

Neighbourhood Development Initiative



An easy How-To Guide To organize a Neighbourhood

BLOCK PARTY



www.stalbert.ca/block-party-information



**Government
of Alberta** ■

INTRODUCTION

With the hectic lifestyle most of us lead, it's much harder to get to know our neighbours than it used to be. Between rushing to our jobs, racing to drop the kids at daycare, running off with them to soccer practice, or catching up on weekend errands, people seem to spend very little time around their home. Neighbours are often greeted with a quick wave at best.

Block Parties provide the opportunity for neighbours to relax, have some fun and socialize at least once a year. Neighbours who know each other look out for one another. It's helpful if neighbours can spot a stranger on the street, and especially if one is lurking near your home. Children need to know where they can turn in an emergency, and the difference between a friendly neighbour and a stranger. A concerned and connected neighbourhood helps to create a sense of well-being and safety for all who live there.

10 TOP REASONS TO HAVE A BLOCK PARTY

1. To have fun – no excuses or reasons needed to celebrate!
2. To meet your neighbours. When you know who lives in your neighbourhood, you are more likely to identify strangers or suspicious people.
3. To increase that sense of belonging to a community.
4. To strengthen neighbourhood spirit and encourage residents look after the neighbourhood.
5. To make additional connections within the community. When you know people, you can exchange skills or resources and perhaps organize a book club, baby-sitting co-op, share walking to school duties, or find new friends for your children.
6. To meet some old time residents in the neighbourhood and learn the neighbourhood's history.
7. To establish new friendships.
8. To learn a little about each other and who might need a little extra help from time to time.
9. To have a neighbourhood clean-up day, play some good music and barbeque once all the work is done.
10. To start a neighbourhood tradition of getting together at least once a year!

Benefits

1. make new friends
2. find a sitter
3. increase sense of belonging
4. recipe exchange
5. increase security
6. decrease vandalism
7. small town feel
8. learn something new
9. help others

As friendships grow, so do safe and caring neighbourhoods.



PLANNING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD BLOCK PARTY

One of the first things to be aware of is that both the **Neighbourhood Watch Association of St. Albert** and the **St. Albert Citizen's Patrol Society** are encouraging neighbourhoods to organize Block Parties by supplying **FREE burgers, hot dogs and buns**. To qualify, organizers need only distribute a flyer about crime prevention along with their Block Party invitations. For details contact 780-459-1756.

1. HOW BIG TO MAKE IT

- Start off with a smaller event rather than a large one. It can always grow, but it is hard to shrink it.
- In selecting who to invite, use natural neighbourhood boundaries where possible (i.e. end of the block). If you are planning a street or cul-de-sac party, you need to invite everyone from that area.

Decide early and make it clear in your flyer if this will be a Block Party restricted to those on the street/block or whether people can invite friends/relatives (if yes, how many).

2. GETTING STARTED

- The idea of a neighbourhood Block Party is to bring neighbours together, so the first step is to create an organizing committee.
- You may want to send out a flyer to explain what a Block Party is, encourage attendance, and get opinions on how to handle the food, possible dates and times to have an event (see sample questionnaire on page 5).
- Enlist as many neighbours as you can to help out. One person can type the flyer; someone else can deliver and collect them. Perhaps local youth can drop the flyers in the mailboxes.
- It's important to include as many interested people as possible in planning and organizing your event.

3. GETTING THE WORD OUT

It is important to keep your neighbours informed. Here are some ideas:

- Flyers can be used with a request to drop back their suggestions for the event in your mailbox.
- Have organizing committee members drop off flyers one day and collect them on another.
- Information can be gathered from your neighbours by going door-to-door. This adds a personal touch and people will often offer to help. This is also an opportunity to collect signatures if you intend to close off any part of your street.



- A casual approach can be used to inform or remind neighbours of the event as you see them out mowing their lawns or gardening.
- Residents can be called on the phone. If you don't know your neighbour's phone number, a reverse directory telephone book can be used, which is available at the library or on the Internet.
- To reach neighbours in townhouses, apartments and condos, it is best to approach the manager. They will let you know how to get in touch with the residents.
- Once a date has been determined, put up signage at the entry to your crescent, cul-de-sac or street prior to, and on the day of the Block Party.

Take every opportunity to talk it up in the neighbourhood as often as possible prior to the event.



Garden Crescent Block Party



SAMPLE BLOCK PARTY QUESTIONNAIRE

A few neighbours have been talking and we thought it would be fun to get together and have a "meet-on-the-street event". This would be an opportunity to get to know one another. To get this event underway, we would like to know what you think!

