

What keeps volunteers going in winter?

By Lorraine Willmot

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Don Nylin, who lives at [Sedgebrook](#) in Lincolnshire, Ill., believes you go with your strengths to get things done. So when a silent auction came around where he volunteers, he knew just what to do.

For the past ten years, Nylin has been a volunteer project manager at Executive Service Corps of Chicago (ESC), which provides consulting services for nonprofits. He's helped parks, libraries, the developmentally disabled, and schools with things like board development, strategic planning, and marketing.

A former school administrator, Nylin decided his contribution for the ESC fund-raiser would be something for the children. The self-taught woodworker got busy handcrafting a one-of-a-kind rocking horse. "I've made lots of toys—trucks, wagons, even a biplane my granddaughter could sit in and pedal," he says. "I took on rocking horses 25 years ago mainly for the challenge. Until now, all have been for family members."

At the ESC silent auction, the winning bid on the rocking horse was \$175, which Nylin thinks was a steal. He says that he hopes children in the Chicago area are enjoying the ride as much as he enjoyed making it in [Sedgebrook's](#) wood shop.

Nylin spends a fair amount of time in the [Sedgebrook](#) wood shop, crafting furniture, decorative boxes, and cabinets for a church and himself. He also repairs and refinishes antiques and model ships. Prized possessions include a table made by his grandfather, who trained as a cabinetmaker in Sweden.

The philosophy of precision he's developed as a woodworker has carved out other paths for him too. "My three criteria in looking for a retirement community—and I looked at eight—were the continuum of care offered, being within 20 miles of my daughter's home, and a good wood shop," he says. "I've found that all here at [Sedgebrook](#)."



Sedgebrook's Don Nylin handcrafted this one-of-a-kind rocking horse for a fund-raiser benefiting Chicago nonprofits. It sold for \$175, which he thinks was a steal.