



May 3, 2007

Southside sweep

About 250 volunteers tidy up neighborhood

Star report

May 3, 2007

Organizers of the inaugural Great American Cleanup on the Southside have labeled the event a success.

About 250 volunteers rolled up their sleeves Saturday to spruce up the University Heights neighborhood, just south of the University of Indianapolis.

Volunteers of all ages, including grade school children, college students and retired folks, pitched in, said Jeff Cardwell, president of the Gateway Business Alliance, a grass-roots economic development group that co-sponsored the event.

"It just went fabulous," said Cardwell, inspired by the turnout of young people.

"This is the future. To see them starting out with a life of service -- it's just wonderful. They will never forget this."

The alliance partnered with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Inc., the University Heights Neighborhood Association and UIndy for the massive cleanup.

Next year's event is expected to be even larger.

Cardwell said that eight Southside neighborhood associations will join forces on the last Saturday in April and should draw more than 1,000 volunteers to clean up the Southside.

In addition to the University of Indianapolis site, volunteers are expected to gather at Garfield Park and Southern Plaza shopping center.

Sprucing up neighborhoods is essential to sparking economic revival, said Cardwell, president of Cardwell Do-it Best Home Center.

"This is how it starts," he said. "This is a way to reclaim our neighborhoods and the first step in fighting crime. It's also a great step in economic development."