

Common ground

This weekend was the neighborhood clean-up. Every year, neighbors in our northside corner of Indianapolis turn out to pick up trash, trim back a few bushes that would otherwise block views and intersections, and celebrate our accomplishment over chili and beer.

Apparently, lots of litterers are driving drunk, because we picked up lots of liquor and beer bottles. Some people are neat about their littering—packing their food wrappers and peanut shells inside a bottle before tossing it. Judging by the number of fast-food wrappers and empty cigarette packs we picked up, people who don't care much about their own health seem to be the same people who don't care much about the health of the planet, either.

When we were done, we sat down together, ate, drank and got to know each other. The new neighbors introduced themselves. The old ones passed around the babies born over the winter.

I know from yard signs that we don't agree on politics. I know from neighborhood meetings that we don't agree on whether to install speed bumps. I know that Barb prefers Costco, but Terri likes Sam's Club. And I know that our soft-hearted neighbor Steve believes in relocating chipmunks to the woods down the street instead of killing them. (To make sure he isn't moving the same chipmunk over and over, he spray-paints their tails before letting them go.)

But on Saturday, we set all that aside to make our neighborhood better. And by doing so, we made ourselves better, rising above petty differences to find—and clean—our common ground.

What are you going to do this week that unites you with another person? Some ideas:

- Race for the Cure (komenindy.org)—or run, walk or otherwise raise money for whatever ailment concerns you.
- Teach an adult or child to read: indyreads.org or uwci.org.
- Register and vote. If you haven't done so already, you can't vote in the May 6 primary—but you have until October 6 to [register](#) and vote in the November general election. And please, take the time to cast your ballot.
- Clean up your own neighborhood, or city, or country: kibi.org.

Well said

Whatever you do may seem insignificant, but it is most important that you do it.

Mahatma Gandhi