Yes, our family would be interested in participating in this Block Party ___
Number attending _____

No, will not attend, but have no objection to blocking off the street (if needed) for this event.

What would be the best time of day and the best date?

1st choice _____ 2nd choice _____
Date Time of Day Date Time of Day

Your Name _____ Address _____

Evening Phone _____ Day time Phone _____

A planning meeting is scheduled for _____
Would you be interested in helping organize this event? Yes _____ No _____

Do you have a talent you would like to share with us? _____

We are asking each family to bring:

- Salad or dessert or snacks or condiments (please bring enough for 6 people)
- Hot dogs or hamburgers and buns for your family
- Beverages for your family
- Non-breakable plates, cups and cutlery for your family
- Chairs/blanket for your family to sit on

Would you be willing to bring your barbeque and help cook? Yes _____

Committee members will be around to pick up this flyer on _____. Please ensure the flyer is back in your mailbox. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please contact: _____

Thanks Neighbour!

Sample form



4. TYPES OF BLOCK PARTIES

Your organizing committee can determine which type of Block Party will work best in your neighbourhood;

- Barbecues – organizers purchase all that is needed and neighbours provide money or everyone brings his or her own meat.
- Picnics – everyone brings their own meal.
- Potluck – everyone brings one dish: even # houses could bring dessert; odd # houses could bring salads or main dish.
- Catered – everyone shares the cost and the food is purchased.

*Try not to go overboard; it can make people feel the event is too much work.
Keep it simple.*

5. LOCATION

If at all possible, use a common public space. This will increase the likelihood of shared responsibility for the event. Safety for all participants needs to be an important factor when determining a location.

Options:

- Existing park or common area: must abide by City park use bylaws
- A neighbour's front or back yard
- House
- Garage
- Common room in a condo unit
- Public roadway

SPECIAL NOTE: If you intend to use the street or alley in any way, City permission is required and the street must be officially blocked off with barricades.



6. **CITY OF ST. ALBERT PERMISSION FOR BLOCKING STREET**

Only local (residential) roadways will be permitted for a Block Party closure. The Block party organizer must submit a Block Party Application Form to the FCSS department at least 5 business days prior to the party date. The form includes:

- Block Party date, time and possible rain out date.
- The applicants full name, address and contact information.
- Exact location of where the barricades are to be placed.
- Permission from at least 60% of the neighbours who are affected by the street closure.

See the following pages for examples.

FCSS will ensure:

- Neighbourhood Watch has barricades & signage ready for block party organizer(s) to pick up. A **\$20.00 cash fee will be charged by Neighbourhood Watch if items are not returned by noon the next day** (unless other arrangements have been made in advance). Applicants are also responsible for loss or damage to any barricade or sign.
- Fire Hall is notified of the Block Party should they require access to the street.
- Municipal Enforcement/RCMP will be informed of the Block Party should they receive any complaints.

Note: If a residential fire pit is being used for the Block Party, a permit must be obtained from the [St. Albert Fire Department](#). For more information call 780-418-6069.

If you have any questions with regard to obtaining permission for setting up barricades on your street contact:

City of St. Albert
Family & Community Support Services (FCSS)
201, 8 Perron Street
Phone: 780-459-1756 | Fax: 780-458-1260
Email: fcss@st-albert.net



Neighbourhood Development Initiative



Block Party Application Form

Date of Party: _____

Start Time: _____

End Time: _____

Possible Rain out Date: _____

Block Party Organizer(s):

Name	Address	Phone Number	Email

Barricades are to be placed in front of House # _____ and House # _____

House # _____ and House # _____

You must have permission from at least 60% of the neighbours who are affected by the street closure. Please include the completed "Permission to block the Street" form with this application.

