



Summer is here!

Wouldn't it be nice to get together with neighbors and hold a block party? Have no fear – it's easy to hold a block party!

Follow these 8 simple steps and you are on your way!

8 Simple Steps to Organize a Neighborhood Block Party!

1. Recruit a couple of your neighbors to help organize your party. It's not that much work, but it's always more fun when you have some friends helping with the project.
2. Poll your neighbors and decide on the date and time of your party. Choose a date that works well for most of your neighbors.
3. Decide whether you want to hold the party in a neighbor's yard or close down your street for the evening and spread out. You can also hold your party in a park. (Click [here](#) for the link to Park Reservations.)
4. If you would like to close your street and/or have amplified music, contact the City of Santa Rosa Recreation, Parks and Community Services' office for a Special Events Permit Application and guidelines. (Click [here](#) for an application.)

Please note: Allow 2 weeks to process the application. You can NOT close a street that is on a bus route or has a bus layover. And...if you aren't closing off a street and/or are not having amplified music, you do NOT need a Special Events Permit!

5. Make a list of food and items needed for your party. Perhaps you'd like to have an ice cream social, with each house bringing a different flavor. Or how about a barbecue with side dishes? A vegetable from the garden exchange? A piñata for the kids? A finger-painting contest? A costume party?
6. Go door-to-door and have all your participating neighbors volunteer to bring something to the party. Remind them to bring folding chairs and sports equipment if they want. You can also recruit people to help with other tasks, like picking up and returning the barricades. Or, if you do not want to go door-to-door, you can prepare a flyer and distribute it to your neighbors letting them know about the planned block party.
7. Don't forget to bring a sign-in sheet for your neighbors! Maybe you'll want to get a telephone tree or email list going.
8. Once the planning is done, sit back, relax, and enjoy your party! Don't forget to take pictures.

One more thing...Santa Rosa is bursting with other neighbors and neighborhoods who are trying to build community. In fact, we've organized a Neighbors Summit just for that

purpose. Please check in with us at the [Neighbors Summit website](http://santarosaneighborsummit.weebly.com/) so you can connect with others! (<http://santarosaneighborsummit.weebly.com/>)



How to Organize A Block Party in 5 Easy Steps!

Neighborhood Block Parties are a great way to meet your neighbors, enhance community spirit and build neighborhood unity. Although putting a Block Party together doesn't need to be difficult, it will definitely be more successful with a little careful planning, a lot of neighborhood support and the sharing of organizational responsibilities.

1. Plan the Event.

Your Block Party will be much more successful if you involve others in planning the event. Host a small planning party and invite a wide variety of your neighbors - including those you don't know - to form a Block Party committee. Delegate tasks according to each person's strengths.



The planning committee's first task should be to pick a location, date and time for the event. Typically, block parties are held on a street or cul-de-sac but you might also choose to use a centrally located park or school yard, if you can obtain permission. (Click [here](#) to schedule a park in Santa Rosa. Schedule the event approximately 4 to 6 weeks in advance. Limiting your event to a 3 to 4 hours time span insures that you will have a more concentrated group of attendees. Plan events for midday in the spring and fall, but wait until evening in the hotter summer months.

Decide how you will fund the event, and assign a member of your committee to act as Treasurer. Regardless of how you fund the party, make certain the treasurer keeps good track of what money is put into the fund and what it is spent on. Left over funds can be saved for next year's Block Party! Your group may decide to take up a collection for funds from among neighbors, or to take contributions in the form of donated food, services, equipment, etc. You may also solicit local businesses to contribute food, drinks and supplies.

When the balloons are brought down and the barbecues are restored to their back yards, sit down with the planning committee and evaluate the event so that next time you'll remember what not to do and what to be sure to do again.

2. Making it Legal.

The City of Santa Rosa wants to encourage neighbors to get together. If you are NOT planning on closing off a street and you are NOT planning on having amplified music, then you do NOT need a block party permit or special events permit.

If you would like to close your street and/or have amplified music, please contact the City of Santa Rosa Recreation, Parks and Community Services' office for a special event permit application and guidelines. Click [here](#) for a Special Events Application.

Please note: Allow 2 weeks to process the application. You can NOT close a street that is on a bus route or has a bus layover. If you want to have amplified music, you'll need a sound permit (\$75) which you can obtain from the City Manager's office. (Click here for the sound permit.)

Making the event a pleasant experience for participants, as well as those who chose not to attend, will not only make your event a success, but may encourage more folks to participate the next time. Be courteous to all of your neighbors by not blocking driveways and by turning down music and lights after 9:00 p.m. Make certain that your committee assigns a clean up crew to pick up all remnants of the fun day – you might even make a game out of picking up by giving rewards to children who bring in the most trash.

3. Getting People There.



Assign members of your planning committee to design and distribute invitations 3 to 4 weeks in advance of the event. Going door-to-door with the invitations adds a personal touch that will help you get more people interested in volunteering for and attending the event. Keep the invitation simple, and remember to include contact names and phone numbers for R.S.V.P.'s and for signing up to bring food or coordinate activities. Let people know if they need to bring their own cooler of beverages, or their own chairs and beach towels.

You may want to place a short reminder notice on doorknobs one week before the Block Party, or, if you want to get notice out earlier than when invitations are ready, use your neighborhood newsletter or dues mailing to ask people to "Save the Date."

4. Feeding Your Guests.

Food is an absolute "MUST" for any large gathering of people. The planning committee should decide how to organize the party food. You may decide to ask people to bring picnic baskets to share with other families; organize a



Pot Luck and have people bring foods from different categories (remember that plates, utensils, napkins and drinks should all be categories); plan a "community menu" and assign households to bring specific dishes or beverages; or look into catering the meal. Other creative options include holding a chili or barbeque cook-off, and having kids award prizes to their favorites.

Whatever you do, keep track of how many people will be coming to the event, and stay organized by keeping a list of who's bringing what to the party.

5. Keeping People There - Planning Activities.



Again, a little advanced planning goes a long way, especially when coordinating activities for your participants. Whatever you plan, the following pointers will guarantee fun for everyone:

- 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, the orange pass, 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.

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. Remember, it doesn't take a hundred people or even fifty to have a successful event. 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! And don't forget to bring a sign-in sheet for your neighbors... Maybe you'll want to get a telephone tree or email list going.

P.S. One more thing... Santa Rosa is bursting with other neighbors and neighborhoods who are trying to build community. In fact, we've organized a Neighbors Summit just for that purpose. Please check in with us at the [Neighbors Summit website](http://santarosaneighborsummit.weebly.com/) so you can connect with others! (<http://santarosaneighborsummit.weebly.com/>)

And thanks to Neighborhood Associations of Beaumont, Texas for sharing their block party information!