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## **“Teaming Up” to Build Bridges and Fight Polarization**

“United across divides” is the message that welcomes visitors to the homepage of the [Team Up Project](#), a campaign of four national nonprofits to bridge the polarized canyon our country currently faces. Catholic Charities USA, Habitat for Humanity International, Interfaith America, and YMCA of the USA [launched this collective effort in 32 communities](#) across the country to “showcase bridgebuilding in action, share stories about the positive impact of human connection and elevate ongoing organizational work.”



The founding organizations have joined together in recognition of the need to foster service and human connection, particularly when faced with rising polarization, causing deepening divides between individuals and communities. “This project highlights the value and positive impact of meaningful connections made across differences, particularly in service to others. We hope to see many more organizations, civic leaders, and others use this platform to inspire shared action for the common good,” added Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International.

“Communities are stronger when neighbors are connected to each other, and Team Up aims to help people build relationships, explore and appreciate differences, and work together toward a better future. We see this as a path to a more united country,” stated Suzanne McCormick, President and CEO of the YMCA of the USA.

The Project encourages individuals and communities to start small when building and strengthening bridges. People are invited to get involved through simple, doable acts like sending thank you notes to public servants or personal connections, volunteer as a poll worker, attend an event or book club at your local library, invite a group to partner with a different group, or introducing yourself to a neighbor.

Despite being led by national organizations, the Team Up Project awards grants to support local pilot projects “focused on creating bonds, fostering understanding and collaborating to address a community need among people with different socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, racial and political backgrounds and affiliations.” The initiative provides “resources, toolkits, best practices, and training to educate those in communities across the United States about the importance of bridgebuilding and prepare them to connect to local efforts.”

At its essence, the Team Up Project is an easy capacity building, advocacy-in-action campaign designed to provide 10,000+ residents with the tools they need to build connections in their communities. Its mission is one we can all support (and, hopefully, are already advancing): “The Team Up Project will bring people together to build stronger communities and serve the common good.”