

Our American Heritage and Our Responsibility for Preserving It

“How do the qualities of a good citizen (dependability, service, leadership and patriotism) help support our nation?”

America at its core, is a nation made for and directed by its people. The ideals of the founding fathers sought to give Americans access to rights and freedoms that were withheld from them during the European colonial period of the 1700s. As time has progressed, these rights have evolved into the modern sanctuary of freedom that America represents, and have been upheld by the same caliber of American citizens that led to their creation. America relies on the strength of its people to guide it down a righteous path and prevent deviation towards unjust goals. As America is a nation whose future is determined by its own people, its identity is based upon the qualities of the citizens which it governs. The qualities of good citizenship are necessary within the American people, as it is those same people who shape the qualities of the nation as a whole.

America is a collection of individual citizens, groups, and cultures that rely on each other in various ways. Each individual citizen, regardless of their socioeconomic status, depends upon and provides for their fellow citizens. It is this mutual understanding that we as a nation are better together that breaks down cultural barriers and brings people within the United States together. Mutual respect and dependability begins at the most basic level within American society, its citizens. Any act of assistance, or help performed by a citizen promotes the American ideal although we are different people, we are all one nation. The ability to rely on our fellow Americans is one of the reasons that America as a collective nation has been so successful.

Taking pride in this culture of support, and continuing its legacy for years to come speaks to the importance of patriotism within the American people. Good citizenship includes recognition of the bountiful opportunities that we as American citizens have, and not taking for granted the advantages that being an American citizen brings. The chance to influence this great

nation through participation in local, state and national government through voting is a privilege that is not present throughout the rest of the world, and should not be taken lightly.

The strength of America is dependent upon its leadership. In the same way that a tool is only as good as its user, America is only as good as its citizens. The direction of American ideals and the goals of America as a nation are a direct manifestation of the leadership demonstrated by elected officials and citizens. It is one's duty as an American citizen to help others and it is a quality of a good citizen to do so through leadership. Leadership can take many forms, one of the most important forms being leadership through example. By living lives that are a representation of the ideals of American citizenship, good citizens are able to demonstrate these values for their peers and create a perpetual community of good American citizenship.

The qualities of America that we as citizens appreciate are only made possible through the actions and qualities of citizens and representatives that guide these principles. By leading lives as good citizens, the American people are able to carry on a legacy of strength, support and community within America and pave the way for future generations to do the same. (549 words)