



WESTFORD
CONNECTS
each one can reach one

This project is part of the Westford Coalition for NonViolence strategy for creative change.

Vision

Westford is a peaceable and safe community built on respect, caring, and responsibility for ourselves and for each other. Neighbors are connected, isolation is rare, and residents in Westford's neighborhoods share a sense of safety, interdependence, and community.

The Challenge

A June 2010 Pew Internet research study found that only 24% of Americans knew their neighbors' names. Neighbors are often strangers and both physical and social isolation can be a critical factor in neighborhood safety, preventing people from reaching out for help.

The Goal

Westford Connects is a volunteer community effort whose goal is to develop creative strategies to connect homes within neighborhoods, and to connect neighborhoods with each other. The focus of Westford Connects is on building these networks of community in respectful, meaningful and sustainable ways: person-to-person and home-to-home within Westford's geographic neighborhoods. This project is an on-going long-term effort, essential to the well-being of all residents - and especially the most vulnerable - in the town of Westford.

What You Can Do

We know that communities truly are the sum of their neighborly connections. Each and every small act of thoughtfulness and kindness really counts. In fact these small neighborly acts are the only way to build lasting community. If you would like to join Westford Connects and begin the work of creating a safe resilient community in your neighborhood, visit www.wcnv.org/WestfordConnects or call Christina Strutt at 978 692 6402. And turn over this page for ideas to get you started right away!



‘WESTFORD CONNECTS: Each One Can Reach One’
‘NEIGHBORLY’ ACTIONS

A ‘neighborly’ community is not necessarily one where people do a lot of activities together, nor are they filled with the kind of close friends who are in and out of each other’s homes. They may have a ‘block party’ now and again, with great success and yet it may be too much work to repeat too often! A truly ‘neighborly’ community is one where individuals focus on the many small, simple, sustainable ‘neighborly’ actions that anyone can choose to take at any time, as and when it appeals to them.

Experience shows that it is these small acts of respectful kindness and inclusion that most effectively create connected neighborhoods that feel safe and ‘neighborly’. These ‘small’ acts build neighborhoods in which people know their neighbors’ names, along with something of their life circumstance and how to contact them; are aware of unusual comings or goings; feel comfortable calling for help for any reason, to check in during a storm or power outage that everyone is okay, or just to say ‘Hi’.

Examples of tried and true ‘neighborly’ actions people have taken, continue to take, and that anyone can take:

1. Create a neighborhood telephone and/or email list that everyone can use.
2. Welcome a new neighbor with a home cooked meal, cookies, town map, or Kimball’s gift certificates.
3. Organize a rotation to cook for a neighbor who is ill or injured and can’t walk/drive.
4. Drop off a treat – cookies, muffins, chocolate – in a neighbor’s mailbox, for no reason.
5. Call a neighbor to say ‘Hi’ if you haven’t seen them for a while.
6. Drop off a card or note in a neighbor’s mailbox, or send an email to say you thought of them.
7. Connect with neighbors on Facebook.
8. Deliver a bunch of daffodils to every neighbor in the spring.
9. Plant a bright colored plastic pinwheel flower in the snow in a neighbor’s yard.
10. Stop and chat for a few minutes when you see a neighbor on the street.
11. Invite a neighbor to go for a walk and talk.
12. Invite a neighbor to walk your dogs together.
13. Invite a neighbor to go with you to a school presentation, concert or other community event.
14. Babysit for a neighbor in an emergency.
15. Offer to watch a neighbor’s kids after school if they get stuck at work.
16. Send along a teenager to cut a senior’s lawn, or rake their leaves.
17. Put out and take in a neighbor’s trash can when they’re away.
18. Pick up a neighbor’s newspaper, and mail from the mailbox, when they’re away.
19. Snow blow a neighbor’s driveway or water their plants when they’re away.
20. Snow blow a neighbor’s driveway if you’re out there finished, and they haven’t done theirs yet.
21. Hold a neighbor’s key for emergencies when they’re away, or if they lock themselves out.
22. Invite neighbors for an evening community fundraiser or home sale (e.g. Mary Kay, Pampered Chef).
23. Invite a neighbor(s) over for morning coffee, afternoon tea, or evening dessert.
24. Have a Holiday ‘Open House’ for the neighbors.
25. Put out holiday luminaries lining the street.
26. Give a ‘going away party’ when a neighbor moves out.
27. Call to check on a neighbor (especially seniors) when there’s a power outage or heavy storm.
28. Initiate a pick-up basketball game in your driveway and invite the neighbors to join in.
29. Have a neighborhood summer barbeque gathering.
30. Have a Halloween parade around the neighborhood.
31. Organize little neighborhood competitions e.g. for ‘Best Lawn’
32. Email neighbors to join in getting a good deal on home needs e.g. top soil, driveway sealcoating.

Just pick one neighborly action that appeals to you, try it, see what happens, and take it from there.

