



## Westside Neighborhood Association

### How to Organize a Neighborhood Block Party

Everything you need to know to set up and run your own event!

# 10 Reasons To Have a Block Party

1. To have fun - no excuse is needed to celebrate!
2. To meet your neighbors. When you know who lives in your neighborhood, the more likely you are to identify strangers or suspicious people.
3. To increase the sense of belonging in your neighborhood.
4. 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.
5. To plan a campaign for traffic slowdown, get better lighting, or address other interests.
6. To "use" the street for one day, to, for example, roller blade, play hockey or play other games.
7. To meet some of the old time residents in the neighborhood and learn the neighborhood's history.
8. To have a neighborhood clean-up day, play some good music and barbecue once all of the work is done.
9. To start a yearly neighborhood tradition of getting together at least once a year!
10. To feel more involved in your community and neighborhood.

## **How to Get Started**

1. Gather a few neighbors and divide up the tasks. Decide on a possible theme, activities etc. Decide what to do about food.
2. Start knocking on doors to find out if there is enough interest and, if so, which day would be the best for the most people.
3. Pick a date and time (mid-afternoon to evening works best). Plan to end the event before 9:00pm in order to respect bedtime and neighborhood peace and quiet. Think of an alternate plan in case of poor weather.
4. Go door to door:
  - Hand out an invitation (use the one included in this guide, or create your own).
  - Ask people to fill out the Block Party details sheet and let them know where to return it (use the one included in this guide, or create your own).
  - Recruit volunteers.
5. Decide if this will be a block party restricted to those on the street/block or will people be able to invite friends/relatives (if yes, how many). Make this clear in your flyer/invitation.



# **Important Numbers!**

Lansing Police Department (Neighborhood watch):

(517)483-4469

Road Closure Permits:

(517)483-4455

Fire Department (Administration):

(517)483-4200



The City of Lansing, MI website!

Scan barcode with your phone or visit the city's website at:

<http://www.cityoflansingmi.com>

## **Good Ideas**

- Invite a City council member, school principal or city staff member to your block party.
- 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 neighbors.
- Identify special talents your neighbors might have - you may be living next to a magician, singer, dancer, artist, radio host or prize winning cook.
- Plan lots of activities for children.
- Include activities that encourage people to meet each other. Use nametags and include children by asking them to create the tags.
- Make sure that people with disabilities can participate in the activities and include their attendants (those with Seeing Eye dogs or in wheelchairs).
- Institute a bathroom policy "everyone to use their own" so that home security is maintained.
- Inspire clean up after the party by rewarding children with a prize for packing up garbage.
- Have a block/street clean up as part of the party.
- Distribute an evaluation form to participants (to get a good response, number the forms and have door prizes for returned entries).

## **REMINDERS**

- Alcohol is only permitted on private property, not on city streets or in parks.
- Residents should observe security precautions, for example lock back doors to houses, and keep equipment in sight.
- In hot weather food spoils quickly: all perishables such as mayonnaise, salads or meats should be stored in coolers and be kept at the proper temperature.
- Food cannot be sold on city streets unless the proper permits have been obtained.
- Loud amplification of music is prohibited.
- Observe safety precautions for all activities, for example keep barbeques away from activities for children.
- Post signs the day before reminding everyone to remove cars and that the street will be closed.

# **Suggested Activities for** **Getting to Know Your Neighbors**

Neighborhood History

Cultural Connections

Have everyone bring their favorite family dish.

Teach everyone how to say three things in another language.

Use a map to indicate where everyone originally came from.

Record the story of how everyone came to live in the neighborhood and what he or she likes best about it.

Identify any special people that lived in your area such as the longest resident,

Politicians or Neighborhood Board Members

Research your neighborhood's history at the Michigan Archives

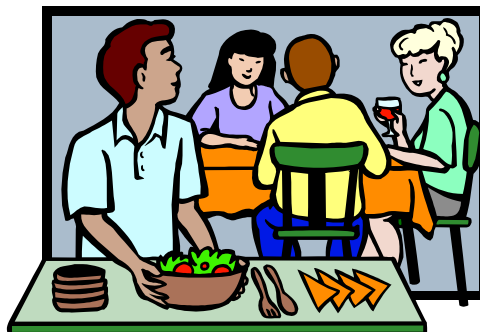
Neighborhood Action

Discuss what issues/concerns people have (keep this to a predetermined time: remember, a block party should be fun).

Establish teams to explore how to resolve the concerns.

Make plans to have a neighborhood clean-up.

Build a bench, plant a garden, paint street numbers, or plant a tree as part of the block party activities.



# **Fun Family Activities**

## **For Block Parties**

- Invite a clown, balloon artist, or magician
- Have games using water balloons
- Rent a "Jump House" but remember: it must not be placed on the street, so use a neighbor's yard
- Play hide and seek
- Do face painting (Remember to use non-toxic paint)
- Organize a kids talent show or parade
- Use sidewalk chalk (Make it a game for the kids and give out prizes)
- Play Pictionary© or charades
- "Name that Baby" (Have everyone bring a childhood photo and see who can guess who's who)
- Play Musical Chairs
- Rent a Popcorn or Snow Cone Machine

# You're Invited to a Block Party!

When: \_\_\_\_\_

Where: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

RSVP to: \_\_\_\_\_

Hosted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out this sheet and either respond via the  
RSVP details or return it to your host.

Additional info to think about that you host may  
request of you -

What can you bring? \_\_\_\_\_

dish to pass, games, ideas

What can you provide for others? \_\_\_\_\_

chairs, tables, paper plates, napkins, etc.

Would you be willing to help set up/tear down?

\_\_\_\_\_