

# **City of Topeka Division of Community Engagement's**

## **180 Awesome Community Building & Engagement Ideas**

- 1 Host an annual Southwest-style luminaria display
- 2 Combine cause and community by presenting an annual home tour to raise money for charities.
- 3 Organize regular wine-tasting parties. You'll be surprised at all the local sommeliers.
- 4 Hold small music concerts on a common green. Encourage karaoke (responsibly).
- 5 Sponsor a holiday celebration such as an Easter egg hunt, a summer solstice party, a Fourth of July bike parade and party, Oktoberfest with grilled bratwurst, or a Halloween block party.
- 6 Start a regular "Mom's night out." "Parent Date Night", Kids Night
- 7 Create a new kind of Neighborhood Watch: Build a "care force" that helps out with dinners and errands when neighbors need a hand, and/or host an emergency preparedness night in which you get organized and learn about your neighbors' special skills (CPR training, etc.).
- 8 Schedule an annual "barn raising," at which a volunteer work crew helps neighbors with household projects, from fixing the pipes to mending a fence.
- 9 Start a progressive dinner tradition on your block. Ask each home to serve a dish, and go house hopping until you're contentedly full.
- 10 Host movie nights, using a garage door as the movie screen. Alternate which home gets to pick the rental, and don't forget the popcorn.
- 11 Work with the city to convert old railroad tracks or easements into multi-use trails. Then start an urban forest. Let neighbors plant their own trees, and revisit the site to watch your work grow.
- 12 Establish a community garden, converting neglected public space, however small, into a pocket garden with a bench or two. Digging in the dirt together creates plenty of opportunity for bonding, not to mention some tasty fruits, veggies, and herbs.
- 13 Make your own playground. Take advantage of a cul-de-sac by devising a play area with a tree swing, basketball court, and plenty of room for riding bikes and skating. (Erect a yellow warning sign to let visiting vehicles know that kids are at play.)
- 14 Produce/revamp a community newsletter to keep everyone informed and to build community spirit. The venture can bring together writers, artists, and designers and keep the neighborhood up to date.
- 15 Put up a community website and a Yahoo group site for public notices, referrals, ads, and event notices.
- 16 Move your picnic table to the front yard. See what happens when you eat supper out front. It's likely you'll strike up a conversation with a neighbor, so invite them to bring a dish to share.
- 17 Plant a front yard vegetable garden. Don't stop with the picnic table. Build a raised bed for veggies and plant edible landscaping and fruit trees. Break your boundaries by inviting your neighbors to share your garden.
- 18 Organize summer potluck street parties. Claim the street, gather the lawn chairs, and fire up the hibachi! Take over the otherwise off-limits street as a space to draw neighbors together.
- 19 Put up a book-lending cupboard. Bring a book, take a book. Collect your old reads and share them with passersby in a cupboard mounted next to the sidewalk out front. Give it a roof, a door with glass panes, and paint it to match the flowers below.
- 20 Build resilience together. Create a neighborhood survey of assets, skills, and needs for times of crisis. Frame it around "emergency preparedness," but watch how it cultivates community.

