



Mr. Mike's Neighborhood

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APRIL NEWSLETTER

HI NEIGHBORS,

“A river cuts through rock not because of its power, but because of it’s persistence.”

— Jim Watkins

THE BROKEN WINDOWS THEORY

It might be easier to understand what the Broken Windows Theory is by a simple example. Consider a vacant building that you pass by every day. One day you see that someone threw a rock at the building and broke one of the windows. If the window is not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to feel like they can break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside. Or consider a sidewalk in our Community. Some litter accumulates. Soon, more litter accumulates. Eventually, people even start leaving bags of trash from take-out restaurants there or even break into cars. It become an accumulated affect.

But, the Broken Windows Theory can have an opposite effect. When Linda and I started our daily walk to pick up trash, the first day we filled almost 4 full trash can bags. As with the quote regarding “persistence”, by doing it every day, we are now down to filling one Kroger plastic bag. I assume persistence plays a big part in it, but I can’t dismiss the fact that since many Neighbors see us taking this initiative, they may not be littering as much themselves, or even helping to pick up the trash they see.

Another example of the Broken Windows Theory can be seen in public restrooms. The inside of restroom stalls is a frequent target of graffiti and vandalism. When the managers of the restroom take action to remove graffiti, and repair damage within a day of it occurring, the social norm of not causing damage is maintained. On the other hand, if the management does not immediately clean or repair the damage, other individuals add further graffiti or damage, because the property is not cared for. The public restroom then becomes part of a system of physical disorder and the behavior of people using the restroom will also become more disorderly.

In essence, the Broken Windows Theory states that visible signs of disorder and misbehavior in an environment encourage further disorder and misbehavior. Small amounts of litter produces greater amounts of litter. As with our Community, small amounts of kindness produces greater amounts of kindness. With our “Smile and Wave Program”, by waving at our Neighbors who pass us, we now have Neighbors who are waving or tooting their horns first. With our “Say ‘Hi Neighbor Program’”, we now have Neighbors saying “Hi Neighbor” first. Persistence toward a positive effect pays.

So let me finish this section by asking you, what kind of examples can you think of how the Broken Windows Theory relates to managing your family? I’m sure you’ll find examples where if you don’t fix an issue when it starts, those issues will continue to fester.

WHO THE HELL IS MR. MIKE?

When Neighbors would come up to me and address me as “the Newsletter Guy”, I realized that many Neighbors know of me, maybe by my walks around the park, but don’t know my name or who I am. So, my name is Mike Whitty. I’m a 75 year old, 12 year resident who owns his home. If you’ve passed by my place at #828, you would see that I’m an avid gardener who enjoys changing the look of my place every year. As a youngster, I was a nationally ranked tennis player and a scholarship college graduate. Immediately out of college, I put my tennis career on hold so I could use my degree to teach 7th and 8th graders. After two years of teaching, I decided to become a tennis professional which lasted until I was 30 years old. I then started selling cars where I became successful enough to write my first book in 1988. That led me to starting Michael Learning Group, a sales and management training company specializing in large group seminars, where I was President for over 30 years. Over the years, I’ve written around a dozen books and twice as many audiobooks. I came to live at Lafayette Place when my mother, a Neighbor for over 30 years, needed my help as she grew older. And now, I’ll spend the rest of my life here offering assistance to my Neighbors as Mr. Mike’s Neighborhood.

As for Linda, she’s been a Neighbor here for over 35 years, and will likely live out her life here as myself. Linda is a beautiful person that had the same belief in developing a Neighbor-Centric Community that I had, and offered to help her Neighbors through Mr. Mike’s Neighborhood, originally the now defunct Lafayette Place Neighborhood Association. During her work career, she specialized in Property Management where she helped countless families attain Section 8 housing. She was actually the person who started our Community Cleanup Program and continues to make friends with every Neighbor she talks to. You’ll find much to like about this outstanding Neighbor, so don’t hesitate to stop her and say HI. BTW, we are not married and will remain great friends and Associates.

THE \$55 PENALTY FOR NOT CUTTING YOUR GRASS

As some of you have already experienced last year, if your grass gets tall and management puts a citation on your door, typically on a Friday, to cut your grass by Monday then the grass cutting company will do it. Management will charge you \$55. They don’t include this charge in your citation, so the first time you’ll see it is when they charge your rent that month. The reason they won’t tell you the penalty charge in the citation is because it’s in your lease that you signed, so they expect you to remember everything in the lease. If you get a citation, don’t just throw it away. Text me and I’ll cut it so you won’t experience this exorbitant penalty. This of course won’t be an issue if you allow me to cut your grass every couple of weeks. The cost is only \$20 which you can pay by cash, CashApp, or Credit/Debit Card, and of course if you don’t have the money at the time, you’re on the honor system to pay when you can.

THE PORCH PIRATE PROGRAM IS WORKING

Since my last newsletter, my Neighbors know that if you have a package delivered on your porch, you can text me and I’ll pick it up and bring it to my home, where you can pick it up when you get back. It’s unfortunate that we live in a world where Porch Pirating has become a major issue. So I can help you to eliminate the worry of having your package stolen. This is happening in our Community as we speak. So utilize this program. If you need a business card that you can carry with you, you’ll find them on the post with the newsletters in front of my home.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

I read this and totally understood her feelings: “I help people when they are in need. When I am the one who needs help, no one helps, not even those I’ve helped before. I felt used, so I stopped any contact with these people.” What a terrible feeling, but totally understandable. Helping others before yourself is a gift that many people don’t aspire to. There are givers and there are takers. The givers give, and the takers take. If you are a giver, don’t stop. You are blessed and will be rewarded, I promise.
