

April 2018 - Linda Bode Phinney

Congratulations to our April Volunteer of the Month, Linda Bode Phinney! Linda has been volunteering with Atlanta Track Club for the past eight years in varying capacities. Once a course monitor for the Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon, she now helps Atlanta Track Club In-Training participants prepare for that race and helps pace participants to their goal time at the holiday event. This summer you can find Linda helping In-Training participants train for the AJC Peachtree Road Race at Fleet Feet Decatur!

Do you remember your first time volunteering with Atlanta Track Club? What event was it and what brought you back?

My first Atlanta Track Club volunteer event was as a course monitor for the Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon in 2010. It was so much fun cheering and keeping runners safe along Juniper Street that I volunteered in the same place for three years. I then decided to volunteer as a race pacer for this same event. Volunteering for this event annually is a tradition for me and a way for me to give back to the running community.

What is your favorite Atlanta Track Club event? Why?

I love the spirit and the distance of the PNC Atlanta 10 Miler. It seems to attract more runners because of the distance and does not require the same time commitment as marathon training. This also allows for more participants to enjoy the post race party together. The medal does also say "The Perfect 10."

What is one of your best memories from volunteering at any race?

Although this may not be my best memory it certainly is my most memorable one! The Monday before the 2016 Thanksgiving Day Half Marathon I was doing a practice pace run with my co-pacer, Priscilla Parris. It was dark, very early, and we were running along Monroe Drive towards Piedmont Park. I turned my head very quickly and did not see a branch sticking out of a bush. It broke off right in the corner of my eye. I ended up having to go to the eye doctor and found out that I scratched my cornea. Although the



doctor initially told me I might not be able to run because of my eye injury, it all worked out and I was able to pace the race without an eye patch! The other interesting connection is my eye doctor shared that she too was running the event and she wanted to make sure I was able to participate.

What is your favorite thing about volunteering with Atlanta Track Club? What brings you back?

I love the people I volunteer with and participants I have been fortunate to get to know while helping them meet their goals. The people and the community bring me back.

Do you have a favorite volunteer assignment? If so, explain.



I have been a volunteer Run Lead with Atlanta Track Club's In-Training program for four years and it is by far my favorite volunteer assignment. I think I like it most because it continues for a few months at a time and is not over after a few hours or a day. It gives me a chance to get to know fellow volunteers and In-Training participants. It's also a

great feeling when you see someone you have been training with for the past few months cross the finish line and meet his or her goals. Along the way, I have met some interesting people, made some amazing friends and learned a lot about running.

Do you do any volunteering in the community beyond Atlanta Track Club?

I am a lifelong donor with the American Red Cross and I have donated 152 units of blood and platelets. I started donating blood shortly after I got out of high school. Later in life, following my father's cancer diagnosis, I started donating platelets because they are essential for patients surviving and fighting cancer. Someone had to provide platelets for him; this is a way to help others and honor those who donated platelets for his treatments.

What do you do for a living? Do you work? Are you retired? Professional volunteer?

I have been part of the American Express Travel Services team for 29 years. In my current role, I am responsible for managing the global Customer Experience program for our premium customers. I enjoy my job, the people I work with and have made some amazing friends around the world. I have also been fortunate to have traveled to some great destinations and stayed at some amazing resorts.

I also work part time ushering at multiple venues in the area. For the past 15 years, it has been the perfect "fun" job for me because I love live music and interacting with our fans.



Tell us something interesting about yourself – an interesting fact or a story that will help us get to know you...

I enjoy gardening and spending time in my yard. It is one of my favorite places to relax and just hang out. We have two decks and a small pond with water features in our back yard. My perfect Sunday includes an early morning run on the Lilburn greenway, followed by a few hours of yard work and a late afternoon BBQ in our back yard.