

WOLLENBERG AWARD

The Wollenberg Award is presented annually to those who provided extraordinary resources and leadership to Rebuilding Together Peninsula. The 2013-2014 award is proudly presented to Martin Screen Shop and John E. McNellis.



John E. McNellis

John E. McNellis is a very busy man dedicating his career as a retail development guru at McNellis Partners. John is also a monthly columnist for Registry Magazine. He serves on the national Board of Trustees for the Urban Land Institute, is a Governor of the ULI and a member of the ICSC. John also sits on the Board of Directors for Outward Bound USA and is a weekly volunteer with the Urban Ministry's Food Closet project.

As if that was not sufficient, John is also a very active supporter of Rebuilding Together Peninsula. It was about 13 years ago when his good friend, Bill Butler, introduced him to RTP.

“It was at a time when I realized writing checks to nonprofits and charities wasn’t enough,” John said. “I wanted to get actively involved.”

For John, getting involved with RTP was compelling because he could bring his specific knowledge of real estate and construction to the organization. “Rebuilding Together does for nonprofit exactly what we do for profit – that is it rebuilds, it restores, and it rehabilitates houses, and we do the same thing for shopping centers,” John said. He felt because RTP was real estate and development oriented, he could bring his skills and contacts for a greater leverage effect within the organization.



In the 13 years John has been involved with RTP, he has served as a board member, board chair, previewer, Team Build sponsor, and National Rebuilding Day (NRD) ambassador. Though John enjoyed the many ways he has participated with RTP, it was being a NRD goodwill ambassador he enjoyed the most. It also gave him his most memorable moment. John was in the process of visiting 20 project sites. He arrived at the last home on his list and all the volunteers were gone. He came across an old woman in her 80s and her daughter in her 50s sitting on lawn chairs in front of their house. John and his NRD partner approached the two ladies and introduced themselves. The two women began to cry and the old woman hugged them and exclaimed, “Today I live in Atherton!” John said they were so moved about the work the volunteers had completed – painting, landscaping, interior work – both women were in tears.

“RTP will always hold a very special place in my heart,” John said. “Of all the boards I’ve been on and all the organizations I support, RTP is my favorite.”

We are very fortunate to have an advocate like John. He is a great part of our organization and he truly holds a special place in RTP’s heart.