- 21 Host a neighborhood snow shovel day. Create an emergency snow clean up plan
- 22 Host neighborhood Christmas light help. Help hang or take down Christmas light
- 23 Organize a National Night Out party
- 24 Host a neighborhood yard and garden party. Share seeds or plant a garden together
- 25 Hire neighborhood kids for small jobs to help neighbors in need
- 26 Host a neighborhood Bake share. Bake extra cookies, cakes, etc. and share
- 27 Partner with neighborhood schools to host school events
- 28 Create a tool lending club and enlist neighborhood handy people to help neighbors in need
- 29 Have a neighborhood garage sale
- 30 Throw a backyard BBQ
- 31 Start and neighborhood walking, jogging or biking club
- 32 Host a Saturday pancake feed
- 33 Host a neighborhood book club
- 34 Create a private Facebook group for your neighborhood. Share events, recipes, photos and offer to giveaway things you no longer need
- 35 Redesign a crosswalk. In 2015, a handful of Seattle streets were reborn when a rogue designer painted colorful new crosswalks. Instead of wiping them away, the city made them a permanent part of the landscape, and even appropriated the idea, setting up a community crosswalk program so other neighborhoods could create their own colorful street art. Between promoting community pride and increasing pedestrian visibility and safety, it's a quick, colorful step forward. Check out Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Santa Monica for more examples.
- 36 Green your parkway. Okay, there's gonna be a ton of regional slang to fight through here: You know that little sliver of property between the sidewalk and the curb? Whatever you call it, replace whatever's there with a stormwater garden that allows water to naturally percolate into the ground. It will not only alleviate flooding on your street, it will filter and clean the water on its way back underground.
- 37 Make a seat. "One small thing a person can do for your city is build an attractive bench and place it where it's needed. There is an urban seating deficit the world over and some of my favorite cities are those where people frequently build their own street seats. Here are bunch of examples we once catalogued in New York City." — Mike Lydon, The Street Plans Collaborative
- 38 Create a little free library. Libraries may change and evolve, but the pleasure and joy of reading a book remains. In Dallas, the Little Free Libraries/Libros Libres project helped construct and decorate makeshift shelves positioned across the community, part of a wider community literacy project. Inspired by the wider Little Free Libraries movement, it's creating a real-life literary community on city streets.
- 39 Start documenting your street. Share the beauty of your surroundings, whether it's through an Instagram hashtag or a personal photo project. Once you start snapping pictures of everyday life there's no telling what you'll find or who you'll meet.
- 40 Add additional bike parking. While artful racks and bikeshare stations are sprouting up everywhere, popular roadways and sidewalks can still become overcrowded with riders angling to anchor a U-Lock. Small businesses can help make a difference by placing some DIY rackspace out front to make the parking situation more bearable. Here are some creative solutions.
- 41 Plant a tree. Shade, serenity, sustainability—trees add so much to the urban landscape and ask so little. Many cities give away free trees, have planting services, or require tree planting permits, so check your local rules before you start digging.

- 42 Forge a fancier garbage can. If there isn't money in the municipal budget for murals or street art, there's still creative ways to beautify the streets. Providence, Rhode Island, turned everyday urban hardware such as fences and trash cans into colorful creations with the help of a local nonprofit, The Steel Yard. By commissioning artists to create striking bike racks and railing, the city gets more exciting, eye-catching infrastructure.
- 43 Set up a small, interactive community art project on your corner. "Share your art with people in small ways. With our As You Wish project, our artists made versions of people's wishes with cheap materials we had on hand. With Forensic Friends, people stopped by our artists on the street and described a friend like you would if you were doing a forensic sketch of a criminal. But, instead, the artist draws a portrait of a friend from the description. With Listening Booth, we simply have somebody sit and listens to anybody who wanted to talk." — Jim Walker, founder and director of the Big Car Collaborative
- 44 Hang some chandeliers. Need a way to brighten a blah block and add whimsy to a dark sidewalk? The Chandelier Tree in Los Angeles has become a local landmark for the dozens of lighting fixtures ensconced in a sycamore. Neighbors donate to the electric bill using a repurposed parking meter. In Vancouver, a spinning, LED-lit chandelier was installed under a bridge underpass.
- 45 Fight crime with neon. Especially in a city strapped for cash, streetlights are low on the priority list as they're expensive to install, maintain, and keep powered. But they've also been proven to deter crime. Two Philadelphia artists took it upon themselves to brighten a dangerous South Philly block with a "neon mural." The illuminated work of art has become a social-media destination after dark, putting eyes on the street at a time when the neighborhood needs it most.
- 46 Begin a guerrilla garden uprising. Green thumbs often have private plots and backyards to grow, but they can also get on the front lines. Surreptitiously filling in unkempt lots or small patches of untended land with plants and flowers, or tossing a "seedbomb" at a hard to reach patch of land, turns lost space into lush greenery. Richard Reynolds, one of the leaders of the movement, maintains a blog with invaluable tips on how to reclaim "unloved public spaces."
- 47 Look underground. "So much of what happens at the city surface is impacted by what happens underground. From sewer systems to bedrock geology to culverts, what happens below the urban crust can highlight the history of a place, revealing why and how a city develops. In Lexington, SCAPE recently went subterranean, tracing the historic buried stream channel of Town Branch, and creating a podcast tour that describes this forgotten waterway and how it shapes the city's past and future." — Kate Orff, landscape architect, principal at SCAPE, author of *Toward An Urban Ecology*, New York City
- 48 Make an alley into a public art studio. Back in 2004, Detroit homeowners frustrated by people tagging and vandalizing their property decided if their garages were going to be canvases, they might as well benefit the community. Now, those alley-facing doors have become public galleries thanks to The Alley Project, which works with more than 100 young artists to showcase their work, hold art classes, and beautify the neighborhood.
- 49 Get lit. Sometimes it only takes a few spotlights to completely transform a city block. Casting light on a forgotten building can bring a renewed sense of appreciation and community. Boston's new strategy to light its city hall has enlivened its famous adjacent plaza, even for those who hate the "Brutalist punching-bag" of a building.
- 50 Turn utility boxes into civic canvases. In Philadelphia's Washington Square West neighborhood, industrial metal utility boxes line the streets. Instead of seeing them as a mandatory, unusable part of the landscape, a group of local art students wrapped them in colorful artwork. This simple, striking beautification project, co-funded by the University of the Arts and Washington Square West Civic Association, turned more than a dozen aesthetic afterthoughts into colorful neighborhood symbols.
- 51 Network your alleys. Reinventing an alley can turn a dark, scary space into a vibrant place. An even better idea is to combine several alleys into a network of public spaces that stretch on for blocks. In Vancouver, the project More Awesome Now, is turning alleys (they call them laneways) into assets with basketball courts, foosball tables and shady cafes. And they'll all be connected with a way-finding system using bright paint and eye-catching graphics.
- 52 Create a fit path. As part of the Market Street Prototyping Festival, a San Francisco celebration of creative urban intervention, one design team decided that activating the sidewalk required a different kind of action. The City Fit