Forward your application to

City of St. Albert
Family & Community Support Services (FCSS)
201, 8 Perron Street
Phone: 780-459-1756 | Fax: 780-458-1260
Email: fcss@st-albert.net

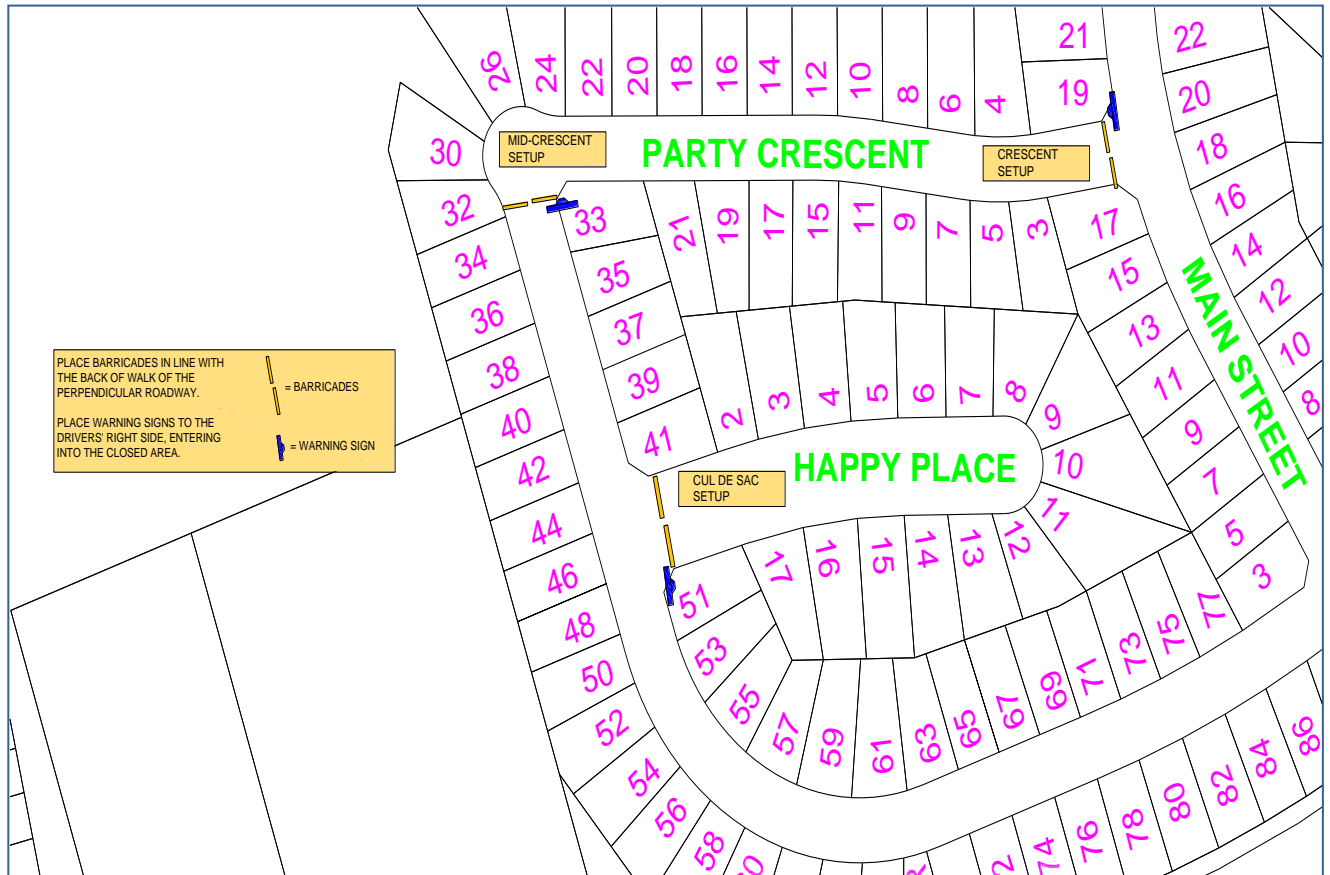
This initiative is supported by:



Government
of Alberta



EXAMPLES OF BARRICADE AND SIGN SETUPS:



7. THE TIMING TO GET THE EVENT PLANNED



- For a first time Block Party, distribute the first flyer requesting feedback 4 to 5 weeks before the event.
- Adjustments may need to be made if a neighbour already has an event of their own planned.
- Once the planning group has looked at all the suggestions, the final flyer with date, time and what to bring should go out 3 weeks before the event.
- May to the end of August is a good time.
- A weekend date or holiday is often preferable for the event.
- Have an alternative rainout day planned, just in case.
- Keep in mind those who live in the neighbourhood when setting the hours for the party. If young children or seniors are living near the party area, plan to finish by 9:00 pm.



