

Voting is One Drop in the Ocean of Love:

How to Get and
Stay Engaged
Post-Election



01

Hope is a
Discipline



02

Organizations
in Chicago &
Evanston



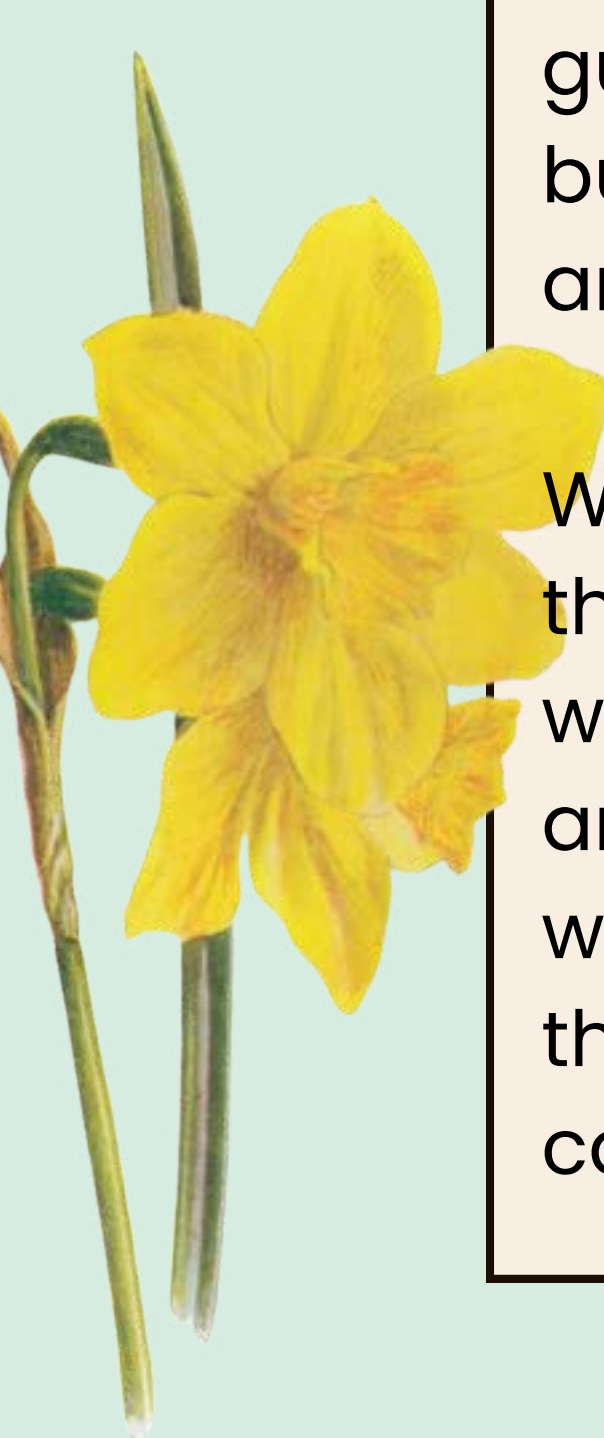
Getting
into
Mutual Aid

03



04

Reflection
Questions for
Continued Growth



Voting is a vitally important cornerstone of a functioning democracy, but it's far from everything we can do. This toolkit is a guide for jumping into the world of local collective action, a way to build community and create effective change for the people around us.

When Mariame Kaba says “hope is a discipline,” it is a call for us to think broadly about how to sustain the work of creating a more just world. This framework seeks to adjust our perspective. Hope is not an ephemeral emotion like sadness or optimism, but instead, it is a way of looking at the world as a place capable of shifting despite the seemingly insurmountable fight for justice. The practice of hope can provide a way for us to organize in a sustained way.

Some Points to Help Us Practice Being Hopeful:

1. **Everything worthwhile is done with other people.** Our culture teaches us that greatness exists at the level of the individual, but the truth is that most great things are done collectively.
2. **Your presence matters.** Most community groups are small, and the addition of one person can make a huge difference.
3. **Find the work you have the energy for.** Are you passionate about food security? A food pantry might be a better fit for you than a housing advocacy group. Think realistically about what you have the time and energy to commit to.
4. **Lean into your strengths.** Not all organizing requires talking to other people. There's always a huge need for administrative work, keeping records, writing emails, all of the behind the scenes things. Whatever your skills, you can help!
5. **Build tolerance, build coalitions.** Small organizing means you can't afford to fracture over every disagreement. You might sometimes get along better with your work than with the other humans, and that's okay. Focus on the task at hand.

1. **Food Not Bombs** – A grassroots organization that provides free meals while raising awareness about food waste and poverty
2. **Frontline Medics** – Volunteers who provide medical support during protests and community events
3. **PO Box Collective** – A community space focused on art, culture, and mutual support in Rogers Park
4. **Chicago Community Jail Support** – Provides support to individuals impacted by the criminal justice system
5. **Chicago Therapy Collective** – Offers affordable mental health services, emphasizing community care
6. **Affinity 95** – Black and queer-led group that works to advance social justice within and for Black LGBTQ+ communities
7. **American Indian Center** – works to preserve Native American culture and help Indigenous people in Chicago and beyond



Find out more about orgs in the Chicago area at:
<https://beyondnovember.blog/>

“Mutual aid is collective coordination to meet each other’s needs, usually from an awareness that the systems we have in place are not going to meet them.” --Dean Spade

1. **Solidarity, not charity!** Mutual aid is about recognizing that we all have things we need, and we all have things we can give. It rejects the traditional hierarchy of charity.
2. **Mutual aid builds solidarity.** When we give each other the things we need, we can also come to understand the structural reasons why we don’t all have everything we need to flourish, and we can organize to change these structures.
3. **Mutual aid teaches us to problem-solve collectively.** We so often work in hierarchical structures, where someone in an authoritarian role tells us what work we should do. In mutual aid, we not only figure things out together, but collectively decide what our problems are and how to approach them.

For more information, check out Dean Spade’s book, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next)*



Reflection Questions for Continued Growth



What are aspects of your life that give you a sense of balance and perspective?

What are communities that you can access for support, comfort and understanding?

What are the things you will be looking for in order to determine what levels of engagement (and risk) you are willing to commit to?

As you consider your options, what community organizations or issues are you passionate about? How are you engaging or considering to engage?

While each of us may not be called into or have the resources to participate in ongoing community support, what are ways you might channel your emotional energies into creative or generative activities?

When you take time to behold nature, whether in a local park or just taking a walk in your neighborhood, what answers or ways of learning might you gain from trees, animals, insects, and plants?

Many thanks...



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