



An easy How-To guide
To organize a Neighbourhood



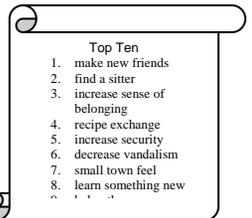
INTRODUCTION

Neighbours look out for each other especially if they know each other. Active participation of neighbourhood residents is a crucial element in community safety.

It seems to be a growing trend that relationships in many of today's neighbourhoods have become less personal than they were years ago. Why is this? It could be that families are more transient, children are involved in more activities away from home, and there are more two working parent families. Unfortunately it is becoming uncommon to see neighbours chatting on front lawns while keeping a watchful eye on children and community activities. Quiet, detached, aloof communities are communities ready for crime such as vandalism.

Getting together with neighbours for a warm evening of fun and food is not only enjoyable, but it also allows for a renewed attachment among people in your area. It is a time to focus on issues and concerns and come up with solutions.

10 TOP REASONS TO HAVE A BLOCK PARTY



1. To have fun - no excuses or reasons needed to celebrate!
2. To meet your neighbours. When you know who lives in your neighbourhood, the more likely you are to identify strangers or suspicious people.
3. To increase that sense of belonging to a community.
4. To strengthen neighbourhood spirit and encourage residents to look after the neighbourhood.
5. To make additional 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.
6. To meet some old time residents in the neighbourhood and learn the neighbourhood's history.
7. To establish new friendships.
8. To learn a little about each other and who might need a little extra help from time to time.
9. To have a neighbourhood clean-up day, play some good music and barbeque once all the work is done.
10. To start a neighbourhood tradition of getting together at least once a year!

As friendships grow, so do safe and caring neighbourhoods.

PLANNING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD BLOCK PARTY

1. 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 neighbourhood 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 (if yes how many).

2. GETTING THE WORD OUT

It is important to keep neighbours informed. Here are some ideas:

- Flyers can be used with a request to drop back their suggestions for the event in your mailbox.
- Have organizing committee members drop off flyers one day and collect them on another.
- Put up signage at the entry to your crescent, cul-de-sac or street.
- Information can be gathered from your neighbours by going door-to-door. This adds a personal touch and people often offer to help.
- A casual approach can be used to inform neighbours as you see them out doing their lawns.
- Residents can be called on the phone. If you don't know your neighbour's phone number, a reverse directory telephone book can be used, which is available on the Internet.
- To reach neighbours in townhouses, apartments and condos, it is best to approach the manager. They will let you know how to get in touch with the residents.

Take every opportunity to talk it up in the neighbourhood as often as possible prior to the event.



3. GETTING STARTED

- The idea of a neighbourhood block party is to bring neighbours together, so the first step is to create an organizing committee.
- You may want to send out a flyer to explain what a Block Party is, encourage attendance, get opinions on how to handle the food, possible dates and times to have an event.
- Enlist as many neighbours 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.
- It's important to include as many interested people as possible in planning and organizing your event.

SAMPLE BLOCK PARTY QUESTIONNAIRE

A few neighbours have been talking and we thought it would be fun to get together and have a "meet-on-the-street event". This would be an opportunity to get to know one another, with hopes to foster friendships and to promote safe and caring neighbours. To get this event underway, we would like to know what you think!

Yes, our family would be interested in participating in this block party _____
Number attending _____

No, will not attend, but have no objection to blocking off the street (if needed) for this event. _____

What would be the best time of day and the best date?

1st choice _____ 2nd choice _____
Date Time of Day Date Time of Day

Your Name _____ Address _____

Evening Phone _____ Daytime Phone _____

A planning meeting is scheduled for _____

Would you be interested in helping organize this event? Yes _____ No _____

Do you have a talent you would like to share with us? _____

We are asking each family to bring:

- Salad or dessert or snacks or condiments (please bring enough for 6 people)
- Hot dogs or hamburgers and buns for your family
- Beverages for your family
- Non-breakable plates, cups and cutlery for your family
- Chairs/blanket for your family to sit on

Would you be willing to bring your barbeque and help cook? Yes _____

Committee members will be around to pick up this flyer on _____. Please ensure the flyer is back in your mailbox. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please contact: _____

Thanks Neighbour!

