

Cathy Ewing loves working on the house she is building with her husband, Kenneth, in Lynchburg.

The retired couple are building the home themselves on property where they currently live in an old farmhouse.

The problem—if it can be called a ‘problem’—is Cathy stays very busy. Retirement after more than 43 years at the nuclear company now known as BWXT Technologies, Inc., seems like it should have opened up her calendar, but when someone enjoys giving back to their community, there’s a line of people asking for help.

Fortunately for Virginia Amateur Sports, donating volunteer hours to the Commonwealth Games is among her favorite things to do. She’s been a vital—and busy—volunteer ever since the Games moved to Lynchburg.

“I’ve always been a go-getter. I do what needs to be done,” Ewing says. “I enjoy helping our community. I love seeing people and encouraging them.”

Encouragement is an overlooked part of the job. Ewing has worked the Virginia 10-miler every year but one since it was first run in 1974. She likes to work the finish line and call out encouragement to the runners trying to push through those last, difficult yards.

“I tell the finish line workers that we stay from the time the first runners finish until the last ones finish, because they’ve all done it, no matter their time,” Ewing says. “You can feel the runners enjoy having someone encourage them.”

Smiles are free to give away and Cathy is generous.

“I’m a smiler,” she says. “People like to see me smiling and they’ll smile, too.”

She said regular runners recognize her year after year.

While offering her services to the 10-miler, Cathy met Pete Lampman (Former Virginia Amateur Sports – President). When the Games moved to Lynchburg, Lampman knew he could count on her help, and he was right.

Ewing works the tailgate party and has been a fixture at the swim meets and the track meets. She’s also put in time working the pickleball tournament.

“I’ll do whatever needs to be done,” she says.

Sometimes that’s every job for 15 minutes as she spells other volunteers, giving them a time for a short break.

For a grass-roots event like the Commonwealth Games, a small army of willing and competent volunteer is needed to have any chance to succeed. People like Cathy Ewing are vital. Fortunately, those people exist in Virginia, and they offer their time and efforts as needed.

With her efforts at the track meet for the Games, plus the 10-miler and the Lynchburg Turkey Trot—a 5k race on Thanksgiving morning that benefits Humankind, a non-profit community service agency—it's natural to think Ewing is a runner. Turns out, she took up running in the last few years, but has never pursued it heavily.

"I've never really been a runner but in the last eight years I've run some races," Ewing says. "It's more like run-walking."

Ewing says she's happy and healthy and enjoys volunteering whenever she has the time. That's not always, because there is a house to finish.

"Whenever people ask for me to help I'll say 'As long as [Kenneth] doesn't need me at the moment I'm willing, but the house has to get done, too,'" Cathy says.