

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TRAILER

1. What items are included in the trailer?

A good size gas grill, two propane tanks (at least one should be full) two light-weight tables, a kid's bounce house, lawn games, coolers, portable sound system, signs, storage bins, extension cords, garbage cans, broom, and instructions for promoting and running a block party.

2. What is not included in the trailer that you will need to supply? Paper plates, cups, napkins, and food to be served. You may want to borrow more tables and chairs for your guests. Also, you may want to supplement the games with your own.

3. How much does the trailer and its contents weigh? Total weight is between 1,700 – 1,900 lbs.

4. What kind of electrical and ball hookup does the trailer require? The electric plug-in is a flat four and the trailer requires a 2" ball.

5. Why is there a cost for renting the trailer? The rental fee of \$30 will go for annual registration cost, item replacements, refilling the propane tanks, and possible storage costs.

6. How do I reserve the trailer? Go to our website www.blockpartydetroit.org and click on "[Events](#)". Check the calendar to see if your date is available. If it is, click on "[Contact](#)" and send an email to reserve the date. Please plan on picking up the trailer only a day or two before the event and return it right away. It needs to be available for the next group.

7. Where do I pick up the trailer? The trailer is being stored in a garage in Dearborn. You can call 313-563-1030 to arrange a time for pick-up.

PARTY

1. What does a block party look like? Depending on the neighborhood, sometimes they look like an "Open House" where people stop by for 30-60 minutes and then leave. At other times, they look more like a family reunion, where people come at the beginning and stay for several hours. Whatever you can do to add to the "party" atmosphere, would be helpful: face-painting, balloons, music, etc. Be sure to prominently display the trailer and signs as a visual draw to the neighborhood.

2. **When is a good time to schedule a party?** A weekday evening in the summer is the recommended best time for holding a block party. Although weekends may seem like a great time for such an event, results have shown that many neighbors are gone on weekends resulting in a lower turnout.
3. **How much time do I need to plan an effective block party?** We suggest several weeks to prepare. You will want to hand out invite postcards a week or two ahead and then again the day before (or a couple days before) to remind people. You should also plan prayer walks through your neighborhood in the weeks leading up to the event. Be sure to allow enough time to recruit a team of helpers and to plan, purchase and prepare the food.
4. **How long should the party go? Should I run the games?** Often people have scheduled these parties from 4–8 PM or 5–9 PM. The lawn games can run themselves if they are provided. You could challenge someone to a game to get things started. The bounce house should have adult supervision.
5. **How much help will I need?** Make sure you have a sufficient number of volunteers in order to cover all aspects of the party: set-up/clean-up, cooking, supervising the bounce house, etc. We suggest 6 – 10 people or whatever you think is enough to handle the logistical issues. The host family should be freed up enough to mingle with the neighbors. It's important that the people who can establish on-going relationships with the neighbors have the freedom to connect with them during the party. We suggest you get a small group from your church to help. It's a great way to help each other reach each other's neighbors.
6. **Do I need any training to use any of the equipment?** There should be a contact person from your church trained on how this concept works. They should be familiar with the trailer's content and how it is used. On the block party website, you will find a "Frequently Asked Questions" document, some "Additional Suggestions", and a "[Block Party Manual](#)". Please review these important documents as part of your preparation. All the equipment is very easy to figure out and use. For setting up the bounce house, there is a demonstration video found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3metTROdtHQ>
7. **Will there be music to play over the sound system?** At this point, you will have to provide your own music. There are instructions included with the portable sound system to help you hook up a smart phone or mp3 player. Pick a varied selection of music. Soft

Rock/Country/Blues/Oldies/Jazz/whatever. Something they are familiar with, not all Christian. You want your neighbors to feel comfortable and welcome. Remember, it's for them, not you.

8. **What if something breaks, rips or falls apart while I am using it?** Please leave a note in the trailer and send an email to the contact found on the website. Do this within 24 hours, so that we can get it fixed before the next event. We are hoping that the trailer will be picked up and used every week.

COSTS

1. **How much does it cost to “rent” the trailer?** The rental fee is \$30 per event and can be paid to Dearborn Christian Fellowship (21360 Donaldson St., Dearborn, MI 48124)
2. **How much do I need to budget for the cost of food?** Food costs on average: 100 guests (\$300) or about \$3.00 a plate. Optional \$5 gift cards can be given away at periodic drawings during the course of the event.
3. **What kind of food should I serve?** Most people have served hot dogs since they are easy, cheap, and liked by most. Hamburgers are another option. A few salads and a cold treat like popsicles are always a hit.
4. **Are there any resources for covering the costs?** You may want to ask the small group of church members who are helping you organize the event to pitch in with the cost. Since this is an outreach event, you may also consider asking for some funds from your church's evangelism/outreach budget.

