

# Neighboring Well Block Party Kit



Mariners Community Church  
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[www.MarinersCC.org/Neighbor](http://www.MarinersCC.org/Neighbor)





Let's NEIGHBOR well! At Mariners Church, we believe that each of us is placed in our specific homes and neighborhoods for a reason. So if that's the case, then knowing our neighbors and serving them is part of each of our individual callings. That can take shape in many forms from organizing emergency response plans, to creating a network to look out for a shut-in, to helping each other keep up yards. But it all begins by developing friendships and what better way to do that, then with a party? A *Block Party* to be specific!

The following pages include ideas and tips on how to create a great event for your neighborhood! It's a starting place of ideas, so be creative and come up with your ideas as well.

While you and your neighbors get together and make it happen, there are some things you can count on your church to do. We will help in the following ways:

- loaning chairs and tables as available
- customizing and printing enclosed promotional materials
- loaning other game supplies and bounce house as available

As you plan for your event, just let us know what you need and reserve it. All we ask is that you give us enough lead-time so we can serve you in this way.

Happy Neighboring,

Pastor Len  
Connections Pastor  
Mariners Church





## 10 REASONS TO HAVE A BLOCK PARTY

- To have fun – no excuses or reasons are needed to celebrate.
- To provide an opportunity to know your neighbors and where they live.
- To establish friendships.
- To increase that sense of belonging to a community.
- To learn a little about each other and know whom might need a little extra help from time to time.
- To meet neighbors on your block that might be able to help you with a gardening problem, or lend you that needed ingredient for your recipe.
- To encourage neighbors to look after the neighborhood.
- To help with safety/crime prevention by knowing who lives where and who does not.
- To increase security by knowing each other's schedules.
- To develop an opportunity to meet some of the old time neighbors and learn about your community history.

## PLANNING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY

Things to consider when organizing your event.

### 1. GETTING STARTED

- The idea of a neighborhood block party is to bring neighbors together. It's a good idea to find 1 or 2 neighbors to help you with the event.
- One can take the "Lone Ranger" approach, and it can be a great event. However, it may make it more difficult to find someone else to organize it next year.
- The first step is to create an Organizing Committee. It is important to include everyone in the decisions about the event.
- If this is the first time you may want to send out a flyer to explain what a Block Party is, encourage attendance, perhaps share some of the benefits, get opinions on how to handle the food, and possible dates and times to have the event.
- Enlist as many neighbors as you can to help out. Someone can type the flyer; someone else can collect them. You may want to ask some kids to drop the flyers in the mailboxes.





## 2. TYPES OF BLOCK PARTIES

Which type of block party will work best in your neighborhood? Try not to go overboard, it can make people feel the event is too much work...Keep it Simple!

- Barbecues; organizers purchase all that is needed and neighbors provide the money; option-everyone brings his or her own meat.
- Picnics; everyone brings their own meal;
- Potluck; everyone brings one dish;
- A chili or barbeque cook-off, and having kids award prizes to their favorites;
- Catered; everyone shares the cost and the food is purchased.

## 3. 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 whom 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 (if yes how many).

## 4. LOCATION

- A neighbor's backyard
- House
- Garage (rainout)
- Common room in a condo unit
- Street \*\*
- Park \*\*

\*\* Because these locations are on public lands, an application or permit may be required. Safety needs to be an important factor in planning!

## 5. CITY OF HALF MOON BAY OR COUNTY OF SAN MATEO APPLICATIONS AND PERMITS

- If you want to close down a street or re-direct traffic, permits are required and can be found in the Tools and Template Section
- Permits may also be required if the event involves a public park, alcohol consumption, sound-amplifying equipment, etc.
- City of HMB requires the permit be submitted at least five (5) days in advance and





the County of San Mateo requires at least thirty (30). So plan accordingly.

- Remember that at the end of the function, public sites need to be cleaned and left in good condition.
- Look online at your city's website and call city hall to obtain more information about the requirements where you live. Often if you search "block party" on the website, you will find policies and additional resources.

\*\*\*Don't let obstacles stand in your way...It is worth it!\*\*\*

## 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 neighbor already has an event of their own planned. Remember, no date will be perfect.
- Once the Committee 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 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 those who live in the neighborhood when setting the hours for the party.
- If young children or seniors are living near the party area plan to finish by 9:00pm.