Path proposal, a simple-to-set-up series of exercise stations and prompts, encourages easy and equitable workouts, no gym membership required.

- 53 Create a community sign initiative. Many marquee streets in American cities share a certain edge, history, and an organic form of verbal branding that helps draw attention, pedestrians, and customers. The CoSign project in Cincinnati's Northside neighborhood used visuals to makeover a neglected block, commissioning artists to transform staid storefronts with arresting, original signage. After redecorating another street in Covington, Kentucky, the project is poised to hang a shingle, so to speak, in cities nationwide.
- 54 Remake an underpass into an art space—or a park. Los Angeles has hundreds of pedestrian underpasses originally built to help students get across busy streets. But most of the underpasses have been sealed off to discourage illegal activities. In the Cypress Park neighborhood, coffee shop owner Yancey Quinones fought to reopen a nearby tunnel and fill it with art. The monthly openings spill out into the streets, activating the entire block. Need more inspiration? We've rounded up 11 ugly urban underpasses now functioning as parks.
- 55 Start a parking lot diary. Lexington's plans for the Town Branch Commons, a linear park system that would thread together different areas downtown, is a game-changer. Part of that new system will run through the Transit Center, a huge, bland parking lot that could be put to better use. To come up with a new use for the space, the city will set up a parking lot diary and let resident feedback determine the shape and function of their new urban park.
- 56 Open a gallery in your living room. If you think your apartment is cramped, maybe all it needs is a few paintings on the wall: Paul Soto turned his 300 square-foot apartment in Los Angeles into a functioning gallery.
- 57 Take over an empty storefront. Closed for business doesn't need to mean closed from the community. Numerous neighborhood groups, artists, and local business groups have turned empty commercial spaces into canvases and economic catalysts. From Project Pop Up, which hosted an array of displays and shops in abandoned Pittsburgh Storefronts (some of which have become permanent tenants) to initiatives such as Chashama and SmartSpaces in New York, creatives are breathing new life into these underutilized spaces.
- 58 Fix up your local park. Does barely functional equipment take the fun out of your local playground? Would new basketball courts or equipment make the park next door more enticing? To help guide those seeking to get their public parks in tip-top shape, the Center for Urban Pedagogy created a guide for building coalitions, activating the community, and petitioning local government for change. It's New York-centric, but the lessons can be applied everywhere.
- 59 Build a pop-up playground. "Explode the static notion of the playground. No city resident is too old to play, and no city space is too small to become a playscape, even if just for a few hours. Gather loose parts (wood scraps, old tires, cardboard boxes, stones) and sponsor a session of Pop-Up Adventure Play. When people of all shapes, sizes and colors come together to play in unexpected ways, communities grow stronger." — Kate Tooke, Sasaki Associates
- 60 Start an urban orchard. This is more of a long-term solution to supporting parks and local agriculture. But isn't the idyllic vision of sitting under an apple tree a few blocks from your apartment worth the wait? The Chicago Rarities Orchard Project (CROP) will literally take root in the city's Logan Square neighborhood, in a lot adjacent to one of the area's main intersections. The planters/planners also have plenty of additional fruit trees growing in a nursery, ready to be spread, Johnny Appleseed-style, to different sites across Chicago.
- 61 Ask kids to help design their own playgrounds. Participatory design shouldn't have an age limit. Involving children in the creative process for local parks and playgrounds not only guarantees the end results will be more engaging to the end user, but also it fosters an early appreciation for design. Firms such as Public Workshop are renowned for working with a much younger set of client when making play spaces a reality.
- 62 Fix up your bus stop. Is there a more bland and boring seat than a typical urban bus stop, a functional, feckless box of plastic? These key parts of urban infrastructure desperately need an upgrade, and people around the world are taking action. Community groups met that call to action with sharp redesigns, from Bus Stop Moves in Cleveland, which covers station walls with fitness instructions, or Ride, Rally, Ride in Memphis, which transforms transit stops into cycling hubs.

