will grab a broom to sweep the floor, whatever. He has the attitude of 'I can do that.'"

Brent is not content to build community at GraceWorks itself. He constantly is on the lookout for people he can convince to join GraceWorks volunteers. So far, he has not been terribly successful at recruitment, but he says he will never stop trying.

"I wish everybody would do this, even short-term at least, to see what God is doing around us."