

**INTEGRATE**  
FOR GOOD

**A GUIDE TO**  
**CIVIC**  
**ENGAGEMENT:**

**HOW TO GET INVOLVED,  
WHY IT MATTERS, AND WHERE TO START**



**PENNSYLVANIA  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES  
COUNCIL**

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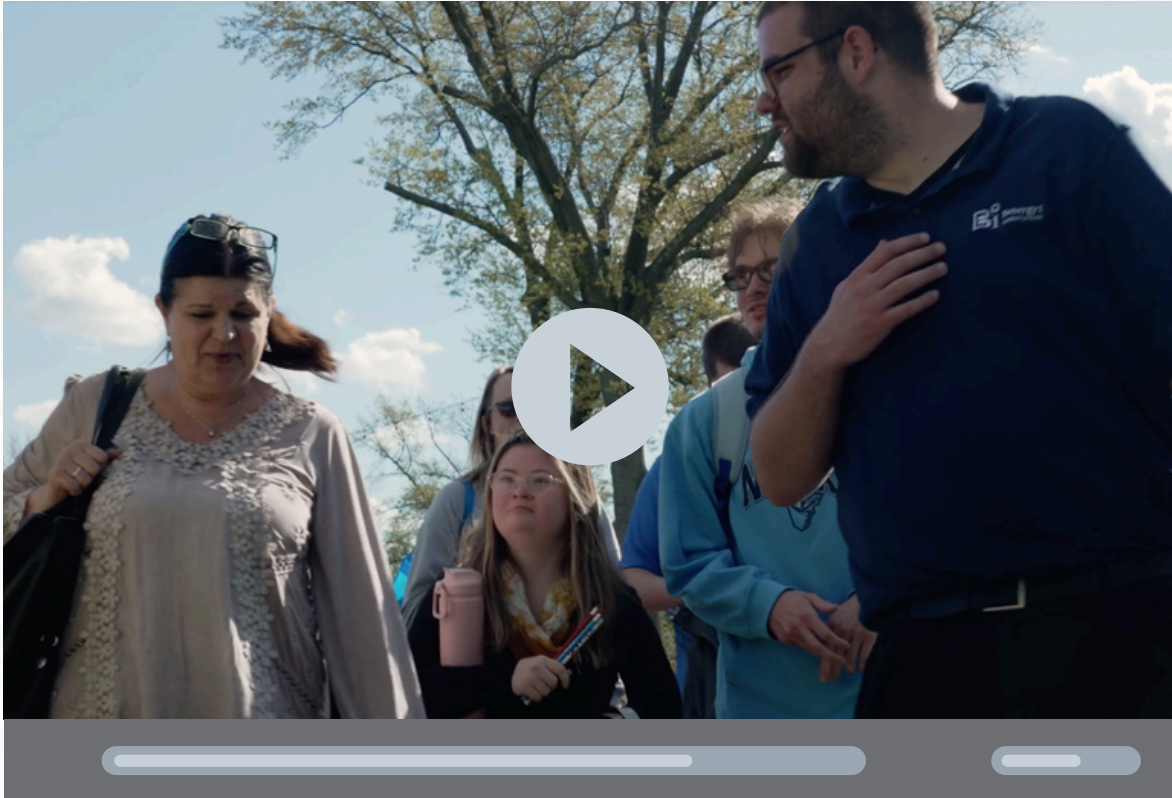
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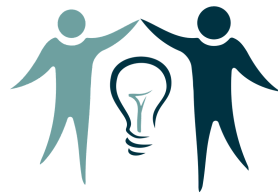


# This guide complements the Integrate for Good Civic Engagement video.



To learn more about Civic Engagement through powerful storytelling, please visit:





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# LONLINESS IS A PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIC.

