

From THE NEW YORK TIMES, Feb. 18, 2019.

Opinion

## A Nation of Weavers

The social renaissance is happening from the ground up.



**By David Brooks**

Opinion Columnist

Excerpt:

“My something extra was starting something nine months ago at the Aspen Institute called [Weave: The Social Fabric Project](#). The first core idea was that social isolation is the problem underlying a lot of our other problems. The second idea was that this problem is being solved by people around the country, at the local level, who are building community and weaving the social fabric. How can we learn from their example and nationalize their effect?”

“We traveled around the country and found them everywhere. We’d plop into big cities like Houston and small towns like Wilkesboro, N.C., and we’d find 25 to 100 community “Weavers” almost immediately. This is a movement that doesn’t know it’s a movement.

“Some of them work at organizations: a vet who helps other mentally ill vets in New Orleans; a guy who runs a boxing gym in Appalachian Ohio where he nominally teaches young men boxing, but really teaches them life; a woman who was in the process of leaving the Englewood neighborhood in Chicago when she saw two little girls playing with broken bottles in the empty lot across the street. She turned to her husband and said: We’re not moving away from that. We’re not going to be just another family that abandoned this place.

“Many others do their weaving in the course of everyday life — because that’s what neighbors do. One lady in Florida said she doesn’t have time to volunteer, but that’s because she spends 40 hours a week looking out for local kids and visiting sick folks in the hospital. We go into neighborhoods and ask, “Who is trusted here?” In one neighborhood it was the guy who collects the fees at the parking garage.

Link: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/18/opinion/culture-compassion.html>