

HOW TO HOST A HOUSE PARTY TOOL KIT

Hosting a house party is a great way to **get together with friends, eat well, talk about the issues that matter to you and support our organization's work.** It's that easy. As a back up, we've developed a lot of supporting materials below, but **feel free to "wing it"** and hold a party that works best for you. Have fun!

STEP 1: GET STARTED

a. Sign Up to Host a Party—Call (*designated staff or board member*) to schedule your party date.

STEP 2: PLAN, PLAN, PLAN

- a. Pick a Date & Time—We recommend you allow up to three weeks to plan your party and give your guests time to put your party on their calendar. You can decide how long the gathering will last—our suggested format takes less than 2 hours.
- b. Location, Location, Location—We recommend you use your own house for the party if at all possible. Even when things are a little cozy, gatherings in homes have a warm, inviting feel. If you do not have a home large enough (we expect most parties to have 8 or more guests), consider hosting the party at a friend or relative's house. In fact, co-hosting can be really fun. Alternately, you might reserve space in an appropriate community space such as a park, wine bar or church.
- c. Plan the Theme—The possibilities are endless. Your party can be as fancy or laidback as you like—there are no rules. Plan something interesting that you know your guests will enjoy. Here are a few ideas: invite a guest speaker (we can arrange for a volunteer or constituent to speak about the value of our programs); screen a film with discussion to follow; make it a potluck; have a dessert auction; play games; or, ask staff to offer a field briefing and slideshow.

STEP 3: DEVELOP YOUR GUEST LIST

- a. Set Your Goals—Your house party can be whatever size you'd like. Invite twice as many people as you'd like to attend.
- b. Make Your Guest List—Invite folks whom you know personally, who may or may not be familiar with the work of the Center, but likely share our values. Guests may include friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, members of your faith group, PTA, political club, or book group, etc.

STEP 4: INVITE PEOPLE

- a. Send Invitations—Staff will create an invitation for you to proof, you provide the guest list and we'll handle the rest.
- b. Follow-Up Personally—Be sure to follow-up by phone or in person. People appreciate the personal touch and it will dramatically increase your chances of getting people there. If you have a co-host, divide up the calls so it's manageable.
- c. Send Reminders—Don't forget to send an email reminder several days before your party.

STEP 5: GETTING READY THE DAY OF THE PARTY

In addition to the regular party organizing, we recommend you include the following items in your set up:

- a. Greeter(s) & Sign-In Station—It's hugely helpful to get the names and contact information of your attendees! And if they become members, we can get them in the loop and begin sending them our newsletter right away. Plan to have a friend or yourself staff the front door and nearby check-in table to welcome folks, grab coats and encourage guests to sign-in (sign-in sheet to be provided by staff).
- b. Printed Materials—Staff will also provide donation envelopes and material for a display table.

STEP 6: PARTY!

- a. Assign a Timekeeper—This is only relevant if you've planned a special activity like a short film screening or discussion.
- b. The Pitch—The party can be as informal or formal as you want. At a minimum, gather the crowd for a brief welcome. Share a personal story about what the organization means to you, invite others to do the same. Ask guests to become a member and explain why membership is important to your family. Thank everyone for attending.
- c. Take Pictures—These may be used on our website or in our newsletter.
- d. Have Fun!

STEP 7: THANK YOU!

a. Staff will send thank you notes to everyone who made a donation as a result of your party, but it would be helpful if you did the same as well as thank your volunteers.