



Character Council of Indiana

Building Cities of Character One Person at a Time

Fall 2001 Newsletter

Our MISSION

The Character Council of Indiana is a non-profit organization dedicated to strengthening the personal character of individuals with the goal of impacting families and communities. We provide training, resources, and assistance for character implementation in each sector of the community including business, education, city government, and faith-based organizations. We are funded by proceeds from training events and by the tax-deductible gifts of individuals and organizations. For more information about CCI, please contact our office.

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"Of all the properties which belong to honorable men, not one is so highly prized as that of character." - Henry Clay

Elkhart Teaches Kids Character

by: Bethany Schaubert, Elkhart City of Character Steering Committee

Dozens of eager children grades K - 7 participated in an exciting and educational Character Hunt the last week of May. Sponsored by the City of Elkhart's Character First Education Committee, the first annual event brought youth from every corner of the city to nine participating Character Sighting Locations in downtown Elkhart.

Character Hunt entry forms were distributed by volunteers along the Memorial Day parade route and throughout the elementary schools. Each child took their entry form to the participating Character Sighting Locations where they heard first-hand how character influences the lives of individuals in their jobs.

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These are just a few of the business in Elkhart that helped to make the first annual "Character Hunt" a success.

Bridge Group Kicks Off Club

by: John Leckenby, Character Coach

On Monday, June 18th, Jim Kraft, President of The Bridge Group kicked off the first "Kids Character Club." The club was held daily for two weeks from 9:00AM to 12:00PM at Collegewood Elementary School in Carmel. Approximately fifty children ages 5-12 attended. CCI assisted in recruiting young people to staff the club. The goal of the club was to help the children develop and understand good character... *and* to have fun in the process! Each day the group focused on a specific character quality. The morning kicked off with all the children coming together for songs and stories. After assembly, the group broke

into two teams. One team went to the craft room, while the other team went to the gym or outside for games. Later, the teams would exchange activities. Somewhere in between was



the much anticipated snack time. The children did a terrific job exhibiting the character qualities they were learning. This was demonstrated in their interaction with each other and the team leader.

Around 11:30 a.m., the whole group came together for group activities before being picked up by parents at noon. The children went home with a small homework assignment printed on a card. *(Continued on page 2)*

Applying responsibility

Responsibility in the home includes:

- Parents diligently working to provide for the family.
- Accepting the challenge of making the household run as smoothly and efficiently as possible.
- Parents giving children encouragement and advice.
- Children obeying and honoring their parents in actions, words, and body language.

Are you consistently doing what is expected of you?

- Do you fulfill all your responsibilities in marriage?
- Do you accept personal responsibility for all your words, actions, and attitudes?
- Do you purpose to fulfill your responsibilities to train up sons and daughters to have good character?
- Do you take responsibility for your own health and well being?

Personal commitments to responsibility:

- I will keep my promises.
- I will not make excuses.
- I will do all my work to the best of my ability.
- I will make things right when I do wrong.

School Corporation of Character

by: Steve Bryant, Principal, Greenfield-Central High School



Steve Bryant serves as President for the Hancock County Character Council

Two years ago, through the generosity of Hancock County Memorial Hospital, Greenfield-Central High School was able to send three staff members to the Hospital's **CHARACTER FIRST!**® employee training. Our people, including myself, were excited that we had finally found a character education program that is relevant and meaningful to high school-aged students. This past school year we had ten other staff members attend the **CHARACTER FIRST!**® training in Indianapolis. This group formed our own "Building Character Council." We are excited about the fact that Greenfield has become a Character City. I am privileged

to serve on the Hancock County Character Council, and two teachers from our high school serve on the Council's education committee.

At our July board meeting, our school corporation voted on and passed a resolution to become a School Corporation of Character. Our Building Character Council is in the midst of planning exciting activities that will promote the character quality of the month and incorporate character qualities throughout all of our school programs. We are excited about the potential of our character initiative and look forward to sharing the results in the not too distant future.

For more information about Greenfield-Central's character initiative, please call the principal's office at (317) 462-9211, Ext. 22211.

Kids' Character Club

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If the day's character quality was initiative, the assignment might be, "Do a chore without being asked." As you can well imagine, this was a big commitment for many of the children. But each morning, the majority of the kids faithfully turned in their assignment signed by their parents. The kids shared excitedly about what they had accomplished.