PLANNING COMMITTEE TO DO LIST

Sample

<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>Address & Phone</i>
<i>Chair/Main Contact</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Distribute invitations</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Answer questions</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Organize planning meetings</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Get nametags from Atco Gas (780-460-4090)</i>		
<i>Activities</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Include games/activities/ icebreakers for all ages and cultures</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Decide whether to offer prizes</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Get kids & teens involved in planning & supervising</i>		
<i>Food</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Arrange tables for food, BBQ's, coolers</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Collect money for any group food supplies (if needed)</i>		
<i>Permission to use Street</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>If you are using the street in any way, City permission is required. Call 780-459-1756 for information.</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Collect signatures from 60% of neighbours</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Submit letter of request & signatures to FCSS at least 5 business days prior to the event</i>		
<i>Clean Up</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pick up garbage cans and replacement bags</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Take down any signs that may have been put up</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Return barricades to Neighbourhood Watch (if used)</i>		



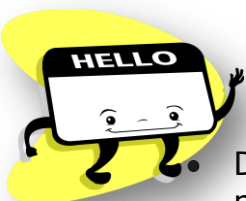
8. ROLE OF THE ORGANIZERS

- Make planning decisions prior to the event.
- Act as greeters at the block party.
- Introduce new neighbours and help them make connections.
- Make sure the clean up is done. You may wish to inspire clean up by rewarding the neighbourhood children with a prize for picking up the most garbage.



9. SET UP

- It's a good idea to have a sign-in sheet with the names of everyone who attends the party and everyone you contacted. After all, the idea of a Block Party is to connect neighbours. This is a great resource for next year, as it can help develop a contact list for the neighbourhood.
 - Nametags are important. Atco Gas will supply nametags at no cost. Call 780-460-4090.
 - Decide what you want neighbours to write on their name tag e.g. first and last names, house numbers.
 - Line up tables for the food and have several garbage cans available.
- Decide who will coordinate or if everyone will bring his or her own tables and chairs, plates, cutlery and cups, and beverages.

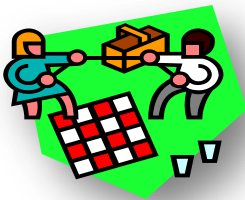


- If using barbecues, who will bring them?
- Institute a bathroom policy "everyone to use his or her own", so that home security is maintained.
- Decide if pets are allowed.
- Provide residents with an evaluation at the end of the event to collect any new ideas for next year.

10. ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

What should we do during the event?

- Visit and eat. Over the centuries, food has always had a very social component in societies.
- Take time to introduce one another and point to one's house. This can be done in a game format.
- Invite crime prevention groups to set up a display.
- Have a presentation on crime prevention through environmental design.
- Plan lots of games for kids, some organized and some they can play themselves. Examples:
 - Sidewalk chalk
 - Face painting
 - Hula hoops
 - Bean bag toss
 - Basketball
 - Fruit loop necklaces
 - Some of the above items are available to borrow. To enquire call 780-459-1756.
- Encourage the talent of your neighbourhood to come forward - you may be living next to a musician, artist, magician, singer, dancer, radio host or prize-winning cook!
- Bulletin board/Sign up sheets for special interests
 - Babysitters (needed/offered)
 - Interested in walking group
 - Interested in reading club



I am interested in

a book exchange

My name/# Cara/555-1234

I will pick up this sheet at the end of the Block Party

Name	Number and/or Email

I am interested in

5:30 a.m. walking partner(s)

My name/# Colleen

I will pick up this sheet at the end of the Block Party

Name	Number and/or Email



Be sure to encourage intergenerational participation. For example, have youth leading games for younger children, seniors and teens working the barbeques. Make sure that people with disabilities can participate in activities, including their attendants (those with seeing-eye dogs or in wheelchairs).

OTHER WAYS TO GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS

- Perennial exchange
- Garden tour party
- Group garage sale
- Block/street clean up
- How about winter gatherings – Neighbourhood street hockey?



Allow the majority to determine the type of event.

REMINDERS

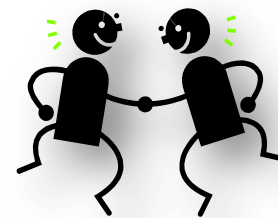
- Residents should observe security precautions by keeping back doors locked and equipment in sight.
- Be courteous, loud amplification of music is prohibited.
- Remember when setting up tables and chairs that emergency vehicles must have access.
- You may wish to post signs the day before the event to remind everyone to remove their cars if the street is being used.
- Alcohol is only permitted on private property, not on City streets or in parks.



SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES **TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBOURS**

Canada Day

- *Who can trace their Canadian family origins back the furthest?*
- *Who is the newest Canadian?*
- *Canadian quiz from newspaper, library, Internet, etc.*
- *Canadian heroes' charades.*
- *A cake decorated with the maple leaf.*
- *Canadian music.*



Neighbourhood History

- *Research the history of your neighbourhood through the library or the City of St. Albert archives.*
- *Identify special people that lived in your area such as politicians, artists, heroes, etc.*
- *Have neighbours guess that neighbourhood history by playing charades (who, what, where and when questions).*

Cultural Connections

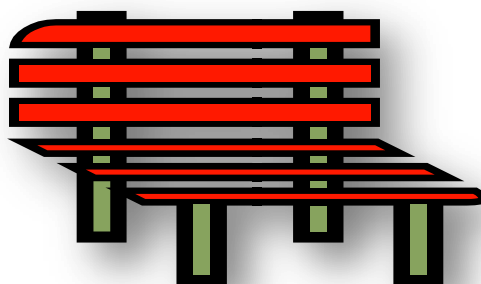


- *Have everyone bring a favourite family dish.*
- *Teach everyone how to say 3 things in another language.*
- *Use a world map to indicate where everyone originally came from.*
- *Record the story of how everyone came to live in the neighbourhood and what they like best about the neighbourhood, give a copy to the city archives and the Mayor.*



Neighbourhood Action

- *Clean up the street, plant a garden, paint out graffiti as part of the Block Party activities.*
- *If you would like assistance in building a stronger, more connected neighbourhood our Neighbourhood Development team can provide guidance, coaching and facilitation to get you started. Call 780-459-1705.*



Winter Block Parties

Block Parties are not only for summer; why not consider organizing a winter Block Party? **Did you know that people find winter more enjoyable when they spend time outside?** This is especially true for children. Despite what we may think, winter does not last 6 months in St. Albert. Between 1971 and 2000 St. Albert saw an average of only 40 days annually with temperatures below -20 C, with the average temperature in January being -12 C.

Activities

Break out of the winter doldrums by joining together with your neighbours for some outdoor fun! Host a neighbourhood street hockey tournament. Have a snow sculpture contest. Use outdoor recreation facilities in your neighbourhood to have a skating or tobogganing party.

Enjoy St. Albert's many trails by going on a neighbourhood nature walk or scavenger hunt. Host a Christmas Block party. Ask the kids for their ideas, the possibilities are endless!

Plan for the Elements

Put a little time into planning for the elements. With a little effort you can create a very comfortable and inviting environment for your outdoor winter party. Here are some ideas to get you started:

1. Provide shelter from the environment
 - Use buildings or landscape in your neighbourhood to protect from wind.
 - Challenge the neighbourhood kids to build a snow fort that can provide some shelter from the wind.
 - Use a garage or pitch a canopy tent.
2. Plan for comfort and warmth
 - Have the neighbours bring out some lawn chairs or benches to sit on.
 - Build your own chairs from snow.
 - Ask neighbours to bring blankets or sleeping bags for extra warmth.
 - Get a permit from the fire department to have a fire pit. This can be a source of warmth and a great place to toast marshmallows later!
 - A permit must be obtained from the [St. Albert Fire Department](#). For more information call 780-418-6069.

Food

Don't forget the food! There is nothing better than a hearty bowl of chilli or stew after a day of winter's play? Besides filling empty tummies, a shared meal brings people together, starts conversations and helps build relationships. Organize a Chilli cook-off. Have a potluck meal. Try a Progressive Dinner where neighbours take turns hosting certain courses of the meal. For information on how to get free hamburgers, hotdogs and buns call 780-459-1756.

The possibilities for your winter block party are endless! For more general information and ideas about planning Block Parties, see the City of St. Albert Block Party Guide.

Additional resources:

City of St. Albert - [Smart Growth and Winter City Design](#)



**MISSION AREA
BLOCK PARTY**

**SATURDAY, JULY 17, 2010
3:00 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M.**

Join your neighbours for a fun afternoon of
food, fun, visiting and laughter!

Find out how to make your house less of a target
and
help bring back that small-town, safe-streets feeling!

Find someone to trade books with! Find a walking partner!
Find a new friend! Find someone to walk your dog! Find someone
who likes to quilt or knit or crochet! Find someone who enjoys
doing crafts!

*Bring your own lawn chairs, cups
and non-alcoholic beverages*

Hot dogs and Hamburgers are Free!!!

Mustard, relish and ketchup will be available

(Please leave your pets at home)



Don't Miss Out!!

