# ROOTS of ENGAGED
## CITIZENSHIP PROJECT

## Project Leaders

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The Roots of Engaged Citizenship Project supports the idea that civic engagement is beneficial for young people's academic, personal, and social well-being, *and* — more than that — it makes our communities and society stronger.

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# THE
# Roots of Engaged Citizenship
# PROJECT



## Thank you!

Greetings!

Your continued participation in the *Roots of Engaged Citizenship Project* has helped advance our understanding of how young people grow into civically minded adults who help others and positively contribute to their communities.

***Thank you.*** Not only for your involvement in this research, but also the countless little things you do every day to help your children become the best versions of themselves. We are grateful to the opportunity to learn from you!

In this newsletter, you'll find updates about the project as well as some early findings from the youth and parent surveys. We look forward to staying in touch as we seek continued support for this project. We encourage you to visit our website, civicroots.org, for additional project updates.

Thank you for your partnership!

*The Roots of Engaged Citizenship Team*

## What is Civic Engagement?

Civic engagement is comprised of behaviors, values, attitudes, and knowledge related to political and social issues. It is **rooted** in young people's day-to-day lived experiences.

### Why care about civic engagement?

*Civic engagement is linked to important youth outcomes, such as:*

✓ **Healthier individuals**, including increases in life satisfaction and positive emotions. Kids feel good when they help others!

✓ **Fewer problem behaviors** and **higher school achievement**.

✓ **Stronger communities,** where young people are valued and feel committed to supporting the greater good.

## A closer look at the data:

**1** $\frac{1}{3}$ — Fraction of kids who report their parents volunteer, follow the news, or work to improve their neighborhood.

**2** 40% — Percentage of youth who report they have too much schoolwork *or* would rather do other things than participate in extracurricular activities.

**3** 7 OUT OF TEN vs. 3 OUT OF TEN — PARENTS report that their family discusses problems facing their community. YOUTH report that their family discusses problems facing their community.

**4** 72% — Percentage of youth who feel supported by their PARENTS, compared to 54% who feel supported by their TEACHERS.

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## Four strategies to enhance youth civic and character development:

**1 Discuss Civic Issues**

**Why?** Talking with family, teachers, and friends about current events, problems in your community, and injustice helps kids learn how to voice their opinions.

**How?**
*Make it a habit* to talk with family about issues important to your community.
*Listen* to your child's opinions and ideas with an open mind.

**2 Provide Opportunities**

**Why?** Productive out-of-school time activities are great opportunities for kids to engage in volunteer work and learn how to be part of a mini-community.

**How?**
*Quality matters.* Activities should teach youth to help others and learn new skills.
*Diverse activities* provide unique and different opportunities for development!

**3 Model Civic Behavior**

**Why?** Parents who participate are more likely to have kids who participate.

**How?**
*Volunteer* with your child or the youth with whom you work.
*Capitalize* on little moments. Youth notice and model how adults treat others!

**4 Build Supportive Relationships**

**Why?** Youth need to feel supported **before** they can become civically engaged.

**How?**
*Give positive feedback* to encourage and challenge continued growth.
*Create age-appropriate opportunities* for kids to help make decisions.

### Let's connect!

The best way to understand how civic and character strengths develop is to study young people over time. As we seek additional funding to support this work, we want to stay connected with you so we can invite you to participate in future research and continue to share study findings. Please update your contact information at: **http://www.civicroots.org/content/contact-update-form**

Feel free to contact us with additional ideas, questions, or feedback.
Our team can be reached at **CIVDEV1@gmail.com**.