Throughout the two-week club, the "character pole" provided some extra motivation to demonstrate good character. Whichever team showed the most character and maturity each day won the pole. For the children, winning that pole was like winning the Stanley Cup; everybody wanted to hold it. Along with the pole came the added privilege of decorating it. It got to be quite a competition between the two teams. The kids were all good sports throughout, and, by the end of the two weeks, each team had held the pole for 5 days.

From my perspective as a team leader, the club was a definite success. I'd recommend it to anyone who thinks character is important



for his or her children. I watched the kids; they had a blast. They also learned some valuable lessons in the process. I look forward to working with the "Kids Character Club" when The Bridge Group offers it again. For myself and for the children, it was time well spent.

John Leckenby is one of a number of young people from the greater Indianapolis area that served as a role model of good character for the younger children attending the "Kids Character Club."



Elkhart "Character Hunt"

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Pictured from L - R: Frank Cassella, owner of Elkhart Bicycle & Fitness, and donor of bicycle; Tyler Liponoga, 8 years old, winner of the Character Hunt; Bethany Schaubert, Elkhart Character First Education Committee Chairperson

- Elkhart Fire Department (Virtue)
- YMCA (Forgiveness)
- Mayor's Office and City Hall (Sincerity)

"This is definitely a confidence building experience," remarked Marie Chupp, mother of Stephanie and Lisa, who participated in the hunt. As the girls went from one character location to another, they boldly exclaimed in unison, "We're here to spot character!". At the conclusion of the hunt, eight year old Lisa declared, "My favorite was the 'fire place'. The Fire Chief explained that we shouldn't look at the outside of people because virtue is what's on the inside, and that's what really counts."

At the conclusion of the Hunt, the children each possessed nine **CHARACTER FIRST!**[®] collector cards which formed a complete puzzle and reinforced the character lessons learned along the Character Hunt. Organizers of the week long Hunt credit the event's success to the participation of enthusiastic employees at each location who willingly gave of their time to share character lessons with the children.

Bethany Schaubert is the Executive Director of Concert Arrangement and Planning for the Elkhart County Symphony Association. She serves as Chairperson of the Character Education Committee for Elkhart's City of Character initiative.



At each Character Location, the children received an official **CHARACTER FIRST!**[®] collector card and obtained stickers and signatures for their entry forms. Participating Character Locations (listed with their assigned character quality) included:

- The Chamber of Commerce (Attentiveness)
- Elkhart Parks & Recreation (Obedience)
- Elkhart Community Bank (Generosity)
- Hopman Jewelers (Truthfulness)
- McDonalds (Orderliness)
- Elkhart Bicycle and Fitness (Gratefulness)

Character Council of Hancock County

by: Kitty Smock, Public Relations Director, Hancock County Public Library

The civic leaders who worked to declare Greenfield a "city of character" last April have now voted to include all of Hancock County in their efforts to cultivate personal integrity in their community. Hancock County, made famous as poet James Whitcomb Riley's birthplace, was once perceived in the national consciousness as a region led by rural common sense and wisdom. Whether or not such an idealized place ever existed, the county's desires for a simple moral compass and unique identity as the area grows is still strong.

The Character Council of Hancock County has

asked for and received support from all sectors of the community including schools, businesses, government, and churches. While the Council as a whole is drawing up a comprehensive "vision statement," the individual sectors are Preparing a list of goals and ways to implement them in the coming year. Already, Greenfield-Central High School has given awards to students who have demonstrated character qualities by their actions. The goal is for students to graduate knowing the 49 character qualities, having put at least some of them into practice.

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Upcoming events

Held at the Indianapolis Training Center, 2820 N. Meridian St. unless otherwise noted

September 18

Character Leadership Breakfast,
7~8 AM
Advisory Board, 8:15~9:30AM

September 19

Character Champions Meeting
10:30 AM~1:30 PM

September 27

Terre Haute Character Breakfast,
7~8 AM
YWCA, 951 Dresser Drive

October 2

CHARACTER FIRST![®] Training,
8:30AM~12PM
City of Carmel,
Police Dept. Training Room

October 8

CHARACTER FIRST![®] Training,
Marion County Sheriff's Dept.