**DEERBOURNE PARK
NEIGHBOURHOOD BLOCK PARTY!!**

Many thanks to the
Organizing Committee
from Deerbourne Park
Neighbourhood for
sharing this great idea!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25TH
4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Sample

In case of rain, we will have the party on Sunday from 1 – 5 p.m.

**Join your neighbours at Deerbourne Park for a fun afternoon of
games, visiting, and food!!
All are welcome!!**

**Children's Bike Parade
4:30**

*Decorate your bike and
show off your creativity!!
Children will parade their
bikes through the park.*

Test your
Chess skills!!

**Face
Painting!!**

3-legged Race!!

RCMP Patrol car for the
kids to check out!!

**Bring your remote
control car to race
around a track!**

Crime Prevention
Groups – how to make
your house less of a
target!

Find a walking partner! A babysitter!
Someone to trade books with! A new
friend! Trade plant slips! Someone to
walk your dog!

Get to know your
neighbours!! Bring back
that small-town, safe
streets feeling!

If you have not previously
confirmed your attendance,
please email
person@hotmail.com with
the number attending so
we can be sure to have
enough burgers!!

Please Bring:

1. Lawn chairs or blanket for your family!
2. Even #'d houses bring a salad.
3. Odd #'d houses bring a dessert.
4. Beverage for your family.



NEIGHBOURHOOD BINGO

Your name: _____

- **All completed forms will be placed in a box for a draw**
- Find someone who has/is: (cannot use a person for more than one)

Moved here from Winnipeg	Likes liver and onions	Has 2 cats	Plays guitar	Can play the spoons
Has travelled to more than 2 other countries	Can do card tricks	Lived here longer than 10 years	Electrician	Volunteers
House number ends in 4	Has more than 3 kids	Helped organize this Block Party	Is wearing something home-made	Born in another country
Retired	Knows how to play pinochle	Is Irish	Lived here less than 6 months	Teacher
Owens more than 200 books	A marathon runner	Can raise one eyebrow	Is 8 years old	Military Family



"Our neighborhood block party is traditionally at Christmas and is called 'Mooch and Mosey' because we 'mooch' starting on one side of the cul-de-sac and then 'mosey' to the next, and the next and the next so eventually we make it to each house!"

Mooch and Mosey Barbecue

Sample

Mosey Plan:

Home 1 and Home 2: Appetizers

Home 3 and Home 4: Entrées, including hamburgers
and hot dogs

Home 5: Desserts

This Crescent Block Party RSVP

Before Sept. 11th, please leave RSVP
in the mailboxes of either:

Mrs. Lady—House #10
or
Miss Herself—House #41

House # Attending: _____
_____ Adults + _____ Kids

How many want?

Hot Dogs _____
Hamburgers _____





2011 GENTRY LANE MEET & GREET BLOCK PARTY

Come on out and meet your neighbours
(we don't bite)



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8TH 5:30pm – 7:30 pm
(rain or shine)

The party will take place on the driveways between **units #19 & #20**
Neighbourhood Watch/Citizen's Patrol is providing
free burgers/hotdogs for all!



ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS show up and

- Bring your own lawn chair(s)
- **Advise Mrs. Smith** at 780-123-4567 by Sat. Sept. 3rd (she has an answering machine)
- If you will be attending (yes or no), how many & from which unit
- If you prefer a burger or hotdog
- Soft drinks will be provided and A YUMMY dessert to boot!
- **HOPE YOU CAN MAKE IT!**





**Each Family,
Please Bring:**

- 1) *Appetizer, salad or dessert to share*
- 2) *Beverages for your family*
- 3) *Non-breakable plates, cups, cutlery for your family*
- 4) *Chairs, cooler to sit on*

**Join us for our
annual Block
Party!**

SATURDAY, SEPT. 17th
from 3-7 pm
at top of street

Barricades will be blocking the top of the street again this year between houses 24/27 & 45/46.



SAFE NEIGHBOURHOOD BLOCK PARTY
EVALUATION FORM

To help plan future block parties your feedback is appreciated.

What were the 3 best things about the Block Party?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What 3 things would you recommend for the next party?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How would you like to maintain the neighbourhood connection that was started at the Block Party during the rest of the year?

Are you willing to help with the planning of a future neighbourhood event?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please leave your name and phone # _____

Return this form to _____ by _____



Your Notes:





QUESTIONS

If you wish to discuss your event or if you have questions please call:

Family and Community Support Services

780-459-1756

fcss@st-albert.net

www.stalbert.ca/block-party-information

April 2012

