



## **Mr. Mike's Neighborhood**

#828 Cour Marie | 248.705.9306

[www.mrmikesneighborhood.org](http://www.mrmikesneighborhood.org) | [mike@mrmikesneighborhood.org](mailto:mike@mrmikesneighborhood.org)

# **MAY NEWSLETTER**

**HI NEIGHBORS,**

**"We make our friends; we make our enemies; but God makes our next-door neighbor."**

**— G.K. Chesterton**

**-- WARNING --**

**This newsletter may be showing more of my feminine side.**

**Read at your own risk.**

### **THE 1 SECOND CONNECTION**

As Linda and I were taking our daily walk and picking up litter, a wonderful man visiting one of our Neighbors stopped us and asked, "are you the ones that keep waving at me every time I come in?" Now, this statement alone would have made our day. And then he said, "every time you smile and wave at me, for that moment, you make me feel so good." WOW!! Can you imagine the number of people in this world, or the number of Neighbors in our Community who have never heard anything like that? Well, it gives me more faith that what I do here, what I do now, what I do for my Neighbors, whether it be for 250 or just 1, has got to mean more than any of the selfish successes I've ever had in my life.

To know that you can make a connection with a person you do not know, all for the 1 second it takes to Smile and Wave, that has got to be big. You know, the Smile and Wave Program was created because I didn't have enough money to provide my Community with a little entertainment, and I wanted to let them know that I wasn't just talk when I started this in October 2022. To show that I would do what I was asking my Neighbors to do, create a Culture in our Park that would give Neighbors reasons to do the same. I wanted to take 250 homes and make them a real Neighborhood. I wanted to give my Neighbors an experience that they may have never had growing up. It was a lofty goal, and likely one that was unattainable. I knew that. Someone once said, "money doesn't buy happiness, but it buys everything else." I think it was Mike Baxter on Last Man Standing. But without money, I needed to be a little more creative in developing a Neighborhood Culture.

### **LET'S BREAK IT DOWN A LITTLE MORE**

The Smile and Wave Program started because of lack of funds. But it actually became more than that. There was a hidden message that didn't surface for months later. Neighbors like to be recognized, and they want to reciprocate by participating in the Smile and Wave Program. By Smiling and Waving back at us, that was our tip for good service.

Here's the philosophy. When we Smile and Wave, and you Smile and Wave back, we now have the

---

opportunity to make a friend. But if you Smile and Wave first, we have already made a friend. You need to understand that we do not know, and have never met 95% of our Neighbors in the Community. But they know Linda and I. They know us because we make ourselves known, when we're sitting on the front bench waving at everyone who passes, or we're on our daily walk and we say, another one of our cheap programs, "Hi Neighbor" to everyone we see. We have seen parents teaching their children to say "Hi Neighbor." We give them a business card, Linda always stops to talk with them and lets them know that we will always be there for them. You should know that the front bench area in front of my home was specifically created so we can interact with our Neighbors anytime we're out.

If you live off South Lafayette, you've had the opportunity to experience the Smile and Wave more than North Lafayette, which makes me sad. I feel we've lost many of our North Lafayette Neighbors since I'm not allowed to tape my monthly newsletter to your doors. But Linda and I try to make sure, on our daily walk, that we can at least say HI Neighbor, and hope you either pick up a Newsletter in front of my home #828, or read it on the website.

### **I'M NO MOTHER TERESA**

When you're retired for a while, you have the Unwanted Luxury of looking back at decisions you've made, paths you've taken in your life. Sometimes it doesn't look pretty. Though I've had many successes in my life, most of the decisions I made were on the selfish side.

Linda was a Section 8 Manager for over 25 years. When you deal in Section 8, you'd better have an understanding of why someone is applying, and have a compassion for their current situation in order to make the right decisions. It was this compassion and understanding that made her an easy choice as Asst. Director for Mr. Mike's Neighborhood. I didn't need to sell her at all on what I wanted to accomplish, she just knew what we were about and wanted to jump right in.

We also had two other beautiful Neighbors who were also ready to jump in and help, but when I was having my issues with Sun, which many of you know of, I didn't want them involved in the fiasco, so I asked them to step aside. You know who you are, and you're Good Neighbors.

I moved here to take care of my mother, a Neighbor of over 30 years. She passed about 8 years ago, and I made the decision to spend the rest of my life here. Since I had no plans of leaving, I wanted to do something good, something that would make a difference, something that would gain me more points in Heaven. Living in a fenced-in Community, I thought I could make a difference right here. I'm not a Church goer, but I do believe in God. And after looking at my past decisions, I was hoping God is looking down also.

### **FINAL THOUGHT:**

The Smile and Wave Program can also be a metaphor. Look what a 1 second interaction with someone you don't even know can accomplish. And for those Neighbors who experience the Smile and Wave more often, you can't tell me when you come around the bend that you're not looking to see if we're sitting on the bench. You can't tell me at that specific moment, you're not hoping that we'll show our big smiles and hearty waves to either welcome you home from a hard days work, or wish you safe travel as you leave the park. You can't tell me when we Smile and Wave at the School Bus Driver, or the FedEx and UPS Driver, or the Delivery Drivers; you can't tell me when I leave water every Monday morning for the trash people to show our appreciation for doing a job we don't want to do, when I give water to the Mail People and Lawn Service to thank them for taking care of our Neighbors, when I give maps to all delivery drivers to make it easier to find my Neighbors, when I answer the phone from a Neighbor who's having an issue, you can't say it doesn't make a difference. And you can do the same.

---