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Volunteers rehabbing Over-the-Rhine

BY JANET C. WETZEL | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

At a time when many people are focused on building careers and/or families, two local men have something extra on their priority list - community service.

Joe Hansbauer, 32, and Bobby Maly, 27, met in 2003 pursuing a common goal of helping others, and have teamed up on projects to that end. In 2006 they co-founded the Washington Park Music Festival to create awareness of the Over-the-Rhine park and help charities.

The daytime festival is an offshoot of the Midpoint Music Festival, held at night. They partnered with the OTR Foundation the first year, and raised money this year for the School for Creative and Performing Arts. They worked months on the festival, plus both have other volunteer projects.

Hansbauer, senior information technology manager for Accenture, has volunteered five years with Give Back Cincinnati as chairman of the advisory board and a member of the operational board. He helps GBC, which provides community service and volunteer opportunities for young professionals, with 10-12 annual events. He's co-founder of Katrina Collaboration (now part of GBC), which takes volunteers to New Orleans to help Habitat for Humanity build homes. The Cincinnati native lives in Newport with his wife, Melanie, and daughter, Greta.

Many trips to a similar event in Austin, Texas, gave Hansbauer the idea for the Washington Park festival. Maly, who had fallen in love with the park and was excited about OTR work, was eager to help. As a Washington Park Community Partners volunteer and event coordinator for his company-sponsored Washington Park cleanup, Maly was already helping revitalization there. He's also on a Washington Park redesign steering committee.

After college, Maly left his native Cincinnati to earn a master's degree in Washington, D.C. He worked on Capitol Hill, then traveled and lived abroad, planning to work for an international group. By 2004, he realized that "Cincinnati is my favorite place in the world." He came home to stay and jumped right into helping revitalize downtown. The real estate developer, vice president of development for The Model Group, lives in Newport. He's on the OTR Chamber of Commerce board and committees; on the board of the Newport Housing Corp.; a board member and committee co-chair for Agenda 360, an economic development plan for area counties; and last year founded the OTR Five K Race to promote Over-the-Rhine and raise money for the chamber.

Brian Tiffany, OTR chamber president, said the two are amazing assets.

"Their work will enhance neighborhoods, lives, and give other young people the chance to be agents of change in the city," he said. "They inspire. When they come up with an idea, it's 'get out of our way, we're getting this done.'"

Hansbauer said he's incredibly busy, but loves every minute.



"I enjoy working with people, I enjoy creating new events and working to promote the city," Hansbauer said. "I'm glad to help, and to see such good results."

Maly agreed, and added, "If you're able to do things, there's no excuse for not getting involved. It's an

obligation, it's exciting and fulfilling."

Do you know a Hometown Hero?

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