

Appleseed

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"Appleseed has no politics, no ideology," he said. "It's not a cult, not a militia. It's a program to train riflemen." That means not only an understanding of firearms use and safety, but a celebration of the role firearms have in this country and its founding. "A rifleman is a person who spends every day of his life trying to improve himself, his country, his state," Adam said. "This is not a program to teach people to defend the nation with a rifle. Our forefathers did that so that we don't have to. We honor them so that we never have to fight." Amy Pfaff, who traveled from Indiana with her husband Robb, agrees. "We check politics at the door. The only politics we talk about are those from 1775," she said. Adam, like others in the program, is quick to remind that the group is not interested in revolts against the government or anything other than teaching marksmanship and history from America's colonial beginnings. "We get folks started," Adam said. "We get them off the couch. We talk to them about their obligations. They have two options. They can go back home and get back on the couch or they can make change in their country." Those obligations are what Adam calls the sacred obligations each American has to be involved in the American governmental process. It's a responsibility of civic engagement, he said. Rick Smith, an airline pilot from Alabama based out of JFK Airport in New York, has been involved with the program for about five years. He's attended 60 to 70 Appleseed programs, and he's been coming to programs in Texas for about three years. "I basically just wanted to learn to shoot better. Once I got involved I saw I could help others learn more and impart the history of our country, too." That history is what Appleseed instructors call The Story and includes details of the events that sparked the American Revolution. Part of the program is that participants remember the past as more than static dates and names. In Appleseed, shooting is a link to civic duty because it's a tangible reminder of what happened at the country's beginning. "It's uniquely American," Smith said. "It's a responsibility. You can own a set of golf clubs and can be irresponsible and not much happens. If you own a firearm, every step has to be responsible. Every time I pull the trigger, it's just the same as my forefathers pulling the same trigger. It's a celebration of that freedom, that liberty, that opportunity to do this." This weekend the program opens up to anyone interested in a two-day program where participants of all ages can learn the basics of firearm safety and shooting, as well as hear the absolute best fundamentals of marksmanship in the country," Adam said. "An Appleseed weekend can change a lot of lives."

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