Dr. Vivek Murthy, the U.S. Surgeon General, recently declared loneliness a public health crisis. Loneliness harms our health and wellbeing. In fact, being lonely can be as harmful as smoking every day. The good news is that building social connections and relationships can reduce these harmful effects. **Getting involved in the community through civic engagement is a great place to start reducing loneliness and building a happy, healthy life.**

**Approximately  
half of U.S.  
adults report  
experiencing  
measurable  
levels of  
loneliness.**

# What is Civic Engagement?

Civic engagement is about getting involved and making a difference in your community. It involves participating in activities that enrich your life while also benefiting others.



Aysia Martin painted kindness rocks with positive, uplifting messages to inspire others passing by our Kindness Rocks Garden at Ursinus College.

# Examples of Civic Engagement:

- ✓ **Volunteering** Help out at a local food bank or animal shelter

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- ✓ **Voting:** Participate in local, state, or national elections.

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- ✓ **Attending community meetings:** Share your ideas and opinions at community meetings

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- ✓ **Supporting Local Events:** Attend or organize community events, fairs, or fundraisers.

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- ✓ **Activism and advocacy:** Use your voice to advocate for change by attending a rally or signing a petition

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- ✓ **Supporting Local Businesses:** Shop at local stores and encourage others to do so

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- ✓ **Helping Neighbors:** Mow lawns, shovel snow, or assist elderly neighbors with tasks.

**There are so many ways to get involved in your community! Everyone has something to offer, and you have the power to make a difference.**

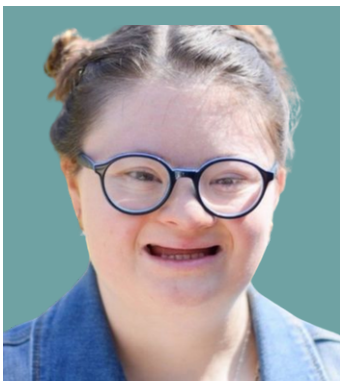
# Civic Engagement In Action



**JACKSON HELLER**

## VOTING

"I have voted two or three times. I just went in and typed in who I thought the president should be next, and one time people were actually cheering for me because it was my first time I did it."



**CARA CUSHING**

## VOLUNTEERING

Cara leads our Sleeping Mat Project on local college campuses. She says, "I love doing the Sleeping Mat Project it meant a lot to me I love IFG. I especially love teaching Sleeping Mat Project to others."

