

Every Community Needs a “Danny Schnell”!!!

Occasionally an item or event comes to your attention that deserves sharing with others. This column is about one of those – the story of Danny Schnell from Clarion, Iowa. Danny recently received awards from both Keep America Beautiful and Keep Iowa Beautiful for his community volunteer efforts in litter clean up and recycling by picking up deposit cans and bottles around Clarion.

When Danny turned 39 his father passed away and he moved from Hampton to Clarion to live with his mother. He started to pick up cans and bottles as a way to keep busy and to earn some extra money. His efforts soon became a role model for others in Clarion to help do their part in keeping Clarion beautiful.

Additionally, he became inspired by the loss of his ten year old niece to cancer. His efforts expanded to the collection of pop can tabs for Ronald McDonald houses to aid other cancer victims and to assist those needing dialysis. This expansion of his activities was supported by the community as others began to help him collect both cans, bottles and tabs.

Danny walks several miles a day to carry out his mission of picking up after others. In addition to cleaning up Clarion, he obtains health benefits from the walking and the exercise in picking up the items. He has collected thousands of deposit cans and bottles – one year it was enough to underwrite a trip to Florida his brothers wedding.

His efforts were also recognized by the city and Mayor John Ofstethun through the designation of the third full week of this past November, 2003 as “Danny Schnell Week” - a fitting commemoration for an individual providing these special unselfish services to the town.

Danny is always ready and willing to provide a “helping hand” to those in need – always without thought for self or for remuneration.

The unselfish acts of Danny are important examples of the basic value of America and rural living. The willingness to help others and to share should be an inspiration for all of us. Every community needs a Danny - maybe several Danny's. Maybe we can all become a “Danny” in our community and our neighborhood.

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See you in the next column.

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