



Falcon Heights Block Party Packet



AN EASY HOW-TO GUIDE TO ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY

Thank you for planning a party in your neighborhood! If you have questions or ideas, contact City Hall at 651-792-7600 or mail@falconheights.org.

Introduction

A neighborhood block party is an opportunity for neighbors to get together, meet each other, have fun, and maybe work together on a common activity.

Neighborhoods are encouraged to plan a block party during the summer months. The following information may assist you in planning and implementing your individual neighborhood block parties.

Block Party Information

Procedures

- Call 792-7600 (at City Hall) You can arrange for:
 - _____ Street barricades during the party
 - _____ Fire truck with FH firefighters (if available)
 - (Pick any) _____ Visit by Ramsey County Sheriff's Deputy (if available)
 - _____ Mayor and City Council members (if available)
 - _____ Block Party Play Kit (\$25 deposit)
- We recommend hosting your block party on MN Night to Unite (the first Tuesday in August). There is no guarantee that firefighters or Sheriff's Deputies will be at your event, because of competing events or emergencies, but they will make an effort to attend. **To register a block party on National Night to Unite with the RCSO, please visit: <https://bit.ly/24bTm80>**
- **NOTE:** If you intend to have a recreational fire, permits are not necessary, but please observe the following guidelines:
 - Recreational fires may be up to 3 ft. in diameter and 2 feet in height
 - Fires can be hosted from 9 am-10 pm Sun through Thurs and 9 am-11 pm Friday, Saturday, and Legal Holidays
 - No combustibles within 10 ft. of an open flame
 - The fire must be attended constantly and have a garden hose with attached water supply or a currently charged fire extinguisher
 - No open fires shall be kindled when the wind speed exceeds 10 mph if smoke migration may create a nuisance, or if otherwise prohibited by the Fire Chief
 - Only "clean" wood can be burned; **no treated wood, garden debris or leaf burning**

Invitations, Nametags, and Block Lists

- There are sample invitations at City Hall. A block list and phone tree examples are included in this packet.
- Feel free to ask City Hall to make copies of your invitations and completed block lists. Brightly colored paper is kept in the Neighborhood Liaison Library. There are also nametags there.
- Out of consideration for their workloads, please clear with City Hall staff when you will be coming in to have copies made. This avoids you interrupting a large copy job or mailing. Please be flexible with your time.

Other Information

If your neighborhood is changing or adding liaisons please let City Hall know so that we can update our records, and welcome them to their new volunteer role. Members of the Community Engagement Commission are also willing to assist with any requested orientation, coaching, or brainstorming.

10 Reasons To Have A Block Party

1. To have fun! You do not need a special reason to celebrate.
2. To create an opportunity to know your neighbors and where they live.
3. To establish new friendships.
4. To increase the sense of belonging in your community.
5. To share resources or interests. Think carpools, babysitters, gardening, lawn care, book clubs, etc.
6. To promote a safe and caring neighborhood where people look out for each other.
7. To ensure you are there for each other in case of an emergency.
8. To learn who might need a little extra help from time to time.
9. To meet some of the long-standing neighbors who can share history about the community.
10. To BLESS the neighborhood

Types Of Block Parties

Which type of block party will work best in your neighborhood? Try not to go over-board; it can make people feel the event is too much work. Keep it simple!

- **Barbecue** – Organizers purchase everything needed and neighbors share the cost, and bring their own food to grill.
- **Potluck** – Everyone brings one dish to share.
- **Picnic** – Everyone brings their own meal.
- **Catered** – Everyone shares the cost and the food is purchased.

How Big To Make It

Start with a smaller event rather than a large one. It can always grow in the future, but it is harder to shrink it. In selecting who to invite, use natural neighborhood boundaries where possible (I.e. End of a block), and invite everyone within that area. Decide early and make it clear in your flyer if this will be a neighborhood block party restricted to those on a street/block or whether people can invite friends/relatives (if yes, how many).

Block Party Planning Topics

WHY?

- What is a block?
- Why have block parties?

WHAT?

- Easy, Average or Advanced?
- Who will come?
- Costs?

WHEN/WHERE?

- Date, Time
- Location

HOW?

- Invitations
- Supplies
- Set-up
- Seating/Configuration
- Spreading out the planning process
- Creating/Updating the block list
- What do I do during the party?
- What do we do with the kids?
- There are people who never come . . .

EVALUATION

- How did the party go?

SUPPORT

- What else can the City, Commission, Council, do for you?

Block Party Planning

Block parties do not need to be elaborate affairs. Depending on the amount of time, you have and the amount of help you want to plan the party, you can take one of several approaches:

Easy

1. Plan the date, time, and location.
 - To request the following, fill out form through Ramsey County website: <https://bit.ly/24bTm80>
 - Law enforcement and squad car
 - To request the following go to <https://falconheights.org>
 - Street barricades
 - Fire fighters and fire truck
 - City Council or Commissioners
 - Play Kit
2. Distribute flyers announcing the date, time, and place of the party.
3. Invite neighbors to bring a dish to share and their own table service.

