

Volunteer Spotlight: Robin Frey

Robin Frey grew up in Alden, NY, next to the old Delaware, Lackawanna & Western (DL&W) rail line, built in 1883 and abandoned in 1963. “We lived in the old hotel across the street from the North Alden Station,” she noted. “We were all homeschooled and television wasn’t allowed, so we had time to get creative (or get into trouble) outdoors, mostly along that old rail line.” Hours on end spent exploring the tracks led to her love of “all things outdoors and all things railroad.”



Robin credits her grandmother for her creativity and her father for her entrepreneurial spirit. Her dad “bought an old station wagon, painted *Ken’s Handyman Wagon* along its side panel, and *Voila!* He was in business!” She helped him make flyers and spread them all over the community, even door-to-door. Robin’s eccentric grandmother exhibited her own creative flair. Like Robin, she loved the outdoors and loved to paint, using “crazy, bright colors to interpret the natural world around her.”

Self-sufficiency was a rule of thumb in Robin’s family, and Robin would hold a series of odd jobs starting at age 14. By 17, she was out on her own. “I attended GCC and took a course in advertising and design. But I was already earning a living at that time, and I just wanted to work with my hands – like my dad.” She soon landed a job with Ingersoll Painting & Construction, painting and doing intricate plaster work on some of Buffalo’s most historic homes and businesses. “I really enjoyed doing my small part to preserve and restore some of these magnificent buildings.”

‘Tired hands’ led her to retire the paint brush for less physical marketing and advertising, first with Joe Basil Chevrolet and later as the Marketing Manager for the entire Basil Automotive Group. “I became adept using a variety of Internet marketing platforms. I produced advertising materials and managed the advertising budget for the Group.”

Some years later, moving to Ashford, NY, Robin again found herself living near a rail line. “I started walking the corridor regularly. It was so beautiful! I got involved with the [Pop Warner section](#) of the trail and started taking lots of pictures in the area – mostly of the trail. I showed them to the owner of *Vanover Fine Arts*, one of Springville’s local galleries at the time”, and they were so impressed that they “invited me to do a show of my own there, featuring many photos of the trail. I called it *Beauty In Our Backyard*.”

During a brief move to Las Vegas, Robin secured a marketing management role with *Goodnature*, a commercial juicing equipment manufacturer which, oddly enough, was based in Buffalo. Her work focused on increasing brand awareness through industry trade shows and required frequent travel to promote the company. *Goodnature* moved her back to their Buffalo headquarters to expand their social media presence and produce the company’s annual *JuiceCon* convention. Robin’s recent corporate projects include developing a new company website, overseeing a rebranding effort and producing the firm’s popular hardcover publication, *The Juicing Companion*. “It’s a growing company with lots of opportunities. I’m really happy there.”



Both a cyclist and hiker, Robin rode in the 2021 [EA2EVL Fondo](#), the fundraising bike ride from East Aurora to Ellicottville benefitting Erie Cattaraugus Rail Trail. There she reconnected with ECRT, and since then she's become a key player on the Communications Team, leading its Social Media focus group and developing branding guidelines.

"I look forward to helping with the website and building greater brand awareness for the trail.

Personally, rail corridors have played an important part in my development as a child. They were, and still are, places to explore, enjoy nature and spark creativity. I really want to see a safe, accessible trail for everyone to use and enjoy. This trail can make a huge difference in the quality of life for so many. The possibilities are endless!"