



THE CIVILITY PROJECT

BY CITY CLUB OF BOISE

PROMOTING CIVIL PROBLEM SOLVING IN IDAHO JANUARY–DECEMBER 2016

INTRODUCING THE CIVILITY PROJECT

City Club of Boise is starting a conversation about how Idaho solves problems. We want our state and cities to be national examples of communities that address differences civilly. The goal of the Civility Project is not to make everyone agree; rather, we hope to help people learn how to disagree while remaining agreeable. This year-long project offers Idaho leaders and citizens tools to move toward resolution and action when those involved don't see eye-to-eye on the issues. It's about listening to and incorporating dissenting voices so that everyone is heard, moving civility from an abstract notion to an expected code of conduct.



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THE KICK-OFF: CULTIVATING COLLABORATION AMONG IDAHO LEADERS

In November 2015, City Club of Boise and the National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD) are facilitating "Next Generation" workshops for Idaho legislators, helping to cultivate a culture in which collaboration is the norm in public policy development.

Also in November, NICD Executive Director Dr. Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer keynotes the City Club's anniversary dinner, discussing the NICD program and the value of civility in American life. The dinner features a video from former Arizona Congresswoman and NICD Board Member Gabrielle Giffords, whose shooting in 2011 was the catalyst for the formation of NICD. A video of the anniversary event will be available at www.boisecivilityproject.org.

NICD staff and the City Club board are also holding informal discussions about civility.

THE CIVILITY PROJECT THROUGHOUT 2016

During 2016, City Club is focusing much of its programming around the Civility Project, including at our traditional lunch forums, tours, and salons, as well as at our new After Hours events. Forums will address civility in arenas like social media; courts; government and politics; education; faith; and business. You'll hear speakers share how the principles of civil discourse guide their work and inspire solutions, such as creating specialized courts for veterans and reducing bullying in schools. We'll augment these discussions with tours or other small-group events that may include:

- » an evening with a professor (or professorial panel) to discuss how society has defined and practiced civility over time, including in highly polarized political climates, and how civil discourse enables us to build bridges and advance areas of common ground.
- » a tour to a neighborhood where residents decided to beautify an eyesore alley, and a Q&A on how they collaborated to make it happen.

- » a visit to hear a Supreme Court argument, followed by a conversation with the justices about civility and the courtroom.
- » After Hours topics:
 - The role of incivility: When civil approaches don't work, when should populist movements try something else, like civil disobedience? What is the line, and how do we walk it?
 - Embracing dissent: How problem solving and community dialogue make room for divergent voices.

Throughout the project, City Club intends to convene Civility Roundtables with university policy centers, community organizations, and other partners to identify cooperative program offerings, evaluate results and explore opportunities to sustain the momentum for a second year.

The 2016 project will wrap with the presentation of City Club's Dottie and Ed Stimpson Award for Civic Engagement to an individual or community group whose work best advances our mission.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Civility Project's success depends on collaborating with a wide range of traditional and new partners in the community. Please consider getting involved.

We are seeking sponsorships and grants to support the year-long project, from the Next Generation workshops to activities spanning 2016. Your contributions help deliver more Civility Project events and programs to a wider audience, sparking positive change across Idaho. We're also seeking support for creation of a multimedia archive documenting the year, which will be made available for download and for broadcast on public television and radio. Additionally, we hope to secure funding to continue the project's mission into a second year.



WHAT WE MEAN BY "CIVILITY"

Civility means different things in different sectors. In courts, it may mean giving voice to those whose rights may be most at risk. In schools or on social media, it may mean creating a non-bullying environment.

Civility is not the trappings of polite speech. It is not pleasing or comfortable dialogue that confirms one's own view, or safe silence in the face of opposing speech. Civility is most valuable when conflict is heated and passions are high. It demands respect between rivals and integrity in conduct. Like most ethics, civility must be practiced to become habitual.

Please consider sponsoring The Civility Project. Call (208) 371-2221 for more information.

The Civility Project is supported by a grant provided by:



About City Club of Boise

One of Idaho's most respected civic organizations, City Club of Boise promotes nonpartisan, civil discourse on topics of local and national importance. At our lunch forums and other events, you'll hear from experts, leaders, and policymakers from many sectors and—just as important—you're always invited to participate in the conversation. To learn more about City Club of Boise or become a member, visit www.cityclubofboise.org or call (208) 371-2221. We are a 501(c)(3) organization.

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