

Common Sense Innovation



Gerald thinks the average high school fundraiser is silly. He suggested, “Don’t make a football team sell cookies nobody wants; pay them \$100 to clean up a blighted lot.” It seems outrageously simple, but that’s exactly the kind of common sense yet unusual vision Gerald has used to guide the city. Not only have ideas and initiatives like these helped raise money for various underfunded school programs, but they’ve also cleaned up lots and improved property values at lower costs than the city could have ever imagined. Projects like these have also helped kids experience the city they live in while learning firsthand how to be responsible,

respectful young adults. Gerald set his sights on the Mt. Airy Forest with the same kind of outside-the-box vision: he wanted to build a treehouse—a big treehouse. Above all, he wanted ordinary citizens to build it. Gerald believes there’s no better way for a community to learn to respect nature than to get outside and experience it. After more than 12,000 volunteer hours, including some help from the Cincinnati Bengals, the treehouse was built not only as an invitation to the community to explore the ecology of the region but also as a testament to what we can do when we work together.

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