- 63 Set the table for community conversation. After breaking bread with someone, it's hard to consider them a stranger. That's the philosophy that informed The Longest Table, a 400-person feast put together by community groups in Tallahassee, Florida, to break down social barriers and get neighbors talking to each other.
- 64 Create community murals, and make preserving them a priority. Public art can illuminate a street, but protecting the work over time can truly define a neighborhood and foster creativity and talent. Philadelphia's iconic Mural Arts Program, which started in 1984 and turned the city into a street art mecca, includes a restoration initiatives, to make sure creative expression is prized and protected. In Denver, Colorado, Crush Walls is an annual urban art festival that transforms the street walls of the city's former industrial neighborhood.
- 65 Launch a community emergency hub. It's not the most ideal circumstances under which to meet your neighbors, but knowing you have a local support network in place is critical for a crisis. Emergency hubs provide a centralized meeting place and a strategy that allows neighborhoods to remain self-sufficient in the days or weeks after natural disasters. In Seattle there are about 50 groups specifically organized for such events. This is especially good because climate change is making natural disasters—like the recent Hurricane Florence—worse.
- 66 Brainstorm a community vision. Community planning discussions benefit from some levity, some understanding, and a lot of visual aids. The St. Paul, Minnesota-based Friendly Streets Initiative holds community visioning events that display large images of potential neighborhood improvements, asking neighbors to vote for their favorites via Post-It. It's a quick, effective, and entertaining way to take the temperature of the neighborhood.
- 67 Help build a better shelter. Sometimes, the best ways to help build your community is to help others who are feeling apart and alone. The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence, along with architect Corrie Rosen, created a series of guidelines, called Building Dignity, to help construct more comforting and effective shelters for victims of domestic violence. The plans include soliciting donations from the community, such as asking interior decorators to "adopt" a room, and asking a local steel artist to create artful window displays that projected both strength, security, and beauty.
- 68 Start a mobile produce market. Running a new route through the city's food deserts, a decommissioned Chicago Transit Authority bus transported market-fresh produce—not riders—for eight months in 2017. The Fresh Moves project helped underserved neighborhoods get access to the same farmer's market finds sold in other parts of the city.
- 69 Set up neighborhood Wi-Fi. In a digital world, neighborhoods without strong wireless connections effectively lose out on other important network connections, ones that can help provide jobs, opportunity, and education. In the Rod Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn, an often isolated pocket of the borough, a local non-profit initiative decided to bridge that gap by building its own mesh wireless network, creating a tool for local communication and a platform for community development.
- 70 Create a block directory. If you don't yet know your neighbors, this is the perfect way to get started. It doesn't need to be fancy. Just drop off a sign-up sheet in everyone's mailbox and, once they return it to you, you can email the final version to everyone.
- 71 Create a formalized tool-sharing program. Sure, you can just ask Joe next door if you can borrow his drill, but consider establishing a more formal tool-sharing program to get everyone involved. I love this idea because tools are one of those things that you generally only use once in a while, so why not share them when they're not in use? Local Tools is an online lending library management system that can get you started. Or check out Peerby or Streetbank to see if your neighbors are already participating.
- 72 Welcome new families. You can bring a traditional baked good, but I also love the idea of welcoming newcomers by sharing your favorite local restaurants and businesses, perhaps a stack of your favorite take-out menus wrapped up in ribbon.
- 73 Celebrate Neighborday in April. Since 2010 Good Magazine has sponsored Neighborday the last Saturday of April, by providing tools and suggestions to encourage good neighboring. You can check the website to get neighborly inspiration from all over the globe.
- 74 Host a regular monthly gathering, same time, no RSVP needed. Years ago I read in Sunset Magazine (unfortunately, the article does not appear to be archived online) about a woman who hosted a monthly soup social at her house. The idea was simple: she provided the soup, neighbors would bring a baguette or drink to

share, and their own bowl. And, this was key...it was the same time every month and no RSVP was necessary. A regular gathering that requires no commitment and little forethought makes for an easygoing gathering.