Average

2. Plan the date, time, and location.
 - To request the following, fill out form through Ramsey County website: <https://bit.ly/24bTm80>
 - Law enforcement and squad car
 - To request the following go to <https://falconheights.org>
 - Street barricades
 - Fire fighters and fire truck
 - City Council or Commissioners
 - Play Kit
2. Distribute flyers announcing the date, time, and place of the party.
3. Have neighbors contact you regarding what they'll bring, or circulate a sign-upsheet.
4. Arrange for table service, tables and chairs, and games for kids.

Advanced

1. Distribute flyers inviting neighbors to attend a planning session for a block party.
2. At the meeting:
 - Select a date, time, and place.
 - Decide who will bring what. (Make a list.)
 - Select a spokesperson to contact the city.
 - Plan additional related activities, such as games, entertainment, decorations, or inviting the Crime Prevention Liaison to make a presentation.

Neighborhoods in Falcon Heights have done parties at all of these levels. Some have simple ice cream socials where they send out a note with a date and everyone volunteers for paper supplies, ice cream, and toppings. The leader makes sure there are tables and garbage cans.

Another neighborhood has combined several blocks, raised money, solicited donations from local businesses for door prizes, and hired ponies for rides for the kids. Following that fun is a potluck meal. It depends on how much energy, volunteer help, contacts, and imagination you have. The page that follows takes you through the steps for planning any type of event.

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to plan or conduct a block party. The most important things to keep in your mind are the needs and personality of your block and its residents!

Steps in Organizing Successful Events

WHY: Define the Purpose of the Event (Why hold the event? What need should it fill?)

Will your event inform, improve community relations, welcome new people to the neighborhood, etc...? Be sure to recognize if one of the purposes is to have fun. It's much easier to involve volunteers in a cause or need if you can make it fun.

WHAT: Choose the Right Event (pot-luck, picnic, ice cream social ...)

- Remember your goals
- Who are your participants? (young, old, interests, schedules, ...)
- What is your neighborhood interested in or what have they done in the past?
 - *Ask around to see what people would be interested in doing.*
- Do you want to extend your event beyond your own neighborhood? *Involving other neighborhoods can contribute more resources and broaden the audience.*
- How much will your event cost?
 - *Very little, if it's a potluck. Talk to others who have tried a similar event in the past. Were there any hidden costs?*
- What are your resources?
 - *Who are your volunteers? Are there any businesses that would help sponsor your event? Is there someone in your neighborhood who could make a contact?*

WHEN/WHERE: Set the Date and Location

- Check the calendar to avoid conflicting community events
- Choose the location and get confirmed reservations
 - *Most neighborhoods in Falcon Heights have used barricades to block off their street and just use the street itself. Some smaller groups have used city hall or alleys.*
 - *If you decide to rent a space, be sure to plan ahead, get enough room, and have something that fits your budget. Considerations include requirements*

for deposits, insurance, and cleanup as well as facility features like floor plan, seating, lighting, electricity, and restrooms. And be sure to get any agreements in writing.

HOW: Planning and Organization

- Leader
 - *Informs others of process, delegates responsibilities to persons/committees, coordinates activities of different committees, sets time limits, settles disputes, praises progress*
- “Committees” defined and staffed, as needed (many will have only one member!)
 - *Decorations, Entertainment, Refreshments/Concessions, *Publicity, Budget/RSVP List, Donations, Clean-Up*
 - *If the Committee is larger than one, the members should hold scheduled meetings at set places. Specific agendas help provide logical steps for attacking tasks. Written descriptions of individual responsibilities help to avoid duplicating effort, chronologically order tasks, and clarify time requirements and deadlines. Always give praise to individuals meeting deadlines.*
- Publicity types can include: group e-mail, phone calling tree, posters, balloons, sidewalk chalk, door hangers, mailings, plywood corner signs, t- shirts, city newsletter, website, ...

POST EVENT

- Follow-up
 - *Return any borrowed items. Write thank you notes to recognize volunteers and donors.*
- Evaluation
 - *What went right? What went wrong? Record each step for future reference. Determine the true cost (consider donations) and true benefit. Should it become an annual event? File it away in a folder for future reference.*
- Begin preparing for next year

Neighborhood Roster

These last two pages are recommended if these records haven't been updated in a couple of years. It will help keep things current, and give neighbors a place to update any email address changes and or resources in the case of an emergency. These lists are extremely useful for emergency situations such as storms and power outages.

<u>Name</u> – List children beneath parents' names.	<u>Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Pets</u>

Neighbor Survey

In case of a major emergency or disaster, it is helpful to know who's on your support team. Use this list to keep track of neighbors who can offer specialized services, equipment, or expertise in the event of an emergency.

Name	Address	Phone	Service to provide for neighbors for free or for a fee? List: mow, babysit, counseling, chaplain, etc.	Medical Expertise? List in what capacity.	Equipment to share? Chainsaw, winch, HAM radio, generator, wheelbarrow, ladder, etc.	Do you need assistance in the case of evacuation?