



**MONDAY, MAY 14, 2012**

## **Do good and feel good**

**BY DIANE HENTGES**, *Director of the Volunteer Center and RSVP at the United Way of Wyandotte County*

I thought today that I would talk about opportunities to work outside and maybe do it as a family group or a small group from church or work. Doing physical labor outside is a good way to not only do good for others but to do something very good for you. A couple hours of manual labor in the fresh air is invigorating.

You might start by looking around your neighborhood. Is there a neighbor too busy making ends meet, caring for a loved one, or just physically unable to tackle the lawn and gardens? Maybe you and your family can help get the property in shape.

You feel good because you helped someone; and you feel good because you got your hands dirty, got a dose of vitamin D and burned up some calories and you improved the neighborhood. Not a bad exchange for a couple hours of work outdoors. You can also check with your neighborhood association. They might have some neighborhood work days planned.

Neighbors working together to help each other and to help maintain common or public areas in the vicinity is a great way to build community. If you don't know your neighborhood association contact check with Livable Neighborhoods.

Cultivate Kansas City has community gardens and urban farms in the area. They need the attention of willing hands in order to thrive and produce. Check out their web site at [cultivatekc.org](http://cultivatekc.org). You will find regularly scheduled work days and directions on how you can register for one of these work days.

Working in a community garden or urban farm provides you information and knowledge that you can use at home to improve your surroundings.

The struggling non-profits in our community often need the help of volunteers to do outdoors maintenance. Their facilities and grounds need to be kept risk free and inviting to the staff and clients.

Check with your favorite non-profit to see if they need your help. You can also call me if you don't know of a local non-profit.

The Boy Scouts have Camp Naish near Edwardsville. A facility that is big and used by many area scouts always needs sprucing up. For more information on how you can help with projects go to **[www.hoac\\_bsa.org/camping/maintenance](http://www.hoac_bsa.org/camping/maintenance)** team. They have a list of established work days.

For information on how you can **GIVE, ADVOCATE,** and **VOLUNTEER** please contact me at 913-371-3674 913-371-3674 or at **[dhentges@unitedway-wyco.org](mailto:dhentges@unitedway-wyco.org)** or check out our web site at **[www.unitedway-wyco.org](http://www.unitedway-wyco.org)**.