



Neighborhood Engagement Program  
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## 150 Things You Can do to Build Social Capital

*With neighbors or on your own, there are many things you can do to strengthen the communities you are a part of. "150 Things You Can Do to Build Social Capital" is an initiative of the Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and has been reprinted here by the City of Walla Walla.*

1. Organize a social gathering to welcome a new neighbor
2. Attend town meetings
3. Register to vote – and then vote
4. Support local merchants
5. Volunteer your special skills to an organization
6. Donate blood (with a friend!)
7. Start a community garden
8. Mentor someone of a different ethnic or religious group
- 9. *Surprise a new neighbor by making a favorite dinner – and include the recipe***
10. Tape record your parents' earliest recollections and share them with your children
11. Plan a vacation with friends or family
12. Avoid gossip
13. Help fix someone's flat tire
14. Organize or participate in a sports league
15. Join a gardening club
16. Attend home parties when invited
17. Become an organ donor or blood marrow donor.
18. Attend your children's athletic contests, plays and recitals
19. Get to know your children's teachers
20. Join the local Elks, Kiwanis, or Knights of Columbus
21. Get involved with Brownies or Cub/Boy/Girl Scouts
22. Start a monthly tea group
23. Speak at or host a monthly brown bag lunch series at your local library
24. Sing in a choir
25. Get to know the clerks and salespeople at your local stores
26. Attend PTA meetings
27. Audition for community theater or volunteer to usher
28. Give your park a weatherproof chess/checkers board
29. Play cards with friends or neighbors
30. Give to your local food bank
31. Walk or bike to support a cause and meet others

- 32. Employers: encourage volunteer/community groups to hold meetings on your site
- 33. Volunteer in your child's classroom or chaperone a field trip
- 34. Join or start a babysitting cooperative
- 35. Attend school plays
- 36. Answer surveys when asked
- 37. Businesses: invite local government officials to speak at your workplace
- 38. Attend Memorial Day parades and express appreciation for others
- 39. Form a local outdoor activity group
- 40. Participate in political campaigns
- 41. Attend a local budget committee meeting
- 42. Form a computer group for local senior citizens
- 43. Help coach Little League or other youth sports – even if you don't have a kid playing
- 44. Help run the snack bar at the Little League field

***45. Form a tool lending library with neighbors and share ladders, snow blowers, etc.***

- 46. Start a lunch gathering or a discussion group with co-workers
- 47. Offer to rake a neighbor's yard or shovel his/her walk
- 48. Start or join a carpool
- 49. Employers: give employees time (e.g., 3 days per year to work on civic projects)
- 50. Plan a "Walking Tour" of a local historic area

- 51. Eat breakfast at a local gathering spot on Saturdays
- 52. Have family dinners and read to your children
- 53. Run for public office
- 54. Stop and make sure the person on the side of the highway is OK

***55. Host a block party or a holiday open house***

- 56. Start a fix-it group–friends willing to help each other clean, paint, garden, etc.
- 57. Offer to serve on a town committee
- 58. Join the volunteer fire department
- 59. Go to church...or temple...or walk outside with your children–talk to them about why it's important
- 60. If you grow tomatoes, plant extra for a lonely elder neighbor – better yet, ask him/her to teach you and others how to can the extras
- 61. Ask a single diner to share your table for lunch
- 62. Stand at a major intersection holding a sign for your favorite candidate
- 63. Persuade a local restaurant to have a designated “meet people” table
- 64. Host a potluck supper before your Town Meeting
- 65. Take dance lessons with a friend
- 66. Say "thanks" to public servants – police, firefighters, town clerk...
- 67. Fight to keep essential local services in the downtown area–your post office, police station, school, etc.
- 68. Join a nonprofit board of directors

69. Gather a group to clean up a local park or cemetery
70. When somebody says "government stinks," suggest they help fix it
71. Turn off the TV and talk with friends or family
72. Hold a neighborhood barbecue
73. Bake cookies for new neighbors or work colleagues

***74. Plant tree seedlings along your street with neighbors and rotate care for them***

75. Volunteer at the library
76. Form or join a bowling team
77. Return a lost wallet or appointment book
78. Use public transportation and start talking with those you regularly see
79. Ask neighbors for help and reciprocate
80. Go to a local folk or crafts festival
81. Call an old friend
82. Sign up for a class and meet your classmates
83. Accept or extend an invitation
84. Talk to your kids or parents about their day
85. Say hello to strangers
86. Log off and go to the park
87. Ask a new person to join a group for a dinner or an evening
88. Host a potluck meal or participate in them
89. Volunteer to drive someone
90. Say hello when you spot an acquaintance in a store

91. Host a movie night
92. Exercise together or take walks with friends or family
93. Assist with or create your town or neighborhood's newsletter
94. Organize a neighborhood pick-up – with lawn games afterwards
95. Collect oral histories from older town residents
96. Join a book club discussion or get the group to discuss local issues
97. Volunteer to deliver Meals-on-Wheels in your neighborhood
98. Start a children's story hour at your local library
99. Be real. Be humble. Acknowledge others' self-worth
100. Tell friends and family about social capital and why it matters
101. Greet people
102. Cut back on television
103. Join in to help carry something heavy
104. Plan a reunion of family, friends, or those with whom you had a special connection
105. Take in the programs at your local library
106. Read the local news faithfully
107. Buy a grill and invite others over for a meal
108. Fix it even if you didn't break it
109. Pick it up even if you didn't drop it
110. Attend a public meeting

***111. Go with friends or colleagues to a ball game (and root, root, root for the home team!)***

- 112. Start a community fruit & vegetable club
- 113. Hire young people for odd jobs
- 114. Start a tradition
- 115. Become a Big Brother or Big Sister
- 116. Help jump-start someone's car
- 117. Join a project that includes people from all walks of life
- 118. Sit on your stoop
- 119. Be nice when you drive
- 120. Make gifts of time
- 121. Buy a big hot tub
- 122. Volunteer at your local neighborhood school
- 123. Offer to help out at your local recycling center

***124. Send a "thank you" letter to the Editor about a person or event that helped build community***

- 125. Raise funds for a new town clock or new town library
- 126. When inspired, write personal notes to friends and neighbors
- 127. Attend gallery openings
- 128. Organize a town-wide yard sale
- 129. Invite friends or colleagues to help with a home renovation or home building project
- 130. Join or start a local mall-walking group and have coffee together afterwards
- 131. Build a neighborhood playground
- 132. Become a story-reader or baby-rocker at a local childcare center or neighborhood pre-school

- 133. Contra dance or two-step
- 134. Help kids on your street construct a lemonade stand
- 135. Open the door for someone who has his or her hands full
- 136. Say hi to those in elevators
- 137. Invite friends to go snowshoeing, hiking, or cross-country skiing
- 138. Offer to watch your neighbor's home or apartment while they are away
- 139. Organize a fitness/health group with your friends or co-workers
- 140. Hang out at the town dump and chat with your neighbors as you sort your trash at the Recycling Center
- 141. Take a pottery class with your children or parent(s)
- 142. See if your neighbor needs anything when you run to the store
- 143. Ask to see a friend's family photos
- 144. Join groups (e.g., arts, sports, religion) likely to lead to making new friends of different race or ethnicity, different social class or bridging across other dimensions
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