7. GETTING THE WORD OUT It is important to keep neighbors informed. Here are some ideas:

- Flyers can be used with a request to drop back their suggestions for the event in your mailbox.
- Information can be gathered from your neighbors by going door-to-door. This adds a personal touch and people often offer to help.
- A casual approach can be used to inform neighbors as you see them out working in their yards.
- Neighbors can be called on the phone.
- Make an extra effort to get your new neighbors out to the event.
- To reach neighbors 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 neighborhood as often as possible prior to the event.





## 8. ROLE OF THE ORGANIZERS

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

## 9. SET UP

- Set up a sign-in book for records for the next year, and it can help develop a contact list for the neighborhood.
- Nametags can be a great help.
- Decide what you want neighbors to write on their name tags (e.g. -first and last names, house numbers).
- Line up tables for the food and have a few garbage cans available.
- Decide whether you will coordinate or everyone will bring their own Tables and chairs Plates, cutlery and cups, 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.

## 10. 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.
- Games for kids (some organized, some they can plan themselves). Plan activities that will get a wide range of neighbors involved.
  - Encourage older kids to help organize games for younger children.
  - Organize on-going activities to keep younger children busy, such as chalk drawing on the sidewalks, finger painting, kite flying, etc.
  - Choose games that involve teams and/or groups of people such as sack races, tug of war, relays, water balloon tosses, or watermelon eating contests.
  - Don't over-plan. Use games to get people involved in the early stages of the Block Party and during down times to encourage people to stay.
  - Give folks the opportunity to relax and talk as well.





- 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, magicians.
- Once the planning is done, sit back, relax, and enjoy your party! *Don't forget to take pictures.*

Regardless of what you plan for your Block Party, getting a wide variety of people involved in the planning, staying organized, and keeping an open mind will help make the event successful. If your neighbors meet a few new families and get to know each other a little better, you're *already* beginning to enhance your community. Make the event a positive experience for the entire neighborhood, and you'll be sure to attract even more folks the next time around!

## OTHER WAYS TO GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

- Holiday Lighting Cooperative
- Garden tour party
- Neighborhood garage sale
- When in doubt, ask your neighbors for ideas.

## FINAL REMINDERS

- Neighbors should observe security precautions by keeping back doors locked and equipment in sight.
- 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 events involving street closure.

## RESOURCES IN THE TOOLS AND TEMPLATE SECTION

- ☐ Planning check-list
- ☐ Planning Team To-Do List Worksheet
- ☐ Sample block party questionnaire
- ☐ Neighborhood Party Bingo
- ☐ Sample evaluation form
- ☐ Customizable Poster
- ☐ City of Half Moon Bay Permit Application
- ☐ County of San Mateo Permit Application







## DISCLAIMER

This manual and associated resources are intended for educational purposes only. Nothing contained in this manual or associated resources should be interpreted or relied upon as legal advice or an invitation to break the law. Partaking in any type of party is at your own risk. If you choose to partake in a party, you will be acting independently of Mariners Church of HMB and all persons and organizations who supported this document/manual, none of whom are liable for your actions.

By partaking in a party, you voluntarily and entirely assume the risk of injury to yourself or others, assume all legal liability related to your party, and agree to indemnify and hold harmless Mariners Church of HMB and all persons and organizations who supported this document/manual. You also agree to obey the law and the directives of any duly authorized law enforcement officer.

Remember, block parties make better use of the space we already occupy; they are excuses to celebrate with one another and they have the ability to turn strangers into neighbors.

***Think smart. Party safely. Have fun!***

## SOURCES

This Block Party Kit was adapted from:

- Building Blocks: Neighborhood Block Party Kit
- "Neighborhood Block Party Kit" distributed by the City of Edmonton Community Services Dept.
- Neighborhood Associations of Beaumont, Texas
- BlockPartyInABox.com





## TOOLS AND TEMPLATES





## BLOCK PARTY PLANNING CHECKLIST

A successful block party is not hard to have - it just takes a little motivation, a lot of cooperation, and a willingness to enjoy time with your neighbors.

