

Neighborhood Block Party Kit

AN EASY HOW TO GUIDE TO ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY

Compiled by: Wainwright & District Family & Community Services

Introduction:

A neighborhood block party is the opportunity for neighbors to get together, meet each other, have fun and maybe work together on a common activity. Getting together with neighbors for fun and food is not only enjoyable but it also enables a renewed attachment among people in your area. As friendships grow, so do safe and caring neighborhoods.

Top 10 reasons to have a block party

- To have fun
- To meet your neighbors
- To establish friendships
- To Increase the sense of belonging
- To encourage neighbors to look after the neighborhood
- To Learn a little about each other
- To help with safety/crime prevention
- To Strengthen the neighborhood spirit
- To see who needs extra help
- To develop a new tradition of getting together at least once a year!

Planning your neighborhood Block Party

Getting Started

- *The idea of a neighborhood Block Party is to bring neighbors together, so the first step is to talk to your neighbors.*
- *You may want to send out a flyer to explain what a Block Party is, encourage attendance, and get opinions on how to handle the food, possible dates and times to have an event.*
- *Enlist as many neighbors as you can to help out. One person can type the flyer; someone else can deliver and collect them. Perhaps local youth can drop the flyers in the mailboxes or doorsteps.*
- *It is important to include as many interested people as possible in planning and organizing.*

Types of Block Parties

- ***Barbecues** – organizers purchase all that is needed and neighbors provide the money; everyone brings his/her own meat*
- ***Picnics** – everyone brings their own meal*
- ***Pot Luck** – everyone brings one dish*
- ***Catered** – everyone shares the cost and the food is purchased*

Try not to go overboard, it can make people feel the event is too much work. Keep it simple!

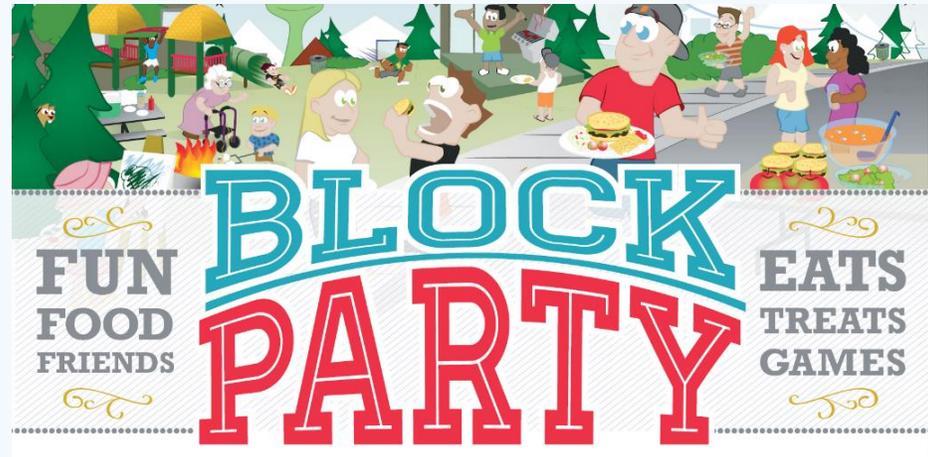
How big to make it

- Start off with a smaller event rather than a large one. It can always grow, but it is hard to shrink it.
- In selecting who to invite, use natural neighborhood boundaries where possible (i.e. end of the block). If you are planning a street or cul-de-sac party, you need to invite everyone from that area.
- Decide early and make it clear in your flyer if this will be a block party restricted to those on the street/block or whether people can invite friends/relatives.

Location

- Alley, Street, Park (may require a permit)
- House, Backyard, Garage
- Common room in a condo unit

*It is recommended to use a public space, if possible.
This will increase the likelihood of shared responsibility for the event.*



Timing

- For a first time block party, distribute the first flyer requesting feedback 4 to 5 weeks before the event.
- Once the committee has looked at all the suggestion, the final flyer with date, time and what to bring should go out 3 weeks before the event.
- Mid-May to end of August is a good time. A weekend date or holiday is often the best times for the event. Have an alternate rainout day planned, just in case.
- Keep in mind who lives near the party area, such as seniors or young children and plan to finish by 9:00p.m.

Getting the word out

- Flyers with a request for suggestions can be handed out or information can be gathered by going door-to-door. This adds a personal touch and people often offer to help out.
- Neighbors can be called on the phone. (If you don't know their phone numbers you can use a reverse directory telephone book available at many libraries.)
- Make an extra effort to get your new Canadian neighbors out to the event.
- To reach neighbors in townhouses, apartments and condos, it is best to approach the manager.

Role of the organizers

- Make decisions about set up.
- Act as a greeter at the event. Introduce new neighbors and help them make connections.
- Set up a **sign-in book** for records for next year, it can help develop a contact list. **Name tags** are important decide what you want neighbors to write on their name tags.
- Line up tables for food and have **garbage cans** available.
- Decide whether you will coordinate or everyone will bring their own **tables, chairs, plates, cutlery, cups and beverages**.
- If using **barbecues**, who will bring them?
- Institute a bathroom policy “everyone to use his or her own”, so that home security is maintained.
- Decide if **pets** are allowed.
- Be ready to oversee the **clean up** after the event.
- You may wish to do an **evaluation** at the end of the event to collect any new ideas.



Activities

What should we do during the event?

- *Visit and eat. Over the centuries, food has always had a very social component in societies.*
- *Games for kids (some organized, some they can plan themselves). You can book our giant board games, if you like!*
- *Take time to introduce one another and point to one's house. This can be done in a game format.*
- *Encourage the talent in your neighborhood to come forward such as musicians or magicians.*

Final Reminders

- *Neighbors should observe security precautions by keeping back doors locked and equipment in sight.*
- *Loud music is prohibited.*
- *Remember when setting up tables and chairs that emergency vehicles may need access.*
- *You may wish to post signs the day before the event to remind everyone to remove cars for the street closure.*

Other ways to get to know your neighbors

- *Perennial exchange*
- *Garden tour party*
- *Group garage sale*