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Posted on Wed, Jan. 02, 2008

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The Weekly 5
5 Ways To Start A Resolution

The Weekly List Here we go -- another year, another set of the same rules we try to sell to ourselves every Jan. 1: lose 10 pounds, work out five days a week, stop biting our nails. Let's be realistic and get back to the things that really matter in life. It's not how you look, baby, it's how you live.

Be Good to Yourself

Eat well: What if you didn't set ridiculous dieting goals this year, but instead resolved to eat better? Support local growers and you'll get food that's more nutritious and tastier and you'll be giving a boost to the local economy. Find growers, online stores and farmer's markets at localharvest.org. Give & take: Help others and do something for yourself when you become a volunteer at the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center.

Unplug: Almost nobody gets enough downtime anymore. Choose to rest more, put down the digital devices every now and then and find some peace. Watch the sunset over the Westside from the Lynx or grab a bench in Freedom Park on Sunday afternoon.

Be Good to Others

Find your niche: The need for volunteers is great in every community -- take the guesswork out of finding the fit for you. Visit volunteermatch.org. You can also call 211 to reach the United Way of Central Carolinas.

Build a dream: Celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with Hands on Charlotte's Building on a Dream event on Jan. 19 & 21. Pick a project out of a dozen across the community and join volunteers to renovate homes for seniors, maintain parks, spruce up homeless shelters, or sort through donations. Details: handsoncharlotte.org.

Karma Check: Work, family, traffic and just plain exhaustion can make it hard to find time to make a difference. Never underestimate the power of the smallest gesture. Get ideas for even the busiest do-gooder at actsofkindness.org or helpothers.org.

Learn Something

Get carded: What do you mean you don't have a library card? Get one and get access to an award-winning library that provides services you can only begin to imagine. Plus you can do almost everything online - from reserving books, compact discs and movies or learning a new language, to downloading digital media like audio books, eFlicks and music. Details: plcmc.org. Get civic minded: Sign up for Civics 101, the popular yearly program offered by the League of Women Voters of Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Get started: There's always more learning left to do -- whether it's a new career, starting a hobby or honing your tennis swing. Spring semester is almost here and Central Piedmont Community College delivers plenty of learning at an affordable community college prices. Details: cpcc.edu.

Change Something

Be an advocate: Got a few free hours every week? Change a life by becoming a Guardian ad Litem (GAL). Speak for neglected and abused children as a trained community volunteer who investigates the needs of abused and neglected children. Find out more at: nccourts.org/Citizens/GAL.

Be heard: There's an election coming up -- or haven't you heard? If you haven't registered to vote, make this priority one or you could be the disenfranchised hanging chad poster child of 2008. Details: meckboe.org. Don't know enough about the candidates? Check out 2008electionprocon.org.

Be involved: Did you know that the Board of County Commissioners appoints average citizens to various advisory boards? Everything from the Historic Landmarks Commission to the Bicycle Advisory Committee is up for grabs. Stop complaining and be the change you want to see in Charlotte. Get a complete list and submit your application at charmeck.org.

Live Dangerously

Need for speed: Do you wanna go real fast? As the home of NASCAR, Charlotte's got more than its share of racing schools that can teach you the finer points of the continuous left hand turn. Local schools tout famous names like Jeff Gordon, Dale Jarrett and Mario Andretti and offer classes that range from half day to several days. Compare and contrast at racingschools.com.

Float your boat: How many of your friends can say that they are a professional river guide? You live near the largest artificial whitewater facility in the world -- take advantage of it. Details: usnwc.org.

Get in the game: Just itching to stop being a spectator and start playing again? Adult sports leagues are all the rage and offer everything from the traditional soccer and

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**basketball** to the more playground friendly **dodgeball** and **kickball**. You might even meet Mr. Right -- before you put your eye out. Check out **Interlink** (interlink-charlotte.com) and **Charlotte Outdoor Adventures** (choa.com).

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