

Libraries and Civic and Social Literacy

Libraries can play an important role in helping citizens have the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives, to participate and contribute effectively to their community, government, and society, and to connect with one another through discourse.

Civic and Social Literacy in Action

In Allegheny County, *Create Together: An Intergenerational Art Program* brings together youth and older adults to share the experience of making art. Each child is paired with an older adult who will become their partner for the six weeks of the program. A local arts organization is the community partner for this program which has included sculpting, collage, drawing, cartooning, fabrics, acrylic painting, watercolor painting, photography, and a variety of mixed-media. Each two-hour weekly workshop features one teaching artist and his or her media, and they incorporate collaborative activities throughout their workshops so the younger and older participant pairs can interact with each other. At the end of the six weeks, the participants' works are displayed in a Sunday afternoon exhibit at a local gallery. In addition to the artwork, each participant is encouraged to keep a journal that reflects what they learned that day about the art, themselves, or their intergenerational buddy.

In York County, a library hosts a bi-partisan *Legislative Forum* to bring candidates and voters together. Members of the community, the business community, and the media often attend to meet the candidates and learn more about the issues. In addition, the library uses the opportunity to inform the public of voter registration, absentee ballots, and election dates.

Additional examples can be found on the PA Forward | Pennsylvania Libraries website, www.paforward.org.

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