

Practicing civility every day. How learning a new way of listening helped a city council candidate. Diner owners recognized for their role in community.

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## The Worst of Times Brings Out the Best in Us

*In a blog post excerpted here, leading expert on civil discourse, Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, Ph.D., reflects on how natural disasters bring out the best in us.*

It is very gratifying in one sense but also sad that it takes a natural disaster to get people to come together. Or as CBS's Steve Harman put it Mother Nature has "pounded us with perspective". The question is what do we, the people, need to do to ensure that 'perspective' doesn't fade with the retreating winds and water.

If we can offer a helping hand to a total stranger in times of disaster, why is it so hard for us to do the same on an ordinary day? One important step we can take collectively is to practice civility: to say "hello", hold open a door, listen instead of cutting someone off, remove our bag from the last seat on the bus. We need

to make a collective pact—as a nation—to begin the hard work of reviving civility in America. And it will take us all to make that happen.

Hear more from Dr. Lukensmeyer on a [free Heart & Soul Talks: Bridge Divides with Discourse that's Civil](#), 2 p.m., Sept. 28.

**Read more**

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## **A New Way of Listening Helps Candidate's Campaign**

Last spring, lifelong Galesburg, Illinois, resident Chris King decided to run for city council. She credits the town's Community Heart & Soul<sup>®</sup> project for both preparing and inspiring her to seek public office for the first time.

King's road to running for office began about two years earlier, when she learned about an initiative called [Galesburg on Track](#), a Community Heart & Soul project in the town of about 32,000. She was skeptical at first, but attended a meeting of the leadership team and read up on the model. Community Heart & Soul resonated with her.

"In a lot of initiatives, people try to start from the top down," King said. "This is entirely different. It's a grassroots movement, so it's getting the people at the bottom of the pyramid involved, and it kind of travels up the chain. Eventually it

feeds into the top of the pyramid where we're all a huge community working together. It hands a microphone to people who don't typically get a microphone handed to them, but it also helps bridge gaps that you see a lot of times in communities."

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## Diner Owners Recognized for Role in Town

Dave and Paula Tourtelotte own Dave's Diner in Gardiner, Maine, a Community Heart & Soul town (pop. 5,600). Earlier this month Mayor Thom Harnett presented the couple with a Heart & Soulmate of Gardiner award to recognize the restaurateurs for the role they play in the community from treating their customers like family to raising money for community hardships to regularly feeding Rotarians.

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## Free Talk: Bridging Divides, Civilly

Taking on controversial issues is a challenge that every community faces. How those issues are approached can make the difference between a community that thrives and one where divides erode a community's vitality.

Join us for insight and practical ideas and tools for advancing civil discourse from nationally-recognized expert in the field, Carolyn J. Lukensmeyer, Ph. D. and Mayor Thom Harnett of Gardiner, Maine, who has led the way in welcoming new residents and embracing the value they bring to the small town, sometimes in the face of protest.

**Register now**

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## Leaders Focus on Engagement at The Community Institute

A day-long seminar in Brunswick, Maine, on September 14, focused on tools for community engagement. The Community Institute brought together elected officials and leaders from the nonprofit and government sectors who learned about successful community engagement strategies from [Jane Lafleur](#) on Community Heart & Soul, the [Maine Development Foundation](#), [Maine Cancer Foundation](#), and [GrowSmart Maine](#). Participants also took part in 10 workshops aimed at providing practical information and ideas to take home to their communities.



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