

# 5

## Things Every Arizonan Must Do

Lately, there's been a lot of talk about the need for community leaders and elected officials to tone down the divisive and polarizing dialogue that seems to typify discussion about difficult community and political issues. But what is it that *average, ordinary people* can do to help heal our community and restore our sense of cohesiveness and solidarity in order to take on our common ground issues and concerns? We'd like to suggest the following as a starting point for measuring our individual impact on restoring Arizona's "Civil Culture." Feel free to add to this list!

- 1. Be an active part of the community you live in!**
  - Do you know your neighbors? If not, go meet them! Make food to share and use it as an occasion to go door to door to meet new neighbors or your closest neighbors that you may not have met.
  - If you are eligible, register to vote, inform yourself about local issues and vote in local, state and national elections. Attend public meetings and read up on the issues to make informed decisions.
  - Get to know who your elected officials are and how to contact them to inform them of your views.
  
- 2. Volunteer / Serve others**
  - There are innumerable community organizations looking for regular or occasional volunteers. Investigate ways to involve your whole family in regular volunteer activities that speak to an interest or concern that you all share.
  - Make yourself available (within reason) to assist friends and neighbors in need.
  
- 3. Make sure future grown-ups are part of the solution**
  - If you're a parent, talk to your children about respecting others with differences of opinion, and *lead by example*. Involve them in discussing ways to deal with conflict and disagreement in constructive, bridge-building ways.
  - If you don't have children, get involved with mentoring programs to provide support to young people who may not have good adult role models in their lives.
  
- 4. Don't take yourself so seriously**
  - When someone disagrees with you, don't take it personally. Refuse to allow the disagreement to escalate into an exchange of personal attacks. Ask questions to really try to understand where the other person is coming from, and show them that while you may not agree with them, you are interested in understanding their point of view.
  - If you're having a bad day, consciously make an effort not to take it out on others.
  
- 5. Broaden your horizons**
  - Learn about, or get involved with, people that are not like you. Seek out cultural activities or performances that you've not experienced before; read about or take a class on another culture, religion, political ideology, interest, etc.

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE: 5 Questions About “5 Things”:**

1. Which of these 5 expectations are the most challenging for you to live up to? Why?
2. What are the reasons or challenges that make it difficult for people in our community to live up to these expectations?
3. What can you or your organization or peers do to help people to overcome or address those challenges?
4. How can we, as a community, do a better job to promote and live up to these expectations?
5. What can you/are you willing to do?