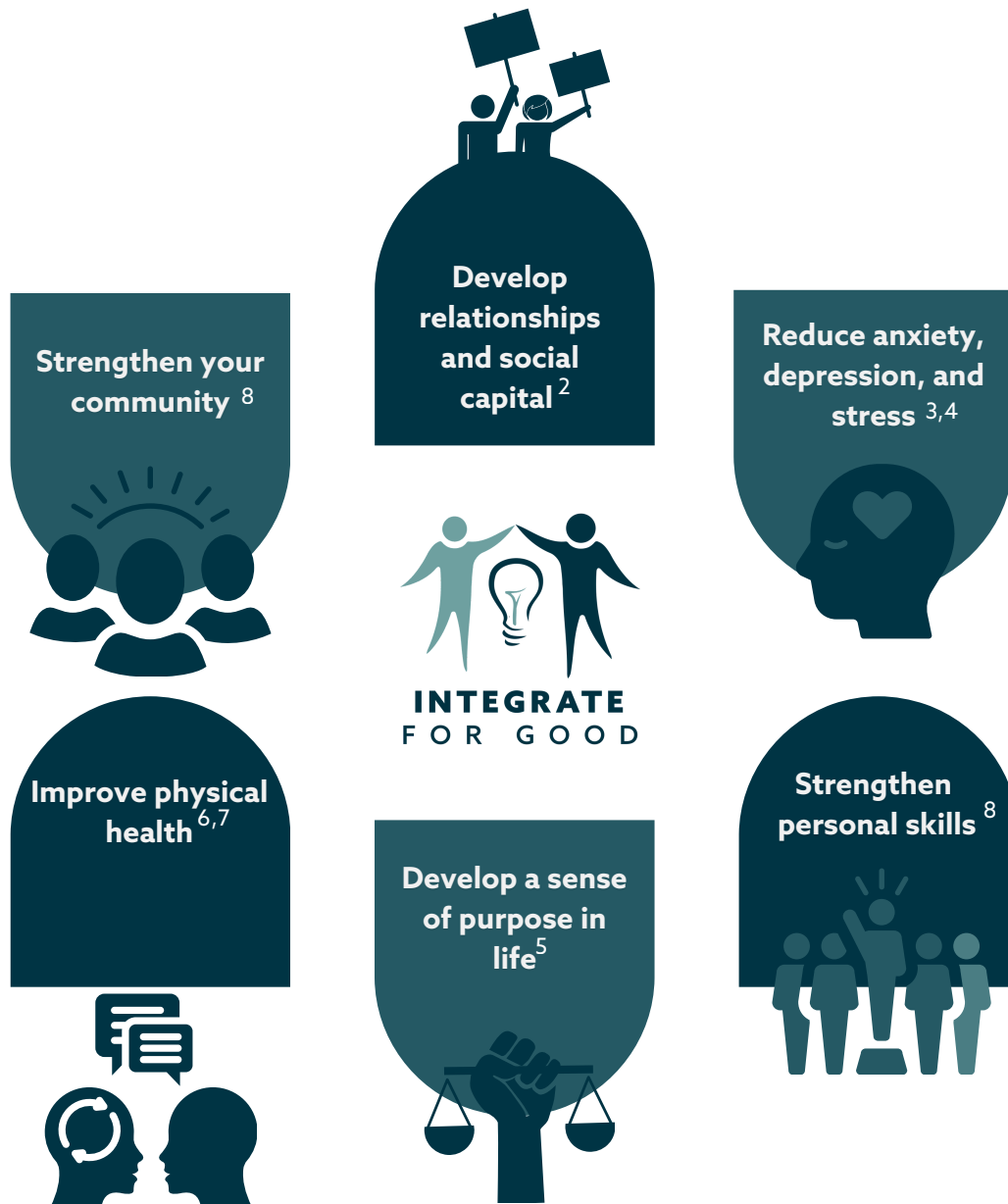


**KEVIN VOCE**

## ADVOCACY

"I went to the capitol crawl in Harrisburg. They don't have accessible ramps at the front of the building, so some people had to crawl up to the top of the stairs in front of the Capitol. It's not fair at all."

# Benefits of Civic Engagement:



Getting involved through civic engagement offers many health benefits. Being active in your community can allow you to meet new people, build relationships, and feel less lonely. Civic engagement also helps lower anxiety, depression, and stress. It can even have a positive effect on your physical health by reducing the risks of heart disease and premature death.



# “Where Do I Begin?”

The 3 steps you can take to be engaged in your community...

# 1.

## **Identify What Matters to You.**

What issues or causes are you passionate about? Perhaps you are passionate about the environment, or animal welfare, or education. Knowing what matters to you can help you decide what you want to get involved in.

# 2.

## **Identify Skills and Talents:**

What are your current skills and talents that you can offer to the community? Perhaps you are strong in writing, organizing, or teaching. What skills do you want to develop? Civic engagement is a great opportunity to develop and build upon your skills.

# 3.

## **Find an Organization or Place to Apply Yourself:**

What local organizations, community groups, or initiatives in your community align with your interests and skills? Google if they have an online form you can fill out to get involved, or contact them to offer your time and talent.

