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For Immediate Release

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“Make Civility COOL in D.C.” by 2025 Campaign is Launched At Independent National Convention in Austin, TX

At a time when political incivility is at an all-time high, “12 Habits 4 All of Us,” a non-profit, founded in 1991 by social-change pioneer Elaine Parke, is launching a “never been done before,” public service campaign, “Make Civility COOL in D.C.” by 2025... right in the heart of America’s political discord.

Speaking at the Independent National Convention 2023 in Austin, Texas, April 3-5, Parke’s topic, “12 Habits of Unity to Improve Civic Culture” recaps her life story trajectory from corporate to public service marketing. The resulting 12-month, habit-forming messaging system bridges the gap between analyzing social issues... and actually mobilizing social actions that move the needle towards civil unity.

Parke’s latest book, *The Habits of Unity, 12 Months to a Stronger America... One Citizen at a Time*, (2021), has a “warning” on the cover that says, “This book is habit-forming and may cause a happier life.” As examples, March’s monthly reminder is “*Resolve Conflicts.*” January’s is “*Help Others.*” September’s is “*Do Your Best,*” and October’s is “*Be Patient & Listen.*”

Parke’s book and the “Make Civility COOL in D.C.” initiative, using public service broadcasting, challenges each citizen to instill the 12 monthly habits into their own lives, one month at a time, as a powerful counterforce to the anger and division that has gripped our body politic. “Just like we celebrate holidays, as awareness of the good habits grow,” Parke affirms, “we’ll find that we are celebrating the 12 Habits together and sharing the enjoyment of our own creativity. This is what transforms ‘becoming your better self,’ into being COOL.”

The D.C. initiative, driven by cost-effective public service advertising, is described by political scientist, Steve Bhaerman, as “an audacious and ingenious ‘*giant civility reminder system,*’ to focus on neighborhoods in Washington, DC that suffer from high-crime and poverty.” He adds,

“By transforming these neighborhoods – just a short distance from the Capitol and White House – the ‘Make Civility COOL in D.C.’ campaign will ultimately inspire all of America to shift away from hostility and towards more unity and kinship.”

The campaign is supported by prior proof and precedent. Twenty years ago, with public service broadcasting support from KDKA-CBS-TV, <https://youtu.be/fJD5cNkIbtg> this 12 Habits monthly reminder system positively transformed attitudes and behaviors in hundreds of Pittsburgh area communities and schools. University-sponsored surveys consistently reported that in less than two years, nearly 72% of the aware citizens polled, felt more kinship and connection with one another.

Nearly 39% also reported, “they had been reminded to improve their behaviors, at least once.” One young survey respondent exclaimed, “this is COOL!” Another wrote, “*I am now nice to the people I used to be mean to.*” This 12 Habits public service model was cited as a “Social Invention” by the London Institute. According to Parke, “Never, has anyone disagreed with any of the 12 “call-to-action” civility messages.”

Effective Public Service Campaigns are initially launched through an organized mass media blitz of public service announcements, (known as PSA’s) on TV, radio and print, that reach the entire intended market, as KDKA-TV successfully did for the 12 Habits in Pittsburgh. This campaign is coordinated with positive website and social media outreach.

According to Parke’s strategy, each month of the year becomes a colorful brand-name for one of 12 aspects of unity, civility, and citizenship. For decades, public service advertising has been motivating grass roots changes for good in America. We’ve learned to buckle up, just say no, and not to pollute.

In 2006-07, with support from Rotary International and Rwanda’s NURC – (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission,) Parke took the 12 Habits to post-genocide Rwanda to help educators promote peace among Rwandan youth.

The non-profit All of Us, Inc.’s mission is to engage creative marketing to create a flagship initiative in Washington, D.C. to help us shift from the current culture of separation to a culture of civility and kinship. Each month offers a simple core, Golden Rule habit to practice – sort of a “do-it-yourself” mental health routine. Some of the 12 habit actions are personal empowerment habits, and some, like March’s habit to “Resolve Conflicts,” are geared towards healing relationships.

