

Tribune-Star Editorial: A checklist for good citizenship in 2017

 www.tribstar.com/opinion/editorials/tribune-star-editorial-a-checklist-for-good-citizenship-in/article_6f1eec29-2527-53d7-bd62-11bb07b29e55.html

Improving community begins with people

We'd like to add another for your consideration: Become a better citizen.

How does one do that? It's easier than you think. You probably do it all the time, yet don't think of it in terms of being a good citizen. But there may be more you can do that requires only that you engage in your community in a greater variety of ways, each of which contributes to enhanced quality of civic life for all.

- Donate blood.
- Drive safely, with an emphasis on construction zones.
- Attend a festival. They're everywhere, almost year round, and they contribute greatly to a community's sense of place, pride and self-worth.
- Volunteer. Plenty of good causes need your help. Clubs and organizations. Churches. Schools. The Neighborhood Watch.
- Make a contribution to a local charity, and not just during the holidays. Choices abound year 'round, including the United Way of the Wabash Valley, which can always use a little more money to support its member agencies that provide a range of social services.
- Read your newspaper. Yes, we know this sounds self-serving, but let us explain. One key way to be more aware, involved and astute is to know what's going on in your community and to apply this knowledge to your civic life. The best way to get that kind of knowledge is by reading a newspaper, which is widely believed to be the main source of vital information about government, business and public and private institutions that make up the foundation of every community.
- Use your local parks. They are beautiful places for recreation, rest, relaxation and relief from the rigors of everyday life.
- Support community-based businesses. They need you. You need them.
- Take advantage of cultural opportunities, which are abundant. Visit a museum. Attend a theatrical performance, a concert or the symphony. Venture onto a college campus for something other than a sporting event.
- Be a good neighbor. Mend fences. Build bridges. And, no, we don't mean the structural kind.
- Embrace the community's diversity. Scrutinize biases or prejudices you may hold toward others concerning politics, religion, race, age, gender or sexual orientation.
- Thank a veteran. Attend an event that salutes those who have served in the armed forces.
- Tell public safety officials how much you appreciate the jobs they do and the risks they take to make our communities safe and secure.
- Be kind to the animals. That doesn't necessarily mean petting them more often, although you should. Adopt a pet

from the shelter. More importantly, be a responsible pet owner. Spay and neuter your dogs and cats. Overpopulation is a scourge on a community and inhumane to the animals.

- Respect the environment. Don't litter. Take care of community resources. Recycle. Educate yourself about ways to help make your community more sustainable.

- Speak well about your community. Proud of where you live? Tell people about it.