

Creating Community



“I feel most connected to the community when I’m helping others, donating goods to local charities and attending sporting events.”

Michelle, 46



“New friendships through our wonderful neighbors has helped me feel connected to Homer.”

Kathy, 57



“I am looking forward to college but I’m not looking forward to leaving Homer.”

Jonas, 18



“At the Homer Public Library, you can read stories to big groups of people.”

Frida, 8



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Community

WHY CONNECT?

“Our own survival is so dependent on the help of others that a need for love lies at the very core of our existence. That is why we need to cultivate a genuine sense of responsibility and a sincere concern for the welfare of others.”

Dalai Lama

We’re experimenting with how to create a more connected and resilient community — one that is full of thriving individuals and families and has structures in place that offer support to all of us. This kind of community not only

helps lift people up who might be struggling, but helps prevent struggles from occurring in the first place. This kind of community enables all of us to live fuller lives.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

? How does my community support people going through tough times?

? What would make it easier for people in my community to feel more connected?

? In what ways could I be involved in creating a more connected community?

THINGS YOU CAN DO

“I go to fundraisers, even if I don’t know the people.” Sam, 72

There is a lot of neat stuff to do in this community, though it takes a little effort to step out of our usual habits and try something new. Connecting to people and place can be as simple as a trip to the farmer’s market or taking time with friends at the post office or grocery store.

Here are a few ideas that people we talked with suggest:

♥ Volunteer, everyone has something to offer.

♥ Take a class at the college or a less formal community class.

♥ Attend performances.

♥ Keep your eye out for community events such as fundraisers, community runs or benefits, art openings, senior center and church events.

If you want to know what is happening in town, keep your eyes and ears out, read the local papers, and listen to the local radio stations. Bulletin boards around town are a good source for classes, events and performances.

What do you do that makes you feel that you are part of the community of Homer?



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Developing Relationships



"I feel connected to others when I can give them a helping hand."

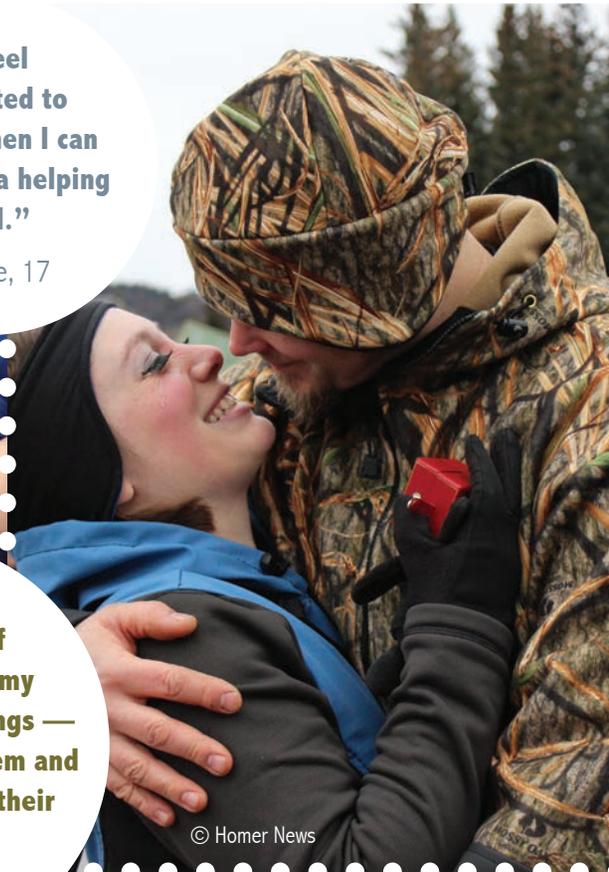
Izabelle, 17

"When I'm with my friends outside, camping, fishing, sitting around a fire."

Josh, 43

"...when I walk outside of my door and see my neighbors doing things — I love that I know them and have a context for their lives."

Shay, 46



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"Family dinner: eating and talking, sharing a meal."

Selina, 22



Relationships

WHY CONNECT?

“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”

Dr. Brene Brown

Positive, supportive relationships with healthy adults are one of the biggest buffers against tough times for both children and adults. This means the simple act of building relationships with others can make us more resilient in times of stress, and less likely to experience some of that stress in the first place.



QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

? *What relationships in my life encourage and support me?*

? *How do I care for the people close to me?*

? *How do I like to be shown respect or care?*

THINGS YOU CAN DO

“I tend to not stop and see people. I need to work on taking the time to stop and visit people.” Anne, 57

A community is made up of many relationships, some close and some not, from family to acquaintances. Some people have many connections and some people maintain just a few. Relationships don't just happen. It takes an effort to meet with people and spend time together. It may be that you just find out what they are doing. Everyone appreciates a good listener. For some people this can be easy, for some people it is more difficult.

Here are a few ways to encourage relationships:

👤 Go where you know you will bump into people, the Post Office, the store, Bishop's Beach, the library, etc.

👤 Offer to help someone.

👤 Ask people about themselves. “Tell me about...” is a good beginning.

👤 Visit the senior center.

👤 Call up a friend.

How do you stay close to the people in your life? Who would you like to know better?



Caring for Self



“When I’m cooking and cleaning,
it’s part of my culture,
getting things in order.”

Hionia, 36



“It’s hard
to do anything
when I’m depressed,
but it can help when
I’m around the people
I love and trust.”

Sara, 64



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“I feel grounded
when I am practicing
martial arts.”

Rowyn, 16



Self

WHY CONNECT?

“You can’t create anything on the outside that you haven’t created on the inside first. If I’m disconnected on the inside, I’m disconnected on the outside.”

Larry Mercurieff

We’re experimenting with how to create a more connected and resilient community which also involves creating more connected and resilient individuals and relationships. All of

these are related and influence each other. Taking the time to take care of ourselves can allow us to take better control over our emotions, our health and our lives. If we’ve faced major life

challenges, it may be harder for us to connect to ourselves. Supportive relationships and a supportive community can help us begin to connect.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

? *What helps me get through tough times?*

? *When do I feel connected to myself?*

? *What ways do I calm myself or cope with stress?*

THINGS YOU CAN DO

“I’m grounded when I take a walk on the beach, or work on an old truck.” *Jeff, 67*

“At the end of the day, I pray. It makes me feel better about everything.” *Alexandra, 29*

A doctor once prescribed “an hour of beauty a day” for a friend who had lost her husband. The medicine of self-kindness can be as simple as taking time in a day to do what you love and as difficult as setting time aside for yourself.

Some people told us they knit, work in their garden, go fishing, do yoga, ride a bike, take a walk, pray. There are as many suggestions as there are individuals in Homer.

What are you doing when you’re at peace with yourself and the world, when time slips by unnoticed?

