My Community

So, how can you be part of an inclusive community, how does one go about finding others with similar interests?

If you enjoy singing, you join a choir. If you like Zumba, you get in a Zumba group. Depending on your interests, you either find an existing group or start something up and invite people!

We started out a couple of years ago trying to come up with a way to help you meet with friends in the community.

It seemed ideal to name it MyComm! We would use the social media site **Meetup**! Brilliant!! We had cool bracelets that we were going to give everyone (and you may still have one)...

It seemed ideal, but we had some reservations that it was the right direction for us to introduce...

We kept thinking and thinking...

What is the right way to go??

When you go out in the community, you don't want to just **be** part of a crowd...

NO

You want to **meet** people, **spend time** with them, **share your interests** and **get to know each other better**!

We asked ourselves some questions... where do people go in general to catch up with friends who share interests? How can we find things in our own community to do that interest us? What if I'm not certain what interests me?

Well, since 1.71 billion people worldwide use Facebook, we decided to give this a try. If it works for them, maybe it will work for My Community!

The Arc
Dearborn County

We are beginning with a Facebook "closed group" which means the page is not seen by the public at-large. If you, your family, a friend, or someone who supports you want to access this group, please search for **My Community** (the name of this group) and request to "Join" the group. Participants are added with administrators' approval. Please allow 24-48 hours for confirmation. When we have the bugs worked out, it's likely we'll make it a public page.

A few things to note:

Acceptance in the group is by invitation or referral.

Administrators may discontinue membership in this group due to, but not limited to, unfriendly or untoward encounters.

All activities are done independent of The Arc of Dearborn County, its members, et al. We have gathered information on regional opportunities in our southeastern Indiana counties and made it easily accessible on the **My Community** Facebook page.

You may be surprised to find what's up near you! We've tapped into many local sources to make your interests simple to access.

This is just the start, so maybe we've only scratched the surface for what's going on in our region. We acknowledge that each person's ability to participate and communicate may be different but we believe many people enjoy being with others—sometimes it's okay to take a chance and see what works. We're starting with what's being offered at local libraries and community groups and will mix in some other opportunities that seem a good fit.

Meeting new people in different situations can be exciting, yet a time of anxiety. Choose something you're comfortable with or plan an activity and invite others.

If you or someone you assist is nonverbal or depends on someone for physical help, start by thinking of what's enjoyable and take it from there.

Here's what we've aimed to find:

- Opportunities to do or learn something in groups of diverse people.

- Activities where people will directly interact, talk or otherwise engage with each other.

Here's what we won't be posting:

- Activities where people go and just walk, shop or sit in a movie theatre. These are fine activities to do with people when you've had a chance to meet and spend time with them, but not ideal for where you'll have the chance to be involved, meet or engage with someone else otherwise.

My Community

We want this to be a lively place to go online. We will continue to seek activities to post and encourage you to submit ideas for us. Consider the two things listed previously under "what we've aimed to find" and if it meets this criteria and is taking place in our region we want to know!

Check it out! If you attend something and want to post a note about it on the My Community page you can describe what happened or what you learned. Maybe you can take a picture and share it with others in the group.

If you don't already have a Facebook page of your own we encourage you to set up your privacy standards very high.

- You don't have to include the town or state you live in, your political or religious views, who you are related to, where you have lived, who you are interested in, the high school you attended or any other optional personal information.

You will have options for who can see your Facebook page and this is where you choose whether the **Public** (anyone in the world), **Friends** those people you choose to be Facebook friends with and that may include your family, **Family** (only people that you have designated on Facebook as being related to you, **Only Me** (just you, no one else) or you may make a **Custom** privacy. *The Arc of Dearborn County, its members and affiliates are not responsible for your choice of privacy settings. We are not recommending your use of Facebook. Your participation in **My Community** Facebook page is optional and of your choosing.*

"IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE A RICHER CULTURE, WE MUST WEAVE ONE IN WHICH EACH DIVERSE HUMAN GIFT WILL FIND A FITTING PLACE."

~ Margaret Meade

Activities will be posted with details, by county, on a file that will be posted and replaced each month. You can see what is in your area and in the surrounding area. If we become aware of new activities they'll be added as a post.

More and more, we will share ideas with you that may inspire you to think of ways, whether you live in Batesville or Lawrenceburg or Osgood or Aurora—Milan, Brookville or Sunman or Dillsboro, to find and create community where you live.

This idea may be used as a tool to find a "fitting place" nearby and stretch to other places when the opportunities are present.

We realize that not everyone has immediate access to computers, smartphones and tablets but feel that these technologies can be harnessed to our good use.

We will make hard copies of activities available through area service providers for those without access to technology.

Let us know if this works for you and how.

The Arc
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13146 STATE ROAD 101 SUNMAN, IN 47041   ~   DEARBORNCOUNTYARC.ORG