

## Organizing Neighborhood Block Parties – Bonnie & Bob Snyder

- Meet with neighbors willing to get the ball rolling
- Go door-to-door to gather information from interested neighbors or use Nextdoor.com
- Compile a complete list of neighbors – names, phone numbers, email addresses, street addresses. This will help with flyer distribution and nametags. It will also provide an excuse to get to know folks and will let you know who might be interested in helping organize a party in the future (or assisting with a certain task).
- Suggestions: each block party moves down the street (or to a nearby picnic area) for the next party with a different group of organizers for each time
- Get the party committee together. Delegate tasks.
- Create flyer – date, time, place, what’s provided; what guests should bring. RSVP information
- Distribute flyers and post on Nextdoor.com
- List those who reply YES, NO, or MAYBE
- Make nametags (or let folks make tags as they arrive)  
At our first party, we used stick-on nametags; 2<sup>nd</sup> party – tags made up ahead of time in plastic nametag holders to use again and again. Be sure to ask folks to drop tags in a basket before they leave the party.
- Decide on time to set up
- Ask for volunteers to set up and clean up
- Our parties are true potluck—very little food planning involved, but we do provide drinks & ice

### *Items needed:*

- Tables – labeled with owner’s name - to make the task of returning tables easier  
Ask someone with a truck to pick these up from neighbors between certain hours  
We suggest at least 12 tables (for a party of 65—70 people)
- Table coverings – preferably cloth (plastic ones are fine, but a problem if it’s windy)
- Coolers with ice (two)
- Cups, plastic utensils, napkins, dinner and dessert plates for 75-100 (bought out of donations)
- Tea and water
- Table decorations (optional)
- Nametags (can be made ahead if you have a good list or just made at the party)
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Extra serving spoons
- Basket (with a sign asking for contributions toward party expenses)
- Large trash cans with plastic liners (at least two)
- Recycle containers
- Signs for food tables (optional)
- Saw horses, if needed (for blocking off part of the street to traffic)
- Signs for saw horses (Block Party in Progress)
- Extra chairs
- Blanket or quilts for children

### *Ideas—options for additional fun:*

- Music
- Games for children
- Climbing toys (if there’s a one easy to move and set up)

## **Organizing Neighborhood Block Parties – Lois & Richard Duley**

- We have street block captains that gather information on new neighbors and pass out information to neighbors just on their street
- You can set up a site on Facebook or a website to communicate news and information or send out a neighborhood newsletter
- You can create a neighborhood directory with names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses
- Our neighborhood has six streets and about 84 houses. We have an empty lot at the corner of the neighborhood that we call a park. We have our neighborhood parties here
- We have some money from homeowner's association dues to rent rectangular tables and chairs which are delivered and picked up from the park
- I have gotten paper tablecloths with plastic backing from Sam's or Costco at six for \$6
- We order food from Sonny's which is reasonably priced. You can choose one or two meats, two or three sides, bread, tea or lemonade. It includes plates, cups, napkins and plastic ware. For a small additional charge they send two people to set up, serve and clean up. They will also provide dessert if you would like
- We have assigned different streets to bring drinks, appetizers or chips and desserts
- We also usually have Coo Coo the Clown come for an hour to make balloon animals and entertain the kids
- We also get an inflatable bounce house or slide for the kids

We have also participated in block parties in another neighborhood

- When they first started having parties, they would do progressive dinners. The first house would have appetizers. Then you could go on a hayride to the next house for salads, then the main course and then desserts usually followed by a bonfire
- The neighborhood has grown so now they get someone to host at their barn or yard. Two parties a year are held usually in July and December.
- At the July party, there is usually a water slide.
- The homeowner's association provides the meat, paper goods and drinks. The neighbors are divided by the starting letter of their last name and assigned to bring salads, vegetables or desserts.

I would like to do a block party for just our street in the spring and get to know our neighbors better.

I have invited neighbors to special events happening at the church. I like to have a handout to present to them telling about the event which provides a reminder of the location, date & time.

### **Additional suggestions from participants in the breakout group:**

- Sent invitations by email and door-to-door visits, food catered.
- Had a homeowners' association party, food catered by Sonny's.
- Some businesses (like banks) have trailer-type grills to loan for free
- Put flyers in mailboxes, had everyone bring their own food. (Note: USPS frowns on putting flyers in mailboxes. Better to put in a plastic bag and hang on outside of mailbox.)
- Once per week, small neighborhood group goes out to eat together.
- Use Facebook to send announcements about gatherings.
- Can use Takethemameal.com to help those in need.
- Use the "Meet, Greet & Eat" approach. Invite others to bring their own picnic and chairs/blankets. Get to meet neighbors, minimum effort.