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## WHY I LOVE MY JOB:

### Kevin Copeland & Ryan Tabb, Junk haulers, Dunwoody

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**Job:** Junk haulers, Dunwoody

**What I do:**

The signs on their trucks may say "justTRASHit.com," but Kevin Copeland and Ryan Tabb say they give people their garages back and save marriages.

As president and vice president, respectively, of the trash-hauling business, they clear away old furniture, construction or demolition debris, and all the excess stuff that people accumulate.

"We de-clutter and de-stress their lives," often when clients are ready to move, have to deal with estates or just want to simplify their lives, Copeland said. "We go in, ask a lot of questions and give an estimate. We don't clean. They usually point and say, 'All this stuff is going.' "



KARL W. RITZLER/Special

Kevin Copeland (left) and Ryan Tabb no longer marvel at people's attachment to junk. Tabb recalls a

He'll help customers by giving them a packet of dot stickers to label the stuff to keep, sell, donate and throw away, but he's not an active participant in the process. Tabb added: "We do all the loading, lifting and take-away. Then we sweep up."

They have hauled away washing machines, wet carpet and mannequins and have had a job on the 19th floor of a Midtown high-rise. The oddest item, Copeland said, was a prosthetic leg with a shoe still attached.

They once had to haul items away from a murder scene. "That was the eeriest job," Tabb said.

Besides handling administrative tasks for a company with five trucks and seven employees, Copeland and Tabb, both 36, still hop in a truck and haul off junk.

Tabb said that sometimes the process is a lot like counseling, when people remain overly attached to their stuff. In the end, however, "we just reaffirm

customer who couldn't throw out a rocking horse that was falling apart.

what they already know." The stuff has to go.

Copeland said that some jobs are so big that he'll advise customers to get Dumpsters or tell them about where to donate usable items. Tabb recalled a time he had to break apart a piano.



Once the junk is in the truck, Copeland and Tabb recycle the metal and donate "the good stuff" to the Assistance League of Atlanta for sale in its thrift shops. Most of it, however, is trash and goes to the landfill.

**What got me interested in this:** "We saw a niche," Copeland said. "We like to fill niches."

Copeland and Tabb have known each other since they were in elementary school in DeKalb County. About 10 years ago, Copeland started a "trash valet" company that picks up trash at apartment residents' doorsteps and takes it to the Dumpster. Tabb joined the business about five years ago.

In that business, which still operates,

Copeland said people would ask if the company hauled off furniture or other large items. The business expanded to include service to individual homes, "and it just took off," Copeland said.

**Best part of my job:** "Seeing people's faces when they can get their car back into the garage," Copeland said.

"I like when we can take something that can be donated," Tabb added.

Both noted the relaxed corporate culture that allows Copeland to bring his dog to work. "We choose freedom over money," Tabb said.

**Most challenging part:**

"It's not the most glamorous business," Copeland said. Besides hauling junk, they deal with scheduling, estimating, talking with customers and collecting payments.

**What people don't know about my job:** "That my hands are actually clean," Copeland said. "I wear gloves."

- What keeps me going: "The customers," Copeland said. "The calls are constantly coming in. The business is growing, and the fruits of our labor are paying off."

He credited his employees, including operations manager Mike Dunn, for keeping things running smoothly.

**Preparation needed for this job:** "It's junk removal!" Copeland said. He said key assets are dependability, punctuality and a good driving record.

You also need the know-how to lift with your legs and must be in good physical shape, Tabb added. To run a company, you need business savvy, Copeland said.

Both Copeland and Tabb graduated from Lakeside High School.

Copeland attended Georgia State University and worked in the rental car and restaurant businesses. Tabb has a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Georgia and worked in inside sales and as a restaurant manager.

- By Karl W. Ritzler, for [ajcjobs](#). Got an interesting job that you love? E-mail your story to [jobseditor@ajc.com](mailto:jobseditor@ajc.com).