PERMITS

Do I need a permit? That all depends on the kind of block party you will be having. The equipment is designed to fit in the front yard of a home. If neighborhood people come and go throughout the event, it can probably be limited to one yard. Then you most likely will not need a permit. However, if you wish to close off the ends of the street with barricades, then you probably will need a permit from your city. Most of the block parties sponsored by Kingdom Enterprise Zone trailers like ours, have not needed a permit.

OUTREACH

1. **Who should I invite?** Invite everyone on your street and maybe a couple blocks in either direction. The more postcards you hand out/deliver, the more people you will get. Not everyone will come – so invite a lot and don't worry too much about running out of food. First come/first serve. The kids will enjoy the bounce house either way.
2. **Should I share Jesus or have Christian tracts available?** This is not the time to actively evangelize your neighborhood. Keep with the main objective of building relationships and being open to having spiritual conversations — if the opportunity presents itself. Neighbors will probably ask where you got the trailer or who is helping you put this on. This is a great opportunity to talk about your church and its mission to serve together in your community.
3. **Should I have information about my church available?** By all means! Set up a small table with information about your church and its programs. It should be kept low-key. But be ready to offer more information, if genuine interest is expressed.
4. **How do I receive contact information from my neighbors?** Provide a raffle or giveaway every 30 minutes in order to get names, as well as snail-mail and email addresses.
5. **What if someone wants to bring alcohol to drink?** You are asked not to serve alcohol, but expect that some neighbor(s) will bring their own. In most cases, they bring enough for themselves, not the neighborhood. So learn to be OK with it, so long they do not become intoxicated. Most people will respect the fact that there are kids around.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE PARTY

What do I do when the party is finished? Dry off the bottom of the bounce house before rolling it up or else it will get moldy. Be sure to return all items to the trailer and return the trailer within 24 hours. Neighbors for whom you were able to get mailing addresses or email addresses, you may want to send a “thank you for coming” note. Also consider submitting pictures to our website's picture gallery.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Multiple Church Members on the same block – If you have multiple church families that live on the same block, it will give you a greater opportunity to establish relationships with the neighbors. Ideally the families can alternate and host several parties over the course of the summer.

Name Tags – You may want to consider providing name tags for everyone. It is surprising how few people know one another — even if they have lived on the same block for many years.

Raffle – This is the one activity that I recommend being led by the host family. You can use the sound system to announce the drawing at designated times (and to welcome your guests for coming) and it will be an opportunity for all guests to know who is hosting the party. As neighbors arrive, have them sign their names and draw names at assigned times during the party. Then give away gift cards or other items of value throughout the party. I've found kids like to participate and draw names.

Grill – The grill has two propane canisters. The purpose for this is to make sure no one runs out of propane. If one canister runs out then the second one will be available. One of the check list items should be “Does the propane canister need to be replaced?” If the answer is yes, then the empty canister will be replaced before the next party.

Bounce House — Adult supervision (I'm sure this goes without saying) but you want to make sure it is supervised at all times. Make sure you line up sufficient volunteers to cover it throughout the party. This is the biggest selling feature of the block party and the greatest source of conflict if a child gets hurt. You may need to limit the number of kids in the Bounce House at a time and if you have older kids and younger kids then alternate the times the older and younger kids are in the bounce house.

Cones – The purpose of the cones in the trailer is to cover the stakes holding down the corners of the bounce house. Several kids tripped over the stakes at our last party. We didn't try the cones and you might find a better way to cover the stakes and prevent the kids from tripping.

Towels for the Bounce House – the bottom of the bounce house will be damp with condensation after use. If you roll it up wet you chance it getting moldy. Take a minute to wipe it down as you are rolling it up.

Contact

If you have any questions about block parties, just contact mbonser@dearborncf.com. Someone from the Block Party Detroit team will either call or email you back. And no, we won't add your email to any mass email list where we bug you all the time. Although, if you are interested in receiving information about future block parties in your area, we'd be happy to share these details with you! Just let us know!

Bringing Metro Detroit neighbors together, one block party at a time.