

Continued from our Spring 2017 Newsletter
Question and Answer with new Trustee Mark Shaffer

Q: What motivated you to want to serve the residents of Canton Township as a trustee?

A: Having two children of my own now growing up in our community served as the major motivation to get involved and serve. I want Canton Township to be an even better place for all residents to live, work, learn, have fun in, and ultimately thrive within. When I look at my children I often think about their future, like all parents do, and I decided I wanted to make sure I played a more significant role in guiding our future as a community. My children, as well as all the children in our community, should be proud of and want to call Canton Township home some day and opt to raise a family here, if they so desire.

I want to do my part, fully realizing it takes a TEAM to make great things happen, and I am now a big part of that team. I want to help make sure our community remains a destination for others in the years ahead. I am not happy with the status quo. I think our community has a large number of positive things happening that we can build off of over the coming years. I want to capitalize on the fact we have a lot of engaged and passionate residents who also believe in the future of our township. Nothing happens overnight, so I look forward to working with township residents and businesses, my fellow trustees, and all township employees as we help realize our full potential together.



Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself and your connection to Canton Township?

A: Absolutely. I was born and raised here and have called Canton Township home nearly my entire life. I'm 39 years old and heading to the big 4-0 this summer. My wife Hather was also raised in Canton Township and we are now raising our family here. We both graduated from Canton South High School. Just as we were contemplating starting a family, an opportunity to purchase my childhood home (in the Steiner Allotment area) cropped up. So, our two boys, ages 3 and 9, are now growing up in the same home surrounded by the same great neighbors. In fact, my three older brothers (Howard Jr., Curt, and Scott) were all raised at the same home our parents built when the allotment was just developing.

Q: Beyond service to the residents as the newest Canton Township Trustee, what other community organizations and activities are you involved with personally and professionally?

A: Getting involved in the community is at the core of who I am as an individual. I work hard to lead by example and I want my children to grow up understanding why service to others is so important to the long-term success of their community. Currently, I'm serving a multiple year term as a member of the Leadership Stark County Board of Trustees, member of Canton Rotary, serve on the Stark State College Technology Advisory Board (as an area employer who hires lots of Stark State graduates), a member of Canton Chamber's ystark! Young Professionals Engaged in Stark County program having served on the Professional Development Committee as well as the Northeast Ohio CEO Lunch and Learn Executive Committee, I'm active inside Canton Local Schools by volunteering in support of the elementary parental organization known as Walker PAWS PTO, and have served as the area management sponsor for our company community giving team efforts. I'm also a member of other industry organizations such as NAMIC – the National Association for Multi-ethnicity in Communications and SCTE – Society of Cable Telecommunications Engineers.

Q: What are you doing to get yourself up to speed as a new trustee?

A: I have to compliment everyone working at the township. In just a few short months I have spent a significant number of hours getting up to speed on my role and township operations in order to better serve our residents. It has been a little while since we have had a new trustee, so everyone has been very accommodating. From this quick ramp-up period, I can say our community of 13,000 residents is served daily by some very caring and passionate individuals, most of whom I did not know prior to this opportunity.



I love learning new things and this opportunity is full of new learning experiences. There is no training manual for a trustee position, so motivation and passion is mandatory for the role. I have been out in the field with all of our departments learning about what they do firsthand. This includes working overnight with the road crews clearing snow off the roads, fixing piping issues, filling potholes and such. I've spent time on shift with the Fire Department and participated in training, community

outreach events, and worked through the daily operations logistics of how the department is managed and ran. I am very hands-on with all I do and I am trying to be proactive about all aspects of township operations.

One of the more enjoyable learning experiences happened as I scheduled some vacation time from my other “job” and spent three full days in Columbus attending the Ohio Township Association winter conference. I attended many educational workshops stock full of information about township operations. The knowledge gained will go a long way toward helping to effectively serve as a trustee. I happily earned certification from the State of Ohio Auditor’s office for public records and open meetings law. The time spent on weekends, evenings, and even overnight is so very important as you never know what issue we will be dealing with tomorrow or next week while providing township services to residents, solving problems, and thinking about our future as a community. Continuing to look for ways to garner efficiency out of our operations remains top of mind in all that we do.



At the same time, I have also reached out to other community leaders and government entities with questions and to gather different perspectives. This approach is shortening my educational learning curve tremendously and is helping to build a network of individuals who can help us achieve great things by working together in Canton Township. Admittedly, I spent the balance of a year attending township functions and board of trustees meetings to help educate myself in the event the day would come where I could serve in this capacity. What I thought I learned was just the tip of the iceberg, as they say!

Q: What do you enjoy doing in your spare time and what are some of your interests?

A: I enjoy spending time with family and friends. I have come to realize how precious family time is, especially with two younger children, so I make a commitment to put family first. Most of what I get involved in outside of work has some level of family involvement incorporated into it. My free time is an investment into family first and foremost. I enjoy watching and attending sporting events, especially auto racing of all varieties! I find activities such as golfing, bowling, vehicle detailing, video editing, reading, and taking on home improvement projects to be refreshing. I enjoy dabbling in and staying current with technology, but that gets expensive fast. I have also started to incorporate more exercise into my daily routine. I am also an avid history nut, so I tend to dive into any activity that has a historical significance and can educate me.

Q: What qualifications do you bring to the residents as a Canton Township Trustee?

A: I bring to the residents over 22 years of practical leadership and management experience in private business, all obtained while earning various promotions through a wide variety of operations management roles at Charter Communications. Most recently, I’ve served in the capacity of Senior Manager/North Canton site leader overseeing residential data and voice operations. Under this structure our location has continually received annual recognition for being the top performing location within the company. From a formal education perspective, I earned my business management degree from Walsh University, proudly graduating with summa cum laude distinction and as a member of Sigma Beta Delta International Honor Society for Business Management and Administration. Leadership Stark County helped further develop my motivation and dedication toward community trusteeship through additional training in leadership skills and education about the community. I’m a proud graduate of the Leadership Stark County Signature Program’s 19th class. I am also a graduate of the Leadership Stark County Government Academy, which is a collaboration among the Canton Chamber of Commerce and many local organizations as well as The Ohio State University Extension. I completed and received certification in a number of other leadership and management courses as well as additional finance and accounting coursework from the University of Denver. That said, I wish there was a degree for having good common sense, bringing a practical approach to problem solving, and treating people correctly. I believe I’ve exhibited all of those qualities time and again in my professional career while also maintaining a high degree of motivation, engagement, and accountability in every endeavor I choose to take on. I am bringing that same energy and passion to serve the residents of Canton Township.

I am very much looking forward to serving the residents of Canton Township through this year and eagerly anticipate the fall election when residents will have a chance to voice their approval or disapproval through the election process. I want to earn the trust of residents meanwhile and look forward to doing my part to help Canton Township to be the very best Proud Family Community it can be!