- 75 Treat your neighbors to a front-yard concert. Music has always been something that brings people together. Still this one's a little tricky and depends on the neighborhood. Many would welcome a guitarist strumming on his front steps but perhaps not a full band. You have to know your neighborhood and, of course, be aware and respectful of noise levels. Check out Boulder's Mapleton PorchFest for inspiration.
- 76 Support our youngest entrepreneurs by buying the neighbor kids' lemonade. I once read somewhere you should always buy whatever kids are selling on card tables in their front yards. I think it goes back to the "it takes a village" concept...you're helping to encourage the initiative and resourcefulness of the young. Plus, just think back to when you were a kid and you were so excited to have a lemonade stand...you made all of the lemonade and spent an hour working on your sign, and then you sat and waited and waited. And when that first customer finally showed up, it didn't matter that you only made 50 cents...you were so excited. Be that person for the neighborhood kids.
- 77 Start a networking group. Like the old nursery song goes, you just never know "who are the people in your neighborhood, the people who you meet each day." One of them just might be the perfect person for you to connect with professionally. Who knows? Your next position or client could be as close as the guy who lives four houses down. Meet up at a neighborhood coffee shop and publicize it on their community board to cast a wider net in the neighborhood.
- 78 Welcome new little ones to the neighborhood. When I was growing up, every time one of the families had a new baby, the neighbors would decorate the families' front porch with pink or blue ribbons. It was a small gesture, but a way of simultaneously announcing to everyone the baby's birth and welcoming the baby into our community.
- 79 Share small neighborhood gifts at holiday times. It's rare that anyone gets anything fun in the mail these days. Why not surprise your neighbor with a holiday treat? Keep it simple...baked goods, seasoned popcorn, or even a bottle of wine will be welcomed by most.
- 80 Talent show
- 81 Art show
- 82 Kids performance or play
- 83 Battle of the Bands
- 84 Karaoke party
- 85 Arts and crafts festival
- 86 Neighborhood walking tour
- 87 Nature walking tour
- 88 Blood drive
- 89 Food drive
- 90 Bake sale for charity
- 91 Assemble "Party Buckets" with bubbles, sidewalk chalk, etc.
- 92 Provide a basket of kids' books with a neighborhood theme
- 93 Basketball Tournament
- 94 Ultimate Frisbee
- 95 Soccer Tournament
- 96 Volleyball Tournament
- 97 Board games night

- 98 Card games night
- 99 Dominoes tournament
- 100 Bulb or tree planting
- 101 Invasive plant species removal in your park
- 102 Fall landscaping clean-up
- 103 Neighborhood spruce-up
- 104 Create a nature trail
- 105 Bike or walking trail repair
- 106 Paint a neighborhood mural
- 107 Paint the fence in a community garden
- 108 Graffiti removal
- 109 Voter registration drive
- 110 Child car seat inspection
- 111 Bicycle tune-up
- 112 Involve any businesses in the neighborhood: open house, using their facilities for the event
- 113 Ask local businesses to get involved – provide a coupon for a discount on services or products, donations: trees, flowers, food, drink
- 114 Hold a holiday tree decorating contest. Ask residents to decorate small trees and select a winner.
- 115 Recipe Exchange - Have homeowners submit a favorite recipe for their favorite dish: chocolate dessert, favorite side dish, etc. Have the residents bring a sample of the finished dish to share and share the recipe.
- 116 Street carnival
- 117 Tailgating
- 118 Auctions - Items or services are sold in front of an audience to the person who is prepared to pay the highest amount. Audience members place 'bids' for each item or 'lot', with bids being managed by an auctioneer. Competitive bids are placed increasing in value, until each person has offered the maximum amount they want to for the lot, at which point the highest bidder has secured the item. Great for non-profit fundraisers.
- 119 Award ceremonies- Think Oscars, The Emmys, etc. Of course, not all award ceremonies are quite as slick and glamorous, but they're a wonderful way to recognize and reward the hard work of teams and individuals.
- 120 Paint jam-Find a great space, grab a handle for street artists, and you've got yourself a paint jam. People love watching amazing art come to life.

