

# Neighborhood Celebrations

## Sponsored by Community Outreach of Our United Villages

Community Outreach of Our United Villages hosted Neighborhood Celebrations in Boise, Humboldt, and Overlook neighborhoods in Portland Oregon. A Neighborhood Celebration is one way of showcasing the strengths, talents, and resources within a neighborhood. We have learned that celebrations of this sort inspire positive interactions among neighbors. Use this information to build capacity of community-building efforts in your own neighborhood. This document is like a tool chest, take from it whatever works best for achieving your own neighborhood or community goals.



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## **Theme & Purpose**

The purpose and theme of a Neighborhood Celebration will be uniquely different in each neighborhood, based on history, current activities, and culture. Your event may serve to do all of the following:

- Celebrate neighborhood accomplishments
- Showcase neighborhood diversity
- Inform neighbors of community resources
- Get neighbors involved
- Provide opportunities for socialization

The purpose of the Neighborhood Celebration sponsored by Community Outreach was to throw a party for the neighborhood and celebrate neighbors meeting one another. This event took place at the end of our focused work in a particular neighborhood. It was our way of thanking neighbors for their participation, sharing information about neighborhood activities, and encouraging them to work together.

## **Involving Neighbors**

We wanted neighbors to be directly involved in planning and implementing the events. Neighbors could be featured in the Talent Show or share information and opportunities through the Resource Fair. Neighbors volunteered in many ways. For example, neighbors helped (1) identify local artists and musicians, (2) distribute posters to neighborhood businesses, (3) greet people at the door, and (4) pick up food.

## **Neighborhood Venue & Date**

Identify a space in the neighborhood that is welcoming, will hold the number of people you hope will attend, is universally accessible (Accessible for Disabled or ADA accessible), has good acoustics, comfortable seating, and is accessible for transportation (parking and close to public transit). The space may be a park, community center, local school, or historic building. When selecting a date, it is important to check community calendars and standing dates for neighborhood groups. Sometimes it can be difficult to find a date where no other event is happening, but you can try to reduce the overlap in scheduling. The time of day might be shaped by school schedules, the availability of venues, or holidays. We usually host Neighborhood Celebrations in the early afternoons on Saturdays.

## **Local Talent Show**

Recruitment for the talent show came through recommendations from people we already had relationships within the neighborhood. We tapped into the talent from local schools, churches, businesses, and placed an announcement in the neighborhood newsletter. Our goal was to fill one hour with a variety of performances, including dance, poetry, singing, and theater. Visual art was on display throughout the venue. At the end of scheduled performances, anyone in the audience wanting to share their talent was invited to the stage. We learned that involving young people increased the number of attendees because it brought out parents and family members.

## **Multi-Ethnic Cuisine**

It is important to have a food selection that reflects the diversity of the community, and meets the food preferences of the community (e.g. vegan, vegetarian, food allergies, and religious/dietary restrictions). For a Neighborhood Celebration that took place during the summer and at an outdoor venue, we had a BBQ; the wonderful smells of food cooking wafted throughout the neighborhood and drew people in. At another Neighborhood Celebration, we purchased one specialty item from an array of neighborhood restaurants and food vendors.

## Getting the Word Out

Once a space and date are determined, it is time to share the opportunity with the neighborhood. We mailed a postcard to every address in the neighborhood, including residential and business addresses. In addition, we created posters and hung them at highly-visible locations such as the laundry mats, schools, faith-based organizations, and community centers. We also created Save the Date cards. Each person participating in the Talent Show, Resource Fair, or volunteering received a stack of the Save the Date cards to share with their neighbors. A description of the event was also posted in the neighborhood newsletter.

## Logistics & Supplies

There are lots of logistical considerations that go into hosting a Neighborhood Celebration. For example:

- Childcare: provide a separate room for child care (if possible), gather supplies, locate providers
- Interpretation: research languages spoken in the neighborhood, identify interpreters (including sign language interpretation if necessary)
- Capture the event: determine if you will use a camera, digital recorder, and/or video camera and a process for gaining permission for the use of photos or video
- Room Layout: consider a circular or stadium seating arrangement, gather decorations
- Equipment: microphone, projector, podium
- Office Supplies: nametags, sign-in sheet, materials for note taking
- Food Supplies: buffet style, sit-down dinner, or finger food, serving platters, dishes
- Raffle: take-away, prizes, memento (these items enhance the experience for participants and, in some cases, can be incentives for people to attend the event)

## Resource Fair

One of the purposes of the Neighborhood Celebration was for neighbors to learn about activities that were already happening in their neighborhood. Neighborhood groups set up tables to share opportunities for neighbors to get involved with projects. This may be called a Resource Fair or Neighborhood Involvement Fair. If you choose to incorporate this aspect of the Neighborhood Celebration, there are additional considerations in planning the event. For example:

- How will you identify and reach out to neighborhood groups? How will you engage their participation?
- How many tables will you have? What supplies will you need for the Resource Fair?
- How can the Resource Fair provide an opportunity for neighbors to get involved in the activities? Will they have sign-ups or action items? Will there be a calendar of upcoming events for neighborhood groups?

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Appendix A  
Sample Invitation:  
Neighborhood Celebration and Involvement Fair

## **Overlook Neighborhood Celebration and Involvement Fair**

**Do you love free good food?**  
Refreshments from  
neighborhood restaurants.

**Did you know that you have neighbors  
that can sing, dance, write poetry,  
and create visual art?**  
Talent Showcase starts at Noon.

**Do you want to learn about the wonderful  
things that are already happening in your  
neighborhood?**

Neighbors will be available to share opportunities  
to get involved with neighborhood projects.

**FREE RAFFLE!**

**Saturday, January 19, 2008**

**Come any time between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.**

**Location: Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center (IFCC)**

**5340 N. Interstate Avenue – at the intersection of N. Willamette and N. Interstate**

All ages welcome. Wheelchair accessible. Parking is limited.  
Take Interstate MAX (yellow line) to the Killingsworth Station or TriMet Bus #72  
Open to everyone who has a connection with the Overlook neighborhood.  
Hosted by Our United Villages, a local non-profit organization.  
For more information, please contact 503.546.7499 or [info@ourunitedvillages.org](mailto:info@ourunitedvillages.org).

Appendix B  
Sample Save the Date Card:  
Neighborhood Celebration and Involvement Fair

**Overlook Neighborhood  
Celebration and Involvement Fair**

**Saturday, January 19, 2008**

Come any time between **11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.**

Location: Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center (IFCC)



**Open to everyone who has a connection  
to the Overlook Neighborhood.**

Hosted by Our United Villages,  
a local non-profit organization.

For more information, call (503) 546-7499  
or go to [www.ourunitedvillages.org](http://www.ourunitedvillages.org)

**Free Raffle!**

**Neighborhood  
Talent Show!**

**Free Food!**

# **Overlook Neighborhood Talent Showcase**

**12:00 - 2:00 pm**



## **Scheduled Performers:**

**Portland Theater Brigade**

**Peninsula Children's Center**

**Darlene "Butterfly" Solomon**

**Sara Henshaw**

**Judith Wild**

**Beaterville Beater Band**

## **Open Mic:**

**Please come to the stage if you  
would like to share your talent**

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**SloMo creation by Kestrel  
throughout the building**