



Organize a Block Party

Block parties can be great fun and an excellent way to promote community spirit. It is a time when neighbors can gather together to meet one another and enjoy themselves within their own neighborhood. Although organizing a block party doesn't need to be difficult, it will definitely be more successful with a little careful planning, a lot of neighborhood support and the sharing of organizational responsibilities.

Reasons to Hold a Block Party

- To meet your neighbors. The more you know who belongs to the neighborhood, the more likely you are to identify strangers or suspicious people.
- To organize a city-sponsored group such as Neighborhood Crime Watch.
- To increase the sense of belonging in your neighborhood.
- To make connections within the community. When you know people, you can exchange skills or resources and perhaps organize a book club, baby-sitting co-op, share walking to school duties, or find new friends for your children.
- To meet some of the long time residents in the neighborhood and learn about its history.

Steps for organizing a block party:

1. Gather neighbors and divide up the tasks. Your block party will be much more successful if you involve others in planning the event. Start thinking of possible themes, food, activities etc.
2. Go door to door. Start knocking on doors to find out if there is enough interest and, if so, which day would be the best for most people.
3. Pick a date and time (mid-afternoon to evening works best). Try to pick a date 4-6 weeks in advance to allow plenty of time for planning and notifying neighbors.
4. Decide on a location. Where you have your party depends on where you live. Look around and evaluate your area. Cul-de-sacs and road ends the best places for hosting a Block Party. What if you can't have a Block Party on your street? No problem! Many sports fields are surrounded by non-playing areas that are free for you to use. There are many neighborhood parks built for your enjoyment-use them!
5. Obtain a Special Activity Authorization form and Block Party Petition from the Traffic/Transportation Department by calling 972-744-4333. If you plan on closing off the street with barricades you must fill out the request form and collect your neighbor's signatures.
6. Make Decisions about the food. Food is a must for a block party. If you want to have a good party, you've got to have food. Suggest a pot luck or have everyone chip in for catering.
7. Decide on Activities. To spice up your party, you may want to include some games and activities for both children and adults. Often block parties are held at the end of a block cleanup, a block garage sale, or a day of tree-planting; others have a theme such as Fourth of July or celebrating a neighborhood anniversary.
8. Go door to door to hand out invitations. Going door-to-door with invitations adds a personal touch that will help you get more people interested in volunteering for and attending the event. Keep the invitation simple and remember to include contact names and phone numbers for R.S.V.P.'s.

Good Ideas to Consider

- Invite City Council members, school officials or Neighborhood Services staff member.
- Call the Police Department, Fire Department, Health Services, or other City department to obtain literature, give-aways, or to request a presentation.
- Make sure you record the name and contact information for everyone who attends and everyone you contacted; after all, the idea of a block party is to connect neighbors.
- Plan lots of activities for children.
- Include activities that encourage people to meet each other. Use name tags and include children by asking them to create the tags.
- Have a block/street clean up as part of the party.