**Neighborhood Enhancement**

- 121. Help people paint and repair their homes.
- 122. Volunteer to clean up trash around a neighborhood.
- 123. Create a mural that depicts values of your community.
- 124. Set up an art exhibit at a local business, sell the creations, and use the money to fund a cause in your community.
- 125. Collect supplies for persons who have been victims of a fire or other disaster.
- 126. Plant a community garden.

127. Organize a campaign to raise money for new playground equipment, or reconstruct the playground yourself.
128. Share your skills! Volunteer to teach a class at a community center.
129. When fall comes around, distribute leaf bags and offer to assist neighbors with raking their yards.
130. Campaign for additional lighting along poorly lit streets.

### **Special Needs**

131. Volunteer at a Special Olympics event.
132. Work with kids who have special needs on an art project.
133. Set up a buddy system with the special needs program at your school.
134. Raise money to purchase Braille books, large print books or other needed materials for the special needs program at a local school or community center.
135. Make gifts with friends for kids in the hospital. Distribute Valentines, Halloween candy, or Christmas treats/toys.
136. Build a ramp for a person in a wheelchair to make their house more accessible.
137. Volunteer to read books or newspapers to those who are visually impaired.
138. Visit a local care center to learn more about those with special needs, and ask how you can help.
139. Recruit some friends or a class to help set up a library at a children's hospital.
140. Create a pamphlet that includes helpful tips concerning the respect of and interaction with people who have special needs.

### **Senior Citizens**

141. Adopt a "grandfriend". Write them letters, call them, and visit often.
142. Gather friends and create a "shop squad" to pick up groceries and medicine for elderly.
143. Deliver meals to homebound individuals.
144. Gather family and friends and organize a summer songfest or play to perform at a nursing home.
145. For the holidays, go caroling, bring (easy-to-eat) treats, or just go and visit senior citizens.
146. Offer to read to people.
147. Provide your local nursing home or library with more large-print books.
148. Teach a senior how to use a computer or the Internet.
149. Call up elderly people who live alone to check if they need anything.
150. Volunteer to do general home maintenance for a senior citizen.

### **Homeless and/or Hungry**

151. Help cook/serve meals at a homeless shelter.
152. Throw a birthday party for children who are homeless at a local shelter.
153. Organize a free, public nutrition awareness campaign.
154. Gather combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, razors, etc. to make "I Care" kits for people who are homeless.
155. Take children who are homeless on outings to a movie, zoo, or other fun location.



156. Hold a book drive and donate the proceeds to the shelter, and then hold a read-a-thon or give a class on basic reading skills.
157. Donate art supplies to the local shelter.
158. Offer to repair or alter clothes for people who are homeless.
159. Campaign to create a nursery in your local shelter, or help maintain an existing one.
160. Always keep a few granola bars on hand!

### **Animals**

161. Volunteer at your local animal shelter.
162. Gather newspapers and give to a local animal shelter.
163. Learn about raising and training a pet to give to a disable person, and consider whether it is an option for you and your family.
164. Visit and volunteer at a local aviary, zoo, or wild animal rehabilitation center.
165. Organize a [community dog wash](#), and donate the proceeds to organizations that aid animals.
166. Locate homes and shelters for abandoned pets.
167. Start a Chow Drive for the community to donate food and toys to a local shelter.
168. Offer dog-walking services to those who can't (or won't) give their pets the proper amount of exercise.
169. Take pictures or videos of pets that are in the pound and use them when organizing a supplies drive.
170. Adopt a pet! Or, if this is not an option, volunteer to become a temporary foster parent for a pet in the pound.

### **Environment**

171. Clean up trash from a local outdoor space.
172. Organize a hike or nature walk with friends, and bring bags to collect trash along the trails. Click [here](#) for an example sign up.
173. Have fun with creating homemade paper out of used paper with friends (It's easy, fun, and green!)
174. Grow your own vegetables, fruits, and herbs in an organic garden, and encourage others to do the same.
175. Instead of using the car, choose the healthy route and bike to your next location. Burn energy, not gasoline!
176. Choose a family "energy watchdog" to shut off lights, television, and dripping sinks when not in use.
177. Switch your current Internet home page to an energy-saving one, such as Google's "Blackle", and turn down the computer screen brightness level as well. (It's unhealthy for both the environment and your eyes.)
178. Create a children's nature garden. Create a path, label plants and trees, and schedule guided tours.
179. Purchase recycled products as opposed to generic ones.
180. When buying food or drinks of any kind, it is better to stick to a large jug or tub as opposed to a collection of individually packaged goods