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## Young Entrepreneur Is Volunteering Matchmaker

By [Kyle Kennedy](#)  
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LAKELAND | Callahan Fore was barely old enough to drive when he became an entrepreneur three years ago.

Then a 16-year-old junior at All Saints' Academy in Winter Haven, Fore spearheaded the development of SweatMonkey.org, a non-profit Internet operation that connects youths with local volunteer jobs.

The idea wasn't hard to come by. Like many other high school students, Fore struggled to find volunteer work needed for a graduation requirement. Enlisting the help of family and fellow students, he launched SweatMonkey in early 2007. Two and a half years later, the oddly-named venture is growing into a gorilla, used in pilot programs for Polk County's public school system, as well as the University of Florida.

"It's gradually getting bigger and bigger," said Fore, now 19 and heading into his sophomore year at UF, where he is majoring in architecture. "I've never been so excited about something in my life."

Aimed toward youths age 13 and up, SweatMonkey boasts nearly 1,800 student members who have logged more than 110,000 hours with volunteer groups and employers (for job training). Users create a free, secure account and browse for service opportunities; their completed hours can be tracked and verified by school officials.

For now, the donation- and grant-funded site is largely focused on Polk. Participating organizations include the United Way, Salvation Army, and Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine. In addition to a student advisory board culled from local high schools, SweatMonkey also is guided by an executive board with representatives from Publix Super Markets, Polk County Schools, Florida Southern College and other entities.

"It's been really useful for us," said Polk Schools' Serena Peeler, a SweatMonkey board member who has been testing the program for the district's on-the-job training courses. "You couldn't ask for a better tool."

SweatMonkey's online infrastructure was developed by Callahan's father, Scott Fore, who handles most of the venture's daily functions through his Lakeland firm, Treetop Software Company. Scott Fore also inspired the site's name: "monkey" was a familial nickname for Callahan, and "sweat" refers to the value of hard work.

Though Scott is credited with SweatMonkey's logistics, it was Callahan who drove its creation.

While at All Saints' he worked with an advisory board of 20 students from Polk high schools, often gathering at the Fores' Lakeland home on Sundays.

Callahan "would get things going right away and would have an agenda. We never just sat there and rambled. Everything had a purpose," said Katherine Artman, 20, a Bartow High School IB graduate and current UF sophomore who still works for Sweat Monkey. "Everybody involved had a common goal: we had to get more volunteer service hours but didn't know how."



Ernst Peters | The Ledger  
Scott Fore

Callahan also served as the young face of Sweat Monkey when it came time to pitch the idea to service groups.

"I'd put on a collared shirt and khaki pants, a belt and nice shoes, and go to different meetings, like Habitat for Humanity or Kiwanis Club and Rotary," he said. "I'd go and give my spiel about Sweat Monkey and people would come up to me and hand me their business card and say 'Hey, that's really cool.' Being in front of a crowd was difficult but I had something exciting I wanted to tell them."

In the summer of 2007, Callahan headed to UF to attend the Young Entrepreneurs for Leadership and Change program for high school students. It was there he introduced Sweat Monkey to professor Kristen Joos, who helped initiate a test run of the program earlier this year with UF students with service requirements.

"We consider Cal to be a social entrepreneur, which means he is using the skills and strategies of business to innovatively and sustainably solve social problems," Joos said.

She said UF plans to expand its SweatMonkey pilot later this year.

"Easily, by next fall, there will be thousands of UF students using it," including those in fraternities and sororities, Joos said.

Peeler said the Polk school district plans to begin using SweatMonkey countywide this fall for its on-the-job training programs.

Callahan, meanwhile, is spending his summer home from UF working on SweatMonkey, meeting with state officials (Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp has endorsed SweatMonkey) and educators, creating instructional videos for the site's upcoming revamp and attending the National Conference on Volunteering and Service this weekend in San Francisco.

He will return to a support role when classes resume at UF in the fall, but Callahan said he plans to stay closely involved with SweatMonkey.

"I've got a great team helping me out," he said. "I was there when we first started the thing, so it's kind of like my baby. I want to see it succeed. I want to see it blast off."

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