



HOW TO CREATE A GREAT BLOCK PARTY

A summer block party carries rewards throughout the rest of the year. Neighbors know each other, stop to talk and share ideas and resources, and generally feel more connected. Are you thinking that planning a block party would be fun, but daunting? It is a fairly easy task if you just following these suggestions:

1. Secure three or four neighbors to help with the event.
2. Talk to your neighbors and choose a date and time. It may be virtually impossible to choose a date that works for everybody on your block. If it works for the planning committee, that's good enough.
3. The location can be your street or cul-de-sac or someone's front yard or driveway. Make an alternative plan in the event of adverse weather. Will you move it to someone's carport? Will you erect canopies? Will you postpone the party?
4. Decide if there will be theme or creative direction to your block party. A summer fiesta? A play on the name of your street? A color or symbol can be used on the invitations and throughout the party.
5. Plan the party around a meal, either lunch or dinner. Decide on a menu. Have each neighbor who attends bring a contribution--for example, if their name starts to A-I, it's appetizers and salads; J-R, main dishes; and S-Z, desserts and drinks. Have each neighbor also bring their own plates, eating utensils and napkins. Have extra on hand in case someone forgets.
6. Have each volunteer bring some equipment: tables, chairs, barbecue grills, garbage and recycling bins or games for the kids (sidewalk chalk, bubbles and beach balls are always popular).
7. Ask if anyone plays an instrument or has a portable sound system. Music creates ambience!
8. Once you've created the plan, print up the information and deliver a copy to each neighbor. Keep one copy for the City of Shoreline if you'd like to arrange for a free permit to close the street.
9. For more information on permits for street closures, contact the City of Shoreline Permit Services at (206) 801-2500.
10. If many of your neighbors are unfamiliar with one another, you may want to have name tags. People feel more comfortable talk if they know each other's names.
11. Check, check and double check your to do list and do some gentle follow-up. Also call your fellow organizers to plan for set up and take down.
12. Sign in sheets – have a clipboard and sign in sheet to record name, phone number, email address and interests. This list can be the basis for future activities like Block Watch or social events.