### 2 Months Prior

- ☐ Locate a couple of neighbors to help design the questionnaire (if first time event)
- ☐ Talk/ questionnaire survey to neighbors to gauge interest
- ☐ Once results are in, invite those interested to a planning meeting and have the Block Party Kit available
- ☐ Planning meeting Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Where \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Planning meeting Decisions:
- Party Date & time: \_\_\_\_\_
- Rain-out Alternatives: \_\_\_\_\_
- Scope of Party (how big will it be: cul-de-sac, neighbors sharing one block)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Location of Party (on street/alley, in backyard/carport, at a park)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Type or Theme of Party (BBQ, Potluck, Holiday)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Budget (how will costs of permit, any supplies be covered?)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 1 Month Prior

- ☐ Follow-up planning meeting to discuss:
  - what's been done
  - what still needs to be accomplished
- ☐ Send out invitations
- ☐ Obtain permit





### **1 Week Prior (if closing the street)**

- ☐ Publicize party and include reminder that street will be closed
- ☐ Confirm arrangements for traffic barricades

### **Party Day**

- ☐ Set-up
  - Designate areas for food, seating, music, & activities
  - Place garbage cans in strategic places
- ☐ Arrival
  - Assign greeters who can introduce neighbors to each other
  - Have sign in sheet and nametags
- ☐ Party Schedule
  - After everyone has arrived, announce the days events & any special announcements
- ☐ Clean-up
  - Get everyone to help clean up area before leaving
  - Take down barriers

***Have a great party!***





## PLANNING TEAM TO-DO LIST WORKSHEET

Responsibility	Who	Contact Info
<b>Chair/Main contact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• send out invitations</li> <li>• answer questions</li> <li>• organize planning meetings (if needed)</li> <li>• publicity and printables</li> </ul>		
<b>Activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include games/activities for all ages, icebreakers</li> <li>• decide whether to offer prizes</li> <li>• get kids &amp; teens involved in planning &amp; supervising</li> </ul>		
<b>Food</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• arrange tables for food, BBQ's, coolers</li> <li>• collect money for any group food supplies (if needed)</li> </ul>		
<b>Permits (if blocking a street)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• submit City application at least 5 days and County application at least 30 days prior to event</li> <li>• (if required) collect signatures from all residents in party zone</li> <li>• determine how cost will be covered</li> </ul>		
<b>Clean Up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• obtain garbage cans and replacement bags</li> <li>• take down any signs that may have been put up</li> </ul>		





## NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY QUESTIONNAIRE

A few neighbors have been talking and we thought it would be fun to get together and have a party. It would be an opportunity to meet each other and to have some fun! To get this event underway, we will like to know what you think!

Are you *interested* in participating in a neighborhood party? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please let us know which options below work with your schedule best?

- ☐ Insert Day, Date, Time Option 1
- ☐ Insert Day, Date, Time Option 1
- ☐ Insert Day, Date, Time Option 1

Which of the following suggestions would suit your family the best?

- a. Each family brings their own hamburger, buns and refreshments, plus a dessert or a salad to share.
- b. The hamburgers & buns are supplied and everyone contributes money to pay for them. Each family brings their own refreshments plus an appetizer, salad or dessert to share.
- c. Each family brings their own picnic meal and a dessert to share.
- d. Everyone brings one dish to share (casserole, salad, or dessert - to be assigned) and their own refreshments.

☐ 1st Choice ☐ 2nd Choice

If you have other ideas please jot them down!

If you would like to help organize, let use know. ☐ Yes ☐ No

**Please return this** by \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Name Address

We will send out a second notice/invitation to let everyone know the outcome of the questionnaire. Please remember to give us your name and address so we can contact you directly.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

***Thanks Neighbor!***



Mariners Community Church *Neighboring Well Block Party Kit*



## NEIGHBORHOOD PARTY BINGO

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

- **Find someone who fits the description and have *them* write their name in the square!**
- You will have 15 minutes to complete the task. All those with completed forms get their form put into a box for a drawing.

Speaks a second language	Wearing sandals	Has brown eyes	Has a sister	Born in the 1940's
Has a great smile	Wearing jeans	Born in another country	Has freckles	Likes to play golf
Plays a musical instrument	Is a football fan	Travelled to another country last year	Wears glasses	Planted a garden
Wearing black socks	Likes to exercise	Did not see the 3rd movie "Lord of the Rings"	Plays soccer	Born in another state









## BLOCK PARTY EVALUATION FORM

To help plan our 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 neighborhood connection that was started at the block party during the rest of the year?

Are you willing to help plan future neighborhood events? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please leave your name, phone # and email

