

Take a Step

Creating new possibilities for Flint & Genesee County

Enough is enough.

Let's face it. The greater Flint area has experienced serious and dramatic change over recent decades; a steady loss of jobs, increased concerns about safety, more troubled families, growing tensions between Flint and the surrounding county, strained race relations. Many people feel isolated and divided from one another. They find themselves in a frame of mind

"We're too busy arguing over whose responsibility it is and who's going to start first and who's going to foot the bill. There are too many 'ifs' instead of doing."

where it is okay to focus on their self-centered needs with little regard for the welfare of others. It would be easy for people to give up, retreat into their homes and lock the door on hope.

But that's not the whole story. Despite all the talk about this

area's troubles, people remain passionate about their community. They know that things can be better. And many people have decided that the time for waiting is over. They are ready to unlock their doors, step outside and re-build their community. Many people and groups have already begun.

What can you do? The first step is to start talking. Find out that others have similar concerns and dreams. Figure out what it might mean for you to step outside.

"Take a Step" can help get you going. It's part of an ongoing effort to help citizens and groups in Flint and Genesee County create a stronger community. One

"We have to come together, forget about these lines, these barriers... We need to pull together and become one strong voice in order to bring about change."

"I've always been a fighter and I'm not going to stop now."

Imagine... a stronger community.

Imagine a community where people build new ways of working together to address issues we care about. A community where we care for our children and feel safe in our homes and on our streets.

Where leaders and institutions work toward the good of the community. Where people move beyond a gnawing sense that they live as isolated individuals, to being a part of something larger. Could this be our community?

Ask yourself these four questions to see what you think. Then ask someone else. And someone else after that. This isn't an interview. This isn't another survey. This is to help you get a real conversation going about what's important to you.

No one to talk to?
Take these steps:

- Start with someone you know pretty well. Bring it up when you're on the phone with a friend. Talk to your family over dinner.
- Work it in to a conversation you're having with a few people. Around the lunch table, over coffee or at the beauty parlor.
- Ask someone you trust if they will talk with you about your community. Maybe a pastor or rabbi, your child's principal, or your doctor.

1. What kind of community do you want to live in?
2. Why is that important to you?
3. How is that different from how you see things now?
4. What are some of the things that need to happen to create the kind of community you want?

So now wh

Take small steps.

First Steps

- Say hello to people you pass on the street.
- Plant flowers in your yard where others can see them.
- Keep your porch light on at night.
- Smile at a teenager.
- Shovel snow for an elderly person.
- Pick up trash on your street or sweep in front of your home.
- Invite a neighbor to dinner.
- Give "Take a Step" to someone you know.
- Hang up "Take a Step" where other people can see it — in the lunchroom, at the gym or bowling alley, at the post office, at the donut shop or the laundromat, at school.

We all know that a community doesn't change over night. It took a long time to get to where we are today; it may take a long time to create the kind of community we want. But what if we each did something, even a little something? Not "them," not "those people," but us. You. We would see the difference over time. And once others start to see progress, they'll join in too.

Next Steps

- Attend your block club meeting. Invite someone to come with you.
- Talk to the community policing officers in your neighborhood to learn their names and shifts.
- Attend church or temple in a different neighborhood. Invite one person you meet to attend your church or temple.
- Work with a local principal or teachers to hold a family night at school.
- Organize a field trip to a local business.
- Donate bathroom supplies to a shelter, or your time to the library.
- Be an assistant coach for a softball team.
- Include "Take a Step" in a church newsletter, club mailing or group publication.

Here are some examples of things you can do now. Pick one and get started. Or think of your own things to do.

What I'll Do:

You can copy "Take a Step" as much as you want.

Go to www.mott.org/flint/ for the on-line version of "Take a Step."

Available Soon
 Another conversation tool for individuals and groups who want to take an even bigger step. This tool will help you think through how to tackle an issue or challenge that is important to you.