October 10

CHARACTER FIRST![®] Training,
9AM~ 4PM

October 16

Character Leadership Breakfast,
7~8 AM
Advisory Board, 8:15~9:30AM

October 23

Terre Haute Character Breakfast,
7~8 AM
Sugar Grove Elementary, 2800 Wallace

November 13

CHARACTER FIRST![®] Training,
9AM~ 4PM

November 23

Terre Haute Character Breakfast,
7~8 AM
Union Hospital, Green Room

December 11

CHARACTER FIRST![®] Training,
9AM~ 4PM

Contemplating responsibility

How fast do you respond to phone calls or e-mail messages? Do you wait for days before returning a call, or do you consider the urgency of the message and respond accordingly? If your vendors were asked to rate your responsibility based on how fast you returned (or failed to return) their calls, would you score higher or lower than your competition?

The **CHARACTER FIRST!**[®]

Responsibility bulletin

provides an example of responsibility in nature. By instinct, the parent eagle

knows when its young are ready to take on responsibility. As the eaglets grow older, the parent knows when it is time to stop feeding the eaglets and to encourage them to exist on their own. The parent eagle guides the eaglets to a place where they can find food for themselves.

Do your employees need to exhibit more responsibility? Are they involved in unnecessary phone conversations, personal web surfing, personal emails or distracting small talk? Do you want a guaranteed way to get them to be more responsible (that will not cost you a dime)? Praise employees when they *do* act responsibly. You get more of what you praise. Try it.



Terre Haute Update

by: *Marsha Doan, Director, Terre Haute Alliance for Character*

A small community west of Terre Haute, likely named West Terre Haute, is working to pass a resolution to become a "Town" or "Community" of Character. Pastor Dennis Leek, a resident of this community, took the initiative to begin this endeavor. He will hold quarterly meetings with residents of the community who are interested in initiating character within their businesses in conjunction with the Terre Haute Alliance for Character.

The Terre Haute Alliance for Character is proud to say that Gibault School started the 2001 - 2002 school year promoting Character Education within its entire administration. Bill Latta Sr., one of the committee members, began promoting the Character Education program in Gibault School this summer while substitute teaching for one week. When the teacher

returned, Bill left materials for the character qualities that he recommended teaching to the students the following week. The teacher was amazed to see how responsive and attentive the children were following the introduction of the Character Education program. When asked what materials Bill recommended using in schools to teach character, he suggested the book *Achieving True Success* because "...everything is there at your finger-tips! All the teachers need to do is 'present it' to the children." Gibault School is a privately owned school for children that have struggles functioning in public schools. The Terre Haute Alliance for Character strongly believes that the effort involved in teaching character will reap lasting benefits in the lives of these young people.

County-wide Character Initiative

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To accomplish this, the committee intends to contact all public schools in the county and offer an educational activities packet and demonstration. They will also contact day care and pre-schools, alternative schools, and Boys and Girls clubs to involve children from all educational outlets in the program. Even suspended students will not be overlooked.

Bobby Keen, CEO of Hancock Memorial Hospital implemented an organization-wide character focus close to two years ago. Hospital leadership took the idea to the community resulting in the formation of a local 501 (c) 3, the Character Council of Hancock County, Inc.



The government task force wants **CHARACTER FIRST!**[®] recognized as an initiative that supersedes any political considerations. Its members hope to set up three county-wide sessions in the coming year to begin eventual training for all public office holders and employees, with each government entity adopting a resolution to participate in the program. They will work with government service organizations to post banners and

send out press releases and public service announcements.

The business sector will encourage county employers to implement the program by emphasizing how **CHARACTER FIRST!**[®] strengthens families and how family members with stable support make better, more reliable employees. Their goal is to enlist at least ten employers into the program within a year's time and to recognize participating companies publicly. They intend to accomplish this by holding two orientation sessions with 40 prospective employers to introduce **CHARACTER FIRST!**[®] As part of the character quality reinforcement campaign, they will ask businesses with high front-door traffic, such as banks and retail stores, to display monthly posters.

Faith leaders will emphasize the commonality, rather than the differences, of character traits based on moral traditions and foundations for life skills. The committee will underscore the value of traits that encourage volunteerism at a time when the faith-based initiative may increase government funding for religious charities.