



Five Easy Steps To Starting Your Love Is Action Community Initiative

FIRST: recruit partners

1. Identify “Community Stakeholders” (CS), such as houses of worship, ministries, public and private child welfare/social services, groups, community leaders, politicians, and businesses that are already involved in community service
2. Send identified Community Stakeholders (CS) the one-page summary of the LOVE IS ACTION COMMUNITY INITIATIVE (LIACI) vision along with the one-page benefits of participation, and ask that they support the initiative
3. Ask CS to send the local newspaper and radio stations the one-page summary and ask if they would do a story or a public service announcement
4. Set up a Facebook page or group and ask recruited CS to join the page and to share it with their connections

SECOND: identify a “champion”

1. Set individual meetings with influential CS to explain the vision and mission of LIACI and to gain their commitment to attend the first gathering (*focus on the potential good for the community*)
 - After introducing the vision for LIACI, ask for feedback and suggestions for maximizing participation and good results
 - Your “Champion” will emerge through your individual meetings. This person will see the value of LIACI and have ideas and suggestions for the launch, for participants, and will grasp the possibilities for improvement of the particular challenges of the community (*the champion in your community may be you*)

THIRD: **set up a gathering open to all**

1. Secure a “neutral” location for the meeting so as to avoid the appearance of LIACI being the ministry or initiative of one particular church or denomination, business person, or political leader, etc.
2. Email or mail an invitation to a meeting for all CS, and post the invitation on your Facebook page or group (*samples are available on our website*)
3. Create handouts for meeting attendees. These handouts will provide an overview of LOVE IS ACTION, and will list some ways that people can engage in a meaningful, measurable way (*samples are available on our website*)

FOURTH: **first gathering**

1. Explain the purpose of the Love Is Action Community Initiative. Cast the vision for the positive outcomes that are possible.
2. **Emphasize that Love Is Action is about unity, NOT uniformity. We are not there to proselytize, to debate, or to persuade.**
3. Recruit a few people who will be willing to act as “spokespersons” to help share the opportunities to engage.
4. Emphasize the value of every participant. *There is no act of kindness that is insignificant.*
5. Give examples of the ways people can get involved in helping kids and families in distress right in their neighborhood (*samples are available on our website*)
6. Give specific opportunities to help, including:
 - Treasure Boxes
 - Adopt a Social Worker
 - Adopt a Foster Family
 - Join the Facebook page or group for updates on on-going needs
 - Organize diaper/backpack/shoe/back-to-school clothes drives
 - Special family events

- Offer and/or host training classes
 - Create “play boxes” for kids coming into foster care
 - Create hygiene bags for teens coming into foster care
 - Start a [FRISTERS](#) ministry for pregnant and parenting young girls
 - Start a [Royal Family Kids](#) Camp and Club for foster kids aged 6-12
 - Start a [Safe Families For Children](#)
 - Start a Foster Haven Intake Center and Foster CARE Closet
 - Start a [Handle With Care](#) collaboration between law enforcement and local schools
 - More samples are available on our website
7. Ask attendees to share what they already do, and to share their ideas for ways to help others. Emphasize the intention to engage the community to help good organizations that are already.

FIFTH: communicate regularly

1. Recruit partners to organize various ways to stay in touch, share success stories, and request assistance. Consider:
 - Facebook
 - CarePortal
 - Email
 - Quarterly meetings
 - Annual community-wide events
 - Picnics
 - Parades
 - Family Strengthening / Reunification celebrations
 - Gala to recognize outstanding citizens (*consider foster parent of the year, teacher of the year, social worker of the year, etc.*)
2. Reinforce the vision and mission of LIACI by
 - repeating it frequently

- celebrating every participant suggestion and contribution
- encouraging follow-up thank you notes from those who benefit from LIACI
- Emphasize in materials and in person that open communication is based on mutual respect. There will be different opinions and perspectives, but all can agree on the mission and vision for improving the community
- Encourage honest feedback
- Create a positive environment inclusive of accountability
- Expand your reach and the good work done by encouraging partners to recruit new participating citizens, community organizations, ministries, and businesses. Word of mouth is powerful

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

Respect that each church/organization/group has its own culture; no two partners will engage in the same way, and that's OK.

*Partners may have suggestions for engagement that you haven't considered. Be open minded and willing to honor their calling and their "no big deal." Try to figure out a way to make it happen **unless what is suggested could endanger children or families**. If it isn't possible immediately, it may be possible in the future.*

*Lastly, **have fun getting to know others while doing what you can do to put your love into action**. This may be one of the most rewarding things you've ever done.*