After the release of her latest book, Parke, in March, 2022, partnered with Steve Bhaerman, co-author with Bruce Lipton, of the national best-selling book, *“Spontaneous Evolution.”* In December, 2022, they signed with the international streaming platform, Humanity’s Team, to syndicate their 12 monthly webinar series, *“12 Habits of Unity, the Path to Intentionally Evolving Our Human Community, One Month at a Time.”* - humanitysteam.org. Bruce Lipton endorsed the 12 habits as a “practical practice for bringing heaven on earth.”


Dr. Bobby Austin, President of Washington, D.C.-based Neighborhood Associates Corporation, and his senior staff, have recently come on board as lead anchor for the launch of **“Make Civility COOL in D.C.”** In a recent TED talk, Dr. Austin said, “Public Kinship? It sounds a little utopian and completely unattainable.” Now he declares, “I can envision that an organized system of broadcast messaging may be able to influence broad populations quickly, perhaps repairing the breach and achieving the public kinship we have so desired for so long.”

Historically, the model for the 12 Habits civility campaign was first piloted in 1991, in the SW Pennsylvania community of Somerset, PA. Early research, conducted by the University of Pennsylvania at Indiana, indicated promising results among the largely rural population of about 30,000. Quantified subsequent successes led to broad regional news coverage, two PA Health Education Awards, a HUD Innovation Award, and a Peter F. Drucker nomination for non-profit innovation.

Regional media stories attracted the attention of Aaron Walton, VP, Community Affairs, at Pittsburgh’s Highmark Blue-Cross Blue Shield. In 1998, at the request for help from middle school principal, Dr. Melvin Steals, Blue Cross funded the first ever, 12 Habits campaign in Aliquippa, PA, then one of Pittsburgh’s highest crime areas with the lowest performing schools.

In less than two years, Aliquippa was selected by then Governor Tom Ridge, to receive the state’s first “Violence-FREE Youth Award.” Police were no longer needed in the halls and student Honor Rolls increased 39%. The hard work paid off. Interest from other schools and communities grew.

Parke said, “Then the game changed. Because of the appeal of the short ‘sound-byte’ call to action messages, KDKA-CBS-TV adopted the 12 Habits as their regional PSA Campaign.” For three years, KDKA broadcasted three to five 30-second spots per day, that changed monthly. The KDKA public service support quickly broadened the influence of the 12 Habits to reach the 2.4 million Pittsburgh metropolitan area residents.



Inquiries for expansion of the 12 Habits campaign instantly multiplied, and attracted funding from large area foundations. Between 2002 and 2006, nearly 200 schools and communities became active. Seven additional studies continued to demonstrate the powerful impact and cost reduction potential of the organized monthly multi-media campaign. Then, like many non-profits experienced, the 2006 bank recession dried up most foundation funding – especially for pro-active rather than re-active initiatives.

Elaine Parke relocated to rural north central Pennsylvania where three communities adopted the 12 Habits Campaign and then to Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, where the community adopted the campaign in 2014. Local surveys again showed transformative success among the broad population of 17,000, with community data outcomes at nearly a perfect match to surveys taken in Somerset, PA, more than 30 years prior.

Since the COVID pandemic lockdowns, Parke stated that “the 12 Habits energies have been focused on building on prior successes in order to scale up, by spreading the messaging through social and streaming media.”

Parke and Bhaerman say they have high expectations for success of the “Make Civility COOL in D.C.” connectivity initiative. Parke reminds us that, “We Americans have a long history of investing in ‘connecting ourselves’ for the good of us all; from building roads, to waterways, to railroads, to the telegraph, telephones, radio, TV, and now the internet.” She believes that “Make Civility COOL in D.C” is an innovative opportunity to reverse the division by connecting our hearts as empowered citizens of a soon-to-be healthier democracy.”

Can engaging an organized 12-month, year-round system of messaging, connect us all with reminders that unity, civility, and kinship are the backbone of a thriving America? The D.C. experiment is a “win/win” challenge to begin to make civility and good citizenship COOL. Can practicing 12 simple, colorful, and even playful habits, all together, month by month, all across America, uplift and support us enough that rage, division, corruption, and even crime, are substantially reduced in a very short time?

Let's Find Out!

To become part of the community of people who are coming together as peer partners to practice the habits of unity visit 12habits4allofus.org. On the third Monday of each month, visitors who join are invited to a participative 12 habits Zoom party with a celebrity guest where we learn, discuss, and share stories about the current month's habit.