# Civic Engagement Benefits In Action:

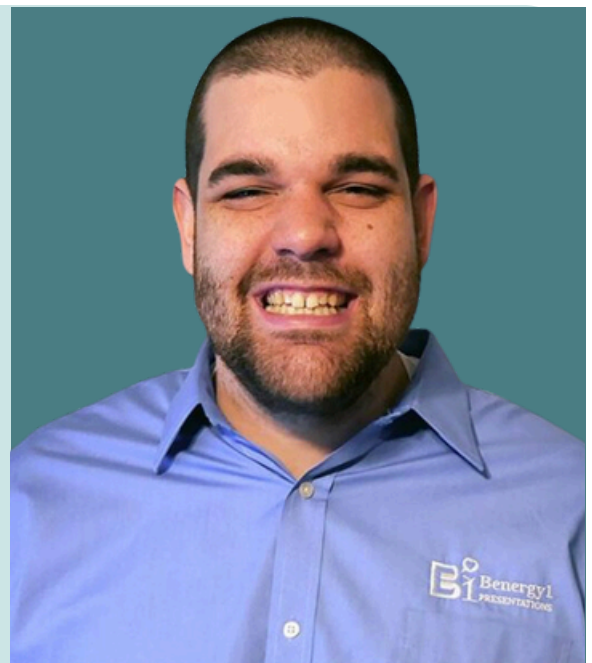


"Being involved means a lot to me because you really feel like an equal a lot of the time, and you can contribute and share and work with a team, and when you do that you really feel accepted."

**JACKSON HELLER**

"Volunteering is a good way to connect with people in your community. You don't know down the line who you'll meet. You don't know what you're going to get in life if you don't get involved and volunteer."

**BEN HARTRANFT**



# Civic Engagement Resources:

## **Disability Related Calendars - Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council (PADDC)**

Stay up to date on things going on all over PA related to advocacy, education, and community networking.

<https://www.paddc.org/resources/disability-related-calendars/>



## **Pennsylvania Department of State - Bureau of Elections:**

This site offers comprehensive information about voting in PA, including how to register, absentee voting, and accessible voting options.

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/vote>



## **Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP):**

DRP provides advocacy, legal support, and information on various issues affecting people with disabilities, including voting rights and accessibility.

<https://www.disabilityrightspa.org/>



## **Disability Pride Pennsylvania (DPP):**

DPP plans fun and accessible community events throughout Pennsylvania to bring disabled and non-disabled people together.

<https://www.disabilitypridepa.org/>



### **Feeding America**

Find your local food bank and help hungry families in your community by sorting through and stocking food. You can also donate meals or host a food drive.

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/take-action>



### **Habitat for Humanity**

Help build houses in your community and around the world. Great opportunity for people interested in construction and interior design.

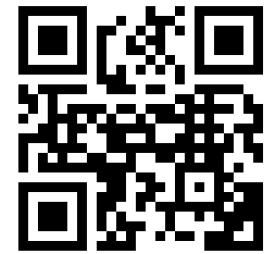
<https://www.habitat.org/volunteer>



### **Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network (PYLN)**

If you are a young person, or an adult ally to a young person, looking to connect with other advocates and organization's in PA... this is the network for you.

<https://pyln.org/>



### **Values into Action (VIA)**

VIA offers services and opportunities, such as Community Participation Support (CPS), to help you get involved in your community in ways that matter to you.

<https://valuesintoaction.org/>



### **VolunteerMatch**

Find local volunteer opportunities by typing your location in the search bar.

<https://www.idealst.org/volunteermatch>



# Local to Southeastern Pennsylvania?

Join us at our Integrate For Good (IFG) Community Hub in Norristown, PA, where we offer many opportunities to volunteer, lead, and get involved within the community.



# Explore Our Programs and Events!



## PROGRAMS

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						



**INTEGRATEFORGOOD.ORG**

<https://integrateforgood.org/programs/>



# **TAKE OUR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SURVEY!**



<https://bit.ly/IFGCivicSurvey>

**We want to know how you are currently involved in your community and how you would like to be involved in the future. We're also interested in learning your thoughts on what, if anything, might be obstacles to becoming more involved.**

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# You are the change.

**Integrate for Good empowers students and adults of all abilities to share their talent through inclusive volunteerism, community leadership, and equitable employment.**

**We created this guide to best help YOU see steps and resources needed to feel connected to meaningful community.**



The Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$3,095,416.00 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. Council efforts are those of the grantee and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

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