**What are the qualities of a good neighbor?**

When I think about my childhood years, I my first friends come to my mind,

those who were the first people besides my family I got to know, who became

my friends and grew up with me. Most of them were classmates, relatives and

of course, neighbors. Neighbors are those people who share the street, block

and fences with us. Their existence has always been taken for granted, and they

haven't been given the importance or attention that they deserve.

For some people, neighbors can mean "troublesome" or "annoyance." For

others, neighbors are considered as relatives, and they enjoy having a good and

close relationship with their neighbors. Of course, the opinions depend on

personality of individuals, culture, type of housing (house or apartment), place

(a big city, a small town, or the country) among others. But both points of view

may come to an agreement when determining "what makes a good neighbor?"

In the first place, a good neighbor should be considerate. Knowing that you

should treat others the way you expect to be treated is a quality that makes

people respect boundaries (physical, social and emotional). For instance, a

neighbor who can tell when the noise of his stereo makes may bother the

people next door, and is able to turn it down taking into consideration of his

neighbors' needs.

In the second place, being sympathetic is another characteristic that a neighbor

should have. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes makes you understand

better the feelings of somebody who is in trouble, and consequently, offer

appropriate help. An example could be a situation where you know that your

neighbor divorced recently and is going through a hard time. Maybe you will

be more understanding when you see her in a bad mood, and avoid an

unnecessary conflict, because you can see the way she feels.

Finally, good manners and a polite way to address your neighbors can polish

even the toughest relationship. When a neighbor is rude, even if we excuse him

or her by saying, "that's the way he/she is", we feel a little rejected. A nice

smile or a "Hello" helps a lot to start a friendly conversation, and to avoid

misunderstandings such as "He never speaks to me, so he must be mad at me or

something." Manners do help to start friendships.

There are so many more characteristics that we could list, and there are many

ways we could make a more accurate picture of the perfect neighbor we all

want to have. But I guess the best way to "edify" our neighbors is by being

good neighbors ourselves. We cannot demand others to do something for us

that we cannot offer to do for them. We should stop complaining about what

our neighbor always does that bothers us; we'd better start analyzing what we

are doing to make the relationships with "the people next door" flourish. Let us

start setting the example