

## **REACH OUT TO YOUR COMMUNITY**

Numbers make a difference! You can create a wave of support for an issue in your community by engaging with organizations, other communities, hosting gatherings, and connecting with the people around you.

### **Work with Organizations and Coalitions**

Expand your group's reach by contacting other community organizations. Look for both natural connections and unexpected partnerships. Coalitions of unlikely allies can be powerful, especially in convincing legislators that a wide variety of constituents share your concerns. Call, contact, or attend a meeting of the group you are interested in working with, explain your common interest, and suggest a joint activity. Don't be discouraged if one group is not interested or too busy. Building relationships can take time, but it pays off in the long term.

### **Connect with Faith Communities**

Don't forget to reach out to other faith communities! Reach out to FAN to find out which faith communities in your area are part of our advocating network. It can be very powerful to have many different faith traditions, denominations, and congregations all working together on current issues. Start simple – ask other churches and faith groups if they'd be willing to sponsor/host an educational event together, or make signs before a rally.

### **Host a Social Gathering**

Social Gatherings are good opportunities to connect with and educate people who are interested in learning more about an issue. You can host folks at your faith community, or your house, or wherever works best for you! Invite friends, coworkers, members of local organizations, and anyone else who might be curious. You could show a documentary, have a guest speaker, read a book or article together, etc. Follow with a group discussion and an action to take at the event or afterwards, such as contacting legislators. Be sure to provide materials! Make a sign-up list to gather the names and contact information of people who want to continue their involvement. Send FAN the contact information of those who would like to receive our email alerts. You can also provide snacks or plan a potluck to get more folks interested. Food is always a draw!

### **Table at an Event**

Concerts, rallies, festivals, holiday picnics, election events, and other highly-attended events can be great venues for tabling. A bright sign and friendly people can generate new interest in an issue or organization. Greet your visitors and let them know what you do, and what you have available. Resist the temptation to chat with friends behind the table! Make sure you communicate with the event runners to get approval and coordinate logistics.

Your table should include something eye-catching, a sign-up sheet for folks to receive more information, handouts, and an on-the-spot action item like a petition to sign or a postcard to send. Giveaways or treats can also be helpful

to attract passers-by!

### **Work with College Students and Faculty**

Colleges and universities are good places to gather resources and support. Work with faculty and student organizations to create an educational event. Some schools have funds to pay for guest-speakers. School newspapers cover campus and community events. Some professors are willing to creatively involve their classes in grassroots actions or will open their class to an outside speaker. Consider all of your options!

When working with student organizations, show respect for their leadership and experience. Build partnerships with them. Offer to staff tables with them on campus, to help find speakers for events, or to pass along FAN materials and action alerts. Gather a group of students to join you when you meet with legislators.

### **Reach Out to High School Students**

High school students are often concerned about the world in which they live but may feel stuck in the political system as they are generally not old enough to vote. Reach out to faith communities and community groups where there are natural connections. For example, work with members of a youth group who have volunteered at a soup kitchen and help them write letters to the editor or to their legislators requesting better funding for social services. Certain issues may be compatible with school classes, and some high schools are looking for ways to involve students in community projects. Many high schools require students to attain a certain number of community service hours before graduation. By bringing high schoolers into your network, you build not only support for your issue but also assist in the development of students' skills for long-term change. Don't underestimate them!

### **Use Libraries and Community Facilities**

Many folks use community facilities such as libraries, health centers, etc. at least once a month, and many of these facilities have display cases or bulletin boards. While you probably will not be able to put up information about a particular piece of legislation, you may be able to educate people about certain issues. Work your display into a holiday, e.g. make a display about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on Human Rights Day on December 10. Put up a display about a topic like food insecurity in Washington State. Advertise for an event your faith community is hosting or sponsoring. Include your group's name and contact information so people can get more information and become involved.

### **Don't forget to be creative!**

Be creative – these are just a few ideas to help you get started. If you have any questions about hosting an event or need help with ideas and themes, be in touch with FAN!

#### **FAITH ACTION NETWORK**

3720 Airport Way S, Seattle, WA | 206 625 9790 | [fan@fanwa.org](mailto:fan@fanwa.org) | [www.fanwa.org](http://www.fanwa.org)