

# Team Depot

An Interview with Shannon Gerber,  
Executive Director, The Home Depot Foundation



Team Depot at work

**EDITORS' NOTE** Shannon Gerber leads The Home Depot's philanthropic strategy, volunteer efforts and The Homer Fund. Prior to joining The Home Depot Foundation, she spent 13 years with The Home Depot in events management. Most recently, she served as the Senior Director of events management where she led large-scale events for the company, as well as The Home Depot Foundation's fundraising events. In this role, Gerber helped raise millions of dollars to further the Foundation's work. Previously, Gerber worked with The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company in positions of increasing responsibility in events management and has served on the advisory board of Make-A-Wish Georgia and is an active volunteer through Team Depot, Atlanta Community Food Bank and other organizations. Gerber earned a B.S. in business management from the University of Phoenix.



Shannon Gerber

**FOUNDATION BRIEF** The Home Depot Foundation ([corporate.homedepot.com/community](http://corporate.homedepot.com/community)), a registered 501(c)(3) public charity, works to improve housing issues facing U.S. veterans, train skilled tradespeople to fill the labor gap and support communities impacted by natural disasters. Since 2011, the Foundation has invested more than a quarter of a billion dollars in veteran-related causes and improved more than 41,000 veteran homes and facilities. In 2018, the Foundation committed \$50 million to train 20,000 skilled tradespeople by 2028, starting with separating military veterans, at-risk youth and members of the Atlanta Westside community.

## Will you highlight the history and heritage of The Home Depot Foundation and the main focus of its work?

The Home Depot Foundation was established in 2002, but we have been doing philanthropic efforts and volunteerism since the day the company was founded.

The Home Depot Foundation serves as the philanthropic arm of The Home Depot and focuses on three main pillars of giving including serving our nation's heroes, assisting communities in need after a disaster strikes and training skilled tradesmen and women to fill the skilled labor gap. We manage the

philanthropic strategy and grant initiatives, as well as The Homer Fund, which is our employee assistance giving fund, and Team Depot, which is our associate-led volunteer force.

## Does the Foundation build partnerships in these efforts?

Through our nonprofit partnerships and our hands-on volunteering through Team Depot, we have invested more than \$280 million just in veteran causes alone since 2011.

We work through our nonprofit partners and have 20 national partnerships across the country, and then we have over 4,000 local nonprofits that we work with on smaller projects in local communities.

## You mentioned the Team Depot associate-led volunteer program. Will you discuss this effort?

Team Depot is our associate-led volunteer force – we have over 400,000 associates who volunteer hundreds of thousands of hours each year to build and repair homes for those who have served us or live in communities that have been impacted by natural disasters.

Team Depot brings our mission to life by demonstrating our core values, like giving back, doing the right thing, and taking care of our people – those are all core values of Home Depot that have been around for the 40 years that this company has been in business.

Team Depot volunteers are very skilled associates – they are the boots on the ground that are getting the work done with our nonprofit partners in the local communities in which they live and work.

## How critical are metrics to track the impact of these efforts?

We regularly track the impact of our efforts. For any grant that is given to any of our national partners, we have a metric in place to measure what we're trying to achieve.

These metrics are important for us in order to determine the best ways to support our veterans and communities through our giving. This allows us to optimize our future efforts and ensure we are making an impact. We look at what social issue we're trying to solve and develop the metrics to measure our progress.

For instance, we know that there are more than 37,000 homeless veterans on any given night. We look at our portfolio of efforts around this issue and we measure how we are helping to not only house those veterans, but how we decrease the in-flow of veterans so they don't become homeless. Our goal is to see those numbers going down. When we started this effort in 2011, there were over 80,000 homeless veterans, so we know the work we and other partners are doing to help decrease that number is working.

When we look at our population of combat-wounded veterans and the critical home repairs we're doing to develop smart adaptive homes for them, we know how many critically wounded and catastrophically wounded veterans there are, so we are looking at the metrics that support our goals in helping that population.

It's the same with our skilled labor. Last year, we committed \$50 million to help fill the skilled labor gap and, today, there are 300,000 open construction jobs. That number fluctuates, but it's about what we're doing to decrease that number. We have a goal of training 20,000 people over the next nine years, so it's about how we can help and measure the success for that program.

Each program and portfolio has a different metric, which we measure regularly throughout the year.

## You have spent more than 13 years at The Home Depot working in different parts of the company. When this opportunity presented itself to lead the Foundation, what made you feel it was the right fit?

In my role, I am very blessed to be able to lead the philanthropic strategy and volunteer efforts to make sure we're serving our associates, veterans, communities, and partners and that we're making an impact. This is something I'm very passionate about.

It was an easy transition for me in terms of knowing that this was where I wanted to be and I was excited about the impact I know this great company can have.

I come from a strong military family, so the veteran tie was a nice part that ties into my personal life.

This company employs more than 35,000 veteran associates, so our mission is a natural connection to the company and doing the right thing is a part of who we are and it's something I was excited to be able to lead. ●