Steps with Others

Give us a call or stop by. Find out what we are up to and how you might plug in. Ask us for more FREE copies of "Take a Step."

Community Coalition

Find out how to take part in dialogues on important issues facing the community. You can get involved with our youth group or, if you are part of a block club you can hook up with other clubs through the Neighborhood Roundtable.
 1160 Robert T. Longway Blvd., 48503, 767-1040

Community Foundation of Greater Flint

We help people and community groups come together to discuss common concerns and explore ways to build partnerships. We provide financial support and technical assistance for community-based projects.
 502 Church Street, 48502, 767-8270

C. S. Mott Foundation

We make grants in the Flint area, nationally and internationally that support community-based efforts to promote a just, equitable and sustainable society. To learn more about our Flint Area Program, please call us.
 1200 Mott Foundation Building, 48502, 238-5651

F.A.C.E.D.

Come to us to learn about our faith-based health teams, for information about health issues like how to stop smoking and nutrition or for links to

community health agencies. We also provide transportation to and from medical appointments.
 2712 N. Saginaw, Suite 115, 48505, 232-7733

Flint Public Libraries and Genesee District Libraries

Come to any of our four Flint branches or 18 district branches to use our books, computers and other resources and to take part in our programs like book clubs, lectures and story times for children.
 1026 E. Kearsley Street, 48502 (main library) 232-7111
 G-4195 Pasadena Avenue, 48504 (main library) 230-3331

International Institute

Join us for language and culture classes, lectures and special events about other cultures. We have programs for all ages, including children.
 515 Stevens Street, 48502, 767-0720

Michigan Works Career Alliance, Inc.

If you are employed, unemployed or underemployed, call us for information about programs throughout the community that can help you improve your quality of life. We partner with economic and community development agencies in Genesee and Shiawassee counties.

711 N. Saginaw, Suite 300, 48503, 233-5627

MSU Extension Genesee County

Work with our staff to identify problems and find solutions to improve your family life, homes, farms, businesses and communities.
 G-4215 Pasadena Avenue, 48504, 732-1470

Neighborhood Violence Prevention Collaborative

If you are part of a neighborhood group trying to prevent violence, come to us for technical assistance and small grants.
 1198 Robert T. Longway Blvd., 48503, 235-7210

Resource Center

Come to us to learn about organizations, services and resources available throughout the community. Talk to us if you want to volunteer in the community or if your organization needs to recruit volunteers. Call us to find out how to get help for people in need. Learn to be a community leader or get help with managing a nonprofit agency you are involved in.
 1401 S. Grand Traverse, 48503, 232-6300

Salem Housing

We can help you own and repair your homes through "sweat equity." You also can learn about organizing your neighborhood into block clubs and

participating in partnerships for positive neighborhood change.
 2610 Martin Luther King Avenue, 48505, 235-6191

Spanish Speaking Information Center

We serve the Hispanic communities in the area. Come to us for homeless prevention services, advocacy, health education and other social services. We also help you get connected to other organizations that can provide services.
 202 East Blvd., Suite 320, 48503, 239-4417

University of Michigan Flint Office of Community & Business Partnerships

If you are a community-based organization or business in the region, we can help you with things like computer systems, marketing and business plans and strategic planning.
 2712 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 202, 48505, 767-7373, 767-9933 fax

YWCA of Greater Flint

Come use our child development center and our health and fitness center. We also provide services to people experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault.
 310 E. Third Street, 48502, 238-7621

Want your organization listed on the next printing of "Take a Step?" Call Judy Wright at the Mott Foundation at 238-5651.



The "Take a Step" conversation tool is the first of a series of tools that helps citizens and groups in the greater Flint area create a stronger community. It was produced by The Harwood Institute located in Boulder, Colorado, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving society. Several local groups joined forces to help make "Take a Step" possible. It is funded by a grant from the C. S. Mott Foundation in hopes of sparking community conversation and action.

