



OUR WISH TREE

The wish tree is a civic engagement activity that can be done with groups of all ages to talk about ideas for making our community better and the important role of citizens of all ages and backgrounds.

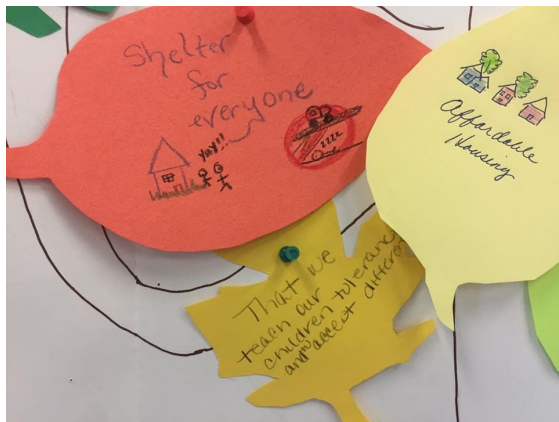
GET READY (materials)

- ★ **Tree** - can be a real tree or bush, a branch in a pot, a tree drawn on paper
- ★ **Paper "leaves"** - you can just use pieces of paper or cut out leaf shaped paper (see some templates here: [link](#))
- ★ **Markers, crayons or other writing instruments**
- ★ **String, tape, or pins** to hang the "leaves" on your tree



GET SET

When we make a wish, we have a hope or dream for something good for our own or someone we care about's future. **What birthday wishes people make when they blow out their candles?** You can also make wishes for a community like your neighborhood, school, city, country, or the world. **Martin Luther King made wishes for our country in his "I have a Dream" speech.** Do you remember any of them? What other people do you know that have made wishes for a community?



GO!

Decide what community you want to make wishes for . It can be your school, neighborhood,

Write or draw each wish on a "leaf" and hang it on the tree. This can be done right after preparations or, if people want more time to think about their wishes, it can be done over time. Each person can write one or more wish. Pre writers can "scribe" their wish to a writer or draw a picture of their wish. Wishes can be individual or a group wish.

Read your wishes to each other out loud and talk about them. Explain you wish to others in more detail. Why did you choose that wish, who do you think it will help? Note where wishes are similar or when many group members share an interest.

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NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

DURHAM COUNTY

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Discuss **how to make your wishes come true**. What can kids do to make this wish come true? What can voters do? What can we ask our elected officials or governments to do to help?

GO THE EXTRA MILE!

- ★ Keep your wish tree on display and add to it as new ideas come to you or invite friends and family to add to your tree as well
- ★ Take a photo of your tree or wishes or write an essay or do a video on your wish tree and send them to Kids Voting Durham so we can share them with others on our website and social media. You can upload your work here or email it to info@kidsovotingdurham.org -- include your name and contact information!
- ★ Let a decision-makers and others know about your wish and your ideas for making them come true. You can write an email or letter or make a call to an elected official or you can create a social media post and call to action on your wish!



Want to know more about people who made wishes for their community and work to make them come true? Or just to seek some inspiration for your own wishes? Explore here:

Groundswell groundswell.nyc/projects

Murals by youth artists that reflect their dreams and wishes for their New York neighborhoods and communities.

Youth Engaged for Change engage.youth.gov/inspiring-stories

Stories of young people working to make their communities stronger.

Americans Who Tell the Truth americanswhotellthetruth.org

Portraits and narratives highlight citizens who courageously address issues of social, environmental, and economic fairness.

Kids Voting Durham is a program of Durham County Cooperative Extension that helps youth 18 and younger understand, know how to use, and believe in the power they have as engaged citizens and informed voters.

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