4. TYPES OF BLOCK PARTIES

Your organizing committee can determine which type of block party will work best in your neighbourhood;

- Barbecues - organizers purchase all that is needed and neighbours provide money or everyone brings his or her own meat.
- Picnics - everyone brings their own meal.
- Potluck - everyone brings one dish: even # houses could bring dessert, odd # houses could bring salads or main 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.*

5. LOCATION

If at all possible, use a common public space. This will increase the likelihood of shared responsibility for the event. Safety for all participants needs to be an important factor when determining a location.

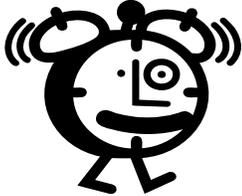
Options:

- Existing park or common area: must abide by town park use bylaws
- A neighbours front or backyard
- House
- Garage
- Common room in a condo unit
- Street or Alley

SPECIAL NOTE: If you intend to use the street or alley in any way contact the town for permission to block off that area.



6. THE TIMING TO GET THE EVENT PLANNED



- For a first time block party, distribute the first flyer requesting feedback 4 to 5 weeks before the event.
- Adjustments may need to be made if a neighbour already has an event of their own planned.
- Once the planning group has looked at all the suggestions, the final flyer with date, time and what to bring should go out 3 weeks before the event.
- Mid-May to the end of August is a good time.
- A weekend date or holiday is often the best times for the event.
- Have an alternative rainout day planned, just in case.
- Keep in mind those who live in the neighbourhood when setting the hours for the party. If young children or seniors are living near the party area, plan to finish by 10:00 pm.

PLANNING COMMITTEE TO DO LIST



<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Address & Phone</i>
<i>Chair/Main Contact</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Send out invitations</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Answer questions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Organize planning meetings</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Get nametags from Atco Gas (460-4090)</i> 	Sample form	
<i>Activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Include games/activities/ icebreakers for all ages and cultures</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Decide whether to offer prizes</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Get kids & teens involved in planning & supervising</i> 		
<i>Food</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Arrange tables for food, BBQ's, coolers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Collect money for any group food supplies (if needed)</i> 		
<i>Clean Up</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pick up garbage cans and replacement bags</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Take down any signs that may have been put up</i> 		

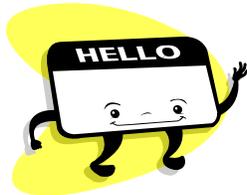
7. ROLE OF THE ORGANIZERS



- Make decisions about the set up.
- Act as a greeter at the event.
- Introduce new neighbours and help them make connections.
- Make sure the clean up is done. You may wish to inspire clean up by rewarding the neighbourhood children with a prize for picking up garbage.

8. SET UP

- Make sure you have a sign-in sheet with the names of everyone who attends the party and everyone you contacted. After all, the idea of a Block Party is to connect neighbours. This is a great resource for next year, as it can help develop a contact list for the neighbourhood.
 - Nametags are important. Atco Gas will supply 300 nametags at no cost. Call 460-4090.
 - Decide what you want neighbours to write on their name tag e.g. first and last names, house numbers.
 - Line up tables for the food and have several garbage cans available.
 - Decide whether you will coordinate or everyone will bring his or her own tables and chairs, plates, cutlery and 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.
- Provide residents with an evaluation at the end of the event to collect any new ideas for next year.



9. ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

What should we do during the event?

- Visit and eat. Over the centuries, food has always had a very social component in societies.
- Take time to introduce one another and point to one's house. This can be done in a game format.
- Invite Crime Prevention groups to set up a display.
- Have a presentation by RCMP on crime prevention



- Plan lots of games for kids, some organized and some they can play themselves. Examples:
 - Sidewalk chalk
 - Face painting
 - Hula hoops
 - Bean bag toss
 - Basketball
 - Fruit loop necklaces
- Encourage the talent of your neighbourhood to come forward - you may be living next to a musician, artist, magician, singer, dancer, radio host or prize-winning cook!
- Bulletin board/Sign up sheets for special interests
 - Babysitters (needed/offered)
 - Interested in walking group
 - Interested in reading club

I am interested in
a book exchange
 My name/# Cara/555-1234
 I will pick up this sheet at the end of the Block Party

Name	Number and/or Email

I am interested in
5:30 a.m. walking partner(s)
 My name/# Colleen
 I will pick up this sheet at the end of the Block Party

Name	Number and/or Email

I am interested in
Having someone mow my lawn
 My name/# Gladys \$15/week
 I will pick up this sheet at the end of the Block Party

Name	Number and/or Email

Be sure to encourage intergenerational participation. For example, have youth leading games for younger children, seniors and teens working the barbeques. Make sure that people with disabilities can participate in activities, including their attendants (those with seeing-eye dogs or in wheelchairs)

OTHER WAYS TO GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS

- Perennial exchange
- Garden tour party
- Group garage sale
- Block/street clean up



Allow the majority to determine the type of event.

