

ONE JOPLIN “GO KIT”
BLOCK PARTY EVENT

TIPS FOR YOUR PARTY

Neighborhood parties are all about building relationships. This is a chance for you to build trust and connection, and begin the process of rebuilding the social fabric of community. Celebrating together is a key element of that endeavor, and this guide is intended to help you celebrate well.



STEP 1: START A FACEBOOK GROUP

If your neighborhood does not already have one, starting a Facebook group a month or two before your event, ensures that the energy begun by your party has somewhere to land. Staying in touch with neighbors after an event isn't always easy, but social media can aid in creating ongoing connection.

Including the link to your Facebook group on your Block Party flyer, is a great way to let people know that it exists, and gives you an audience when you post reminders about the event.

**SEE THE RESOURCES SECTION AT ONEJOPLIN.COM FOR:
"How to Start a Group on Facebook."**



OTHER PLACES TO HOLD YOUR EVENT

IN THE STREET: Street parties may require you to shut off the street, which requires a permit from the City. If you live on a cul-de-sac, you may not need a permit and it may actually bring more people out to the event. Consider the weather too, streets with tree cover will ensure people feel comfortable in warmer weather.

IN A NEIGHBORHOOD PARK: This is best done if it's under a shelter with tables and next to playground equipment. Make sure the park is in the neighborhood, to prevent people from avoiding the event because of distance.

STEP 2: DECIDE WHERE YOU'LL HOLD THE EVENT

We recommend using your or a neighbor's front yard to host the event. This communicates that you want to invite others into your space and want to build relationships. It is the least difficult to set up, and allows you to have access to electricity and supplies if you need them. Usually private property has more tree cover as well. Consider the weather when planning where you'll hold your event. See the box to the right for other location option.



STEP 3: GO DOOR TO DOOR

- About 2-3 weeks prior to the event, go door-to-door on your street and the streets to the right and left to pass out flyers.
- Try to go in pairs with another neighbor, a spouse, a child or a friend. The best times to go are between 5:30-8pm on weekdays, and Saturday between 10am-5pm.
- The key in passing out flyers is to meet people. The more people you meet, the more likely they will be to come to your party.
- We recommend passing out between 50-100 flyers. Leaving flyers on the doorstep or in the front door, is ok. Leaving them in the mailbox is not.

WHAT TO SAY AT THE DOOR

BE FRIENDLY: Make sure to wear a smile and exude a friendly demeanor.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF: "I'm your neighbor who lives at such-and-such address and I've lived there for about ____ years."

SHARE WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND WHY: "We believe that it's important to know your neighbors, so we are putting on an Ice Cream Social, and we'd love for you to come."

GET INTERESTED IN THEM: Don't leave the door step until you've engaged them deeper. Ask them questions about how long they've lived in the neighborhood, what they like about living there, and what their hope for the neighborhood is.

TALKING WITH KIDS: If a families' kids also come to the door, ask them what their favorite ice cream is.



THE IDEAL CO-HOST

The ideal co-host is someone who has strengths that complement yours. If you are detail-oriented, but not good with people, find someone who's good with people and may think more about the overall feeling of the event. Here's some qualities you'll want in either yourself or your co-host.

FRIENDLY: This person doesn't have any problems talking with others.

DETAIL-ORIENTED: This person thinks through all the details and has a plan prior to the event.

HOSPITABLE: If there's someone who looks lost or sitting by themselves, this person makes sure to strike up a conversation or include them in what's happening.

PROBLEM-SOLVER: Problems happen... this person knows how to find solutions and find them fast.

STEP 4: RECRUIT A CO-HOST

We recommend finding a spouse or a neighbor who is similarly excited about hosting a party. If you don't know any neighbors at the moment, be on the lookout for someone as you go door-to-door, passing out flyers. This is usually someone who gets really excited about the idea of a neighborhood party.

If you sense this person is excited and willing to help, exchange contact information and start planning together!



STEP 4: PARTNER WITH OTHERS TO GATHER YOUR SUPPLIES

The key to throwing neighborhood events is to believe that the community you live in has all of the resources you need to throw a successful event. In other words, you don't have to do this alone.

If you don't have any tables or chairs, ask a neighbor or partner with a local church, organization or civic club in your neighborhood. The key here is: neighborhood events are supposed to breed interdependence.

That's why we encourage people to throw the event potluck style, because you'll find that your community is abundant with resources you alone could never supply.

SUPPLIES LIST

- Cups, plates, and utensils
- Food and drinks
- Large cooler with ice
- 3-5 Tables and chairs for about 25 people
- Trash cans
- Sign-up List

OPTIONAL:

- Name tags and sharpies or pens
- Lawn games, water balloons or egg toss
- Decorations



STEP 5: PARTNERING WITH ORGANIZATIONS

Almost every neighborhood has what we call "anchor organizations" within it's geographic boundaries or close-by. Anchor organizations are faith communities, schools, non-profits, businesses and other entities that building a relationship with can benefit both you and the organization.

If you need help with, for instance, finding tables and chairs for your party, find out if anyone in your neighborhood belongs to any associations or communities that may be willing to help. Use those connections to get in touch with decision makers for that organization and let them know what you're doing.

If you can't find anyone with a connection, try going in person to see if the organization would be willing to partner with you, or contact the Community Facilitator at One Joplin for help: 417-624-0153.



STEP 5: GO DEEPER

One idea to make your party really stand out is to prompt reflection about how people view your neighborhood and what they hope to create together as a community. Using a large piece of paper like butcher paper or a large post-it pad, write questions that spark imagination and tape these to a couple of the tables. Then, leave out markers for people to write responses. Some examples might include:

"I love my neighborhood because..."

"My greatest hope/dream for my neighborhood is..."

"One thing I'd like to see happen in my neighborhood is..."

"What gifts, skills and abilities would you like to share with your neighbors?"



STEP 6: PARTY!

SET-UP: Ask your cohost and any other neighbors to come over about an hour before the event and help you start setting up your tables, chairs, coolers, utensils, food, and refreshments.

BE HOSPITABLE: As new neighbors join the event, make sure to introduce yourself, have them sign the sign-up sheet and introduce them to other neighbors.

SIGN-UP SHEET: Make a sign-up sheet with name, address, email, phone, and a box asking if they'd like to be added to the neighborhood's Facebook group. Look in your packet for a sample sign-up sheet.

TAKE PICTURES: At the time when you have the most people at your party, gather everyone together and take a group shot. Then, post it to your Facebook group. Include a catchy hashtag.

CO-HOST ROLES

We recommend that you and your cohost decide who's going to take which role below:

HOST: This person's primary job is to create a hospitable, friendly environment. They welcome new neighbors, show them where to sign-up, and introduce shy neighbors to one another.

LOGISTICS MANAGER: This person's role is to make sure the party runs smoothly. While the host may be chatting it up with a neighbor, the Logistics Manager is cleaning up trash, making sure the music is at a good volume, and



Types of Block Parties

- Ice Cream Social
- Progressive Dinner
- Side Walk Chalk Festival
- Hot Chocolate Party
- Chili Contest
- Soup Social
- Pumpkin Carving Contest
- Fall Harvest Party
- Outdoor Move Night
- Luau
- Porch Fest
- Nerf Wars Party
- Outdoor Potluck
- Backyard Carnival
- Bike Parade
- Art Party

