what to do: 150 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is built through hundreds of little and big actions we take every day. We've gotten you started with a list of nearly 150 ideas, drawn from suggestions made by many people and groups. Try some of these or try your own. We need to grow this list. If you have other ideas, post them at: http://www.bettertogether.org. You know what to do. Build connections to people. Build trust with others. Get involved.

1. Organize a social gathering to welcome a new neighbor
2. Attend town meetings
3. Register to vote and 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/participate in a sports league
15. Join a gardening club
16. Go to 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/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 coworkers
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 and mingle
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 an 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

Note: Expanded from original list of “100 Things You Can Do to Build Social Capital” (Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America project at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard); additional contributions from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and Rochester Area
1. Turn off the TV and talk with friends or family.
2. Hold a neighborhood barbecue.
3. Bake cookies for new neighbors or work colleagues.
4. Plant tree seedlings along your street with neighbors and rotate care for them.
5. Volunteer at the library.
6. Form or join a bowling team.
7. Return a lost wallet or appointment book.
8. Use public transportation and start talking with those you regularly see.
9. Ask neighbors for help and reciprocate.
10. Go to a local folk or crafts festival.
11. Call an old friend.
12. Enroll in a class and meet your classmates.
13. Accept or extend an invitation.
14. Talk to your kids/parents about their day.
15. Say hello to strangers.
16. Log off and go to the park.
17. Ask a new person to join a group for a dinner or an evening.
18. Host a potluck meal or participate in them.
19. Volunteer to drive someone.
20. Say hello when you spot an acquaintance in a store.
21. Host a movie night.
22. Exercise together or take walks with friends or family.
23. Assist with/create your town or neighborhood newsletter.
24. Organize a neighborhood pickup with lawn games afterwards.
25. Collect oral histories from older town residents.
26. Join a book club discussion & get the group to discuss local issues.
27. Volunteer to deliver Meals-on-Wheels in your neighborhood.
28. Start a children’s story hour at your local library.
   Acknowledge others’ self-worth.
30. Tell friends and family about social capital and why it matters.
32. Cut back on television.
33. Join in to help carry something heavy.
34. Plan a reunion of family, friends, or those with whom you had a special connection.
35. Take in the programs at your local library.
36. Read the local news faithfully.
37. Buy a grill and invite others over for a meal.
38. Fix it even if you didn’t break it.
39. Pick it up even if you didn’t drop it.
40. Attend a public meeting.
41. Go with friends or colleagues to a ball game (and root, root, root for the home team!)
42. Help scrape ice off a neighbor’s car, put chains on the tires or shovel it out.
43. Hire young people for odd jobs.
44. Start a tradition.
45. Share your snow blower.
46. Help jump-start someone’s car.
47. Join a project that includes people from all walks of life.
48. Sit on your stoop.
49. Be nice when you drive.
50. Make gifts of time.
51. Buy a big hot tub.
52. Volunteer at your local neighborhood school.
53. Offer to help out at your local recycling center.
54. Send a “thank you” letter to the Editor about a person or event that helped build community.
55. Raise funds for a new town clock or new town library.
56. When inspired, write personal notes to friends and neighbors.
57. Attend gallery openings.
58. Organize a town-wide yard sale.
59. Invite friends or colleagues to help with a home renovation or home building project.
60. Join or start a local mall-walking group and have coffee together afterwards.
61. Build a neighborhood playground.
62. Become a story-reader or baby rocker at a local childcare center or neighborhood pre-school.
63. Contra dance or two-step.
64. Help kids on your street construct a lemonade stand.
65. Open the door for someone who has his or her hands full.
66. Say hi to those in elevators.
67. Invite friends to go snowshoeing, hiking, or cross-country skiing.
68. Offer to watch your neighbor’s home or apartment while they are away.
69. Organize a fitness/health group with your friends or co-workers.
70. Hang out at the town dump and chat with your neighbors as you sort your trash at the Recycling Center.
71. Take a pottery class with your children or parent(s).
72. See if your neighbor needs anything when you run to the store.
73. Ask to see a friend’s family photos.
74. Join groups (e.g., arts, sports, religion) likely to lead to making new friends that bridge across race/ethnicity, social class or other social cleavages.
75. Attend or start a free summer music series at a local park.
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