REMINDERS

- Residents should observe security precautions by keeping back doors locked and equipment in sight.
- Be courteous, loud amplification of music is prohibited.
- Remember when setting up tables and chairs that emergency vehicles must have access.
- You may wish to post signs the day before the event to remind everyone to remove their cars if the street is being closed.
- Alcohol is only permitted on private property, not on Town streets or in parks.



Sample form

Don't Miss Out!!

**Pepins Point
NEIGHBOURHOOD BLOCK PARTY!!**

Many thanks to the
Organizing Committee
from Pepins Point
Neighbourhood for
sharing this great idea!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25TH
4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

In case of rain, we will have the party on Sunday from 1 – 5 p.m.

**Join your neighbours at Grass Hopper Hill Park for a fun afternoon of
games, visiting, and food!!
All are welcome!!**

**Children's Bike Parade
4:30**
*Decorate your bike and
show off your creativity!!
Children will parade their
bikes through the park.*

**Face
Painting!!**

Test your
Chess skills!!

**Free
Burgers!!**

RCMP Patrol car for the
kids to check out!!

**Bring your remote
control car to race
around a track!**

Crime Prevention
Groups – how to make
your house less of a
target!

Find a walking partner! A babysitter!
Someone to trade books with! A new
friend! Trade plant slips! Someone to
walk your dog!

Get to know your
neighbours!! Enhance
that small-town, safe
streets feeling!

If you have not previously
confirmed your attendance,
please email
abcd@hotmail.com with
the number attending so
we can be sure to have
enough burgers!!

Please Bring:

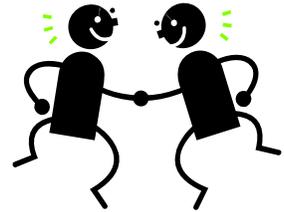
1. Lawn chairs or blanket for your family!
2. Even #'d houses bring a salad.
3. Odd #'d houses bring a dessert.
4. Beverage for your family.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Sample form

Canada Day Block Party

- *Who can trace their Canadian family origins back the furthest?*
- *Who is the newest Canadian?*
- *Canadian quiz from newspaper, library, Internet, etc.).*
- *Canadian heroes charades.*
- *A cake decorated with the maple leaf.*
- *Canadian music.*



Cultural Connections

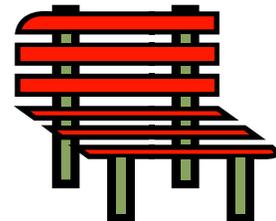


- *Have everyone bring a favorite family dish.*
- *Teach everyone how to say 3 things in another language.*
- *Use a world map to indicate where everyone originally came from.*

Bonjour!

Neighbourhood Action

- *Discuss what issues or concerns neighbours may have and establish teams to explore how to resolve them. Note, keep this part of the party to a set time, remember a block party should be fun!*
- *Have a clean up time, build a bench, plant a garden, paint street numbers etc. as part of the block part activities.*



NEIGHBOURHOOD BINGO

Your name: _____

- All completed forms will be placed in a box for a draw
- Find someone who has/is: (cannot use a person for more than one)

Moved here from Winnipeg	Likes Liver and Onions	Has 2 cats	Plays guitar	Can play the spoons
Has travelled to more than 2 other countries	Can do card tricks	Lived here longer than 10 years	Electrician	Volunteers
House number ends in 4	Has more than 3 kids	Helped organize this block party	Is wearing something home-made	Born in another country
Retired	Knows how to play pinochle	Is Irish	Lived here less than 6 months	Teacher
Owens more than 200 books	A marathon runner	Can raise one eyebrow	Is 8 years old	Military Family

SAFE NEIGHBOURHOOD BLOCK PARTY
EVALUATION FORM

Sample form

To help plan future block parties your feedback is appreciated.

What were the 3 best things about the block party?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What 3 things would you recommend for the next party?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How would you like to maintain the neighbourhood connection that was started at the block party during the rest of the year?

Are you willing to help with the planning of a future neighbourhood event?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please leave your name and phone # _____

Return this form to _____ by _____

