

Coldspring Deck Party Guide

How to Host a Deck Party

By Jane Houck

Getting your deck into the “dessert” mode will take 2-3 parties. The purpose is to help residents get to know one another and to develop a sense of community at the “deck” level. It really doesn’t matter what you do. Any social activity which potentially includes all those who live on the deck is fine.

We started doing desserts on Nutmeg Terrace and Sorrel Court because we wanted to know the people who lived around us. We like dessert (most people do) and it offered a chance for people to have a sweet and drop in as they were able. We are two neighbors who enjoy getting to know the people around us. We recommend that you share the sponsorship of this activity with a neighbor. (You will feel less burdened and you will be role-modeling the kind of neighborly friendship you want to promote.) The following is our step-by-step process. Obviously whatever you think you need to do is also fine.

- 1) Identify a date in the middle of the week. (Many people have family and religious commitments on the weekend.) We chose June and September for our desserts. These are months when the weather is warm enough to be outside comfortably for an hour or two. We offer the area under the bridge unit as a rain alternative. (Yes, we have done desserts under the bridge unit in the rain. Fewer attendees but we still had fun.)
- 2) Identify a central location in the middle of the deck. Ideally you will want a space where there is a bench. We set up a couple of small tables and bring out our plastic patio chairs.
- 3) Create a flyer. One page with the basic information of when, where, who and why. See ours attached. Then take it to the CCA office or get it copied at your job. Copy double the number of units you will be inviting.
- 4) Three days or so before the event, go door-to-door (one person doing this task is enough) inviting people and explaining what you are doing. Introduce yourself and write down the name of individual. Keep track of whether they can attend and how many

of their family will come. If they offer to bring something suggest they keep it simple. Give them a flyer. Anyone who is not home put a flyer through the mailslot. If you know their name, address it to them with a personal note. "John, Hope you can join us." or something of that sort.

- 5) Plan your food. We always make one homemade dessert from each of us. (Joan does black bottom cupcakes and I do lemon squares.) We have caffeinated and decaf coffee and we have cream and sugar available. Sometimes if it is really hot, we do iced tea too. We have juice boxes for the kids. We include a salty snack of pretzels or goldfish for the kids and some fruit or sugar-free dessert for diabetics. We have paper products including cups, spoons, forks small plates, napkins. You will need a trash can. Usually others will bring something and we have stuff to serve whatever.
- 6) The evening before the event, knock on doors again for anyone who wasn't there the first time you knocked on doors. Leave your notice with a personal note for those who agreed to come. "Looking forward to seeing you."
- 7) The evening of the event, get out 10-15 mins early to set up. Be prepared that the first couple of times you may not get too many folks. Be prepared to hang out for a couple of hours (We do 7:00 to 9:00 PM). Sweet stuff does draw people and you should get some participants. Introduce people as they arrive. Use name tags so people can call each other by name. Sometimes people discover that they have an acquaintance in common or may actually know one another from the past. We have seen this happen on more than one occasion. We also invite the presidents and board members of 1B and CCA. This adds an air of importance to the event. Reintroduce people as newcomers arrive. This helps people to register names they missed on the first introduction.
- 8) We wait until the party is dying to clean up. We usually are cleaning up about 9:30-9:45. Make a list of who came and what they brought and a note about who they are (i.e. works at Sinai, nursing.). When you do the party again in a couple of months this will be helpful as you reconnect.
- 9) Finally Joan or I would be glad to help you set up your first dessert or social event. We think that knowing your neighbors strengthens the community and helps us to problem-solve in emergencies.

Sample Invitation

Nutmeg Terrace/Sorrel Court Dessert

Summer is here!

It's time to meet new neighbors and renew old friendships.

When? June 13, Tuesday 7:00 PM

Where? Nutmeg Terrace on the deck
Rain? Under the Bridge Unit

Who? Joan Cooper Jane Houck
2359 Nutmeg 2351 Nutmeg

What? Dessert, coffee, cold drinks
Lots of socializing for all
ages!

Join Us!