



# *8 Front Doors* **CHALLENGE** Guide

## Challenge Overview

*The Neighborhood Advisory Board challenges you to visit 8 front doors in your neighborhood — whether it's your neighbors, new faces, or old friends — and begin building relationships.*

*Let's strengthen and connect with our community to love where you live!*

## Introduction

*This guide was designed to help you plan and host a simple, meaningful Get-Together with 8 neighbors closest to you. It covers how to connect with your immediate neighbors, invite them to your gathering, and follow up afterward.*

*Here is an outline to get started:*

## Outline:

*Step 1: Establish Neighborhood Presence: Begin making yourself familiar on your block/building and start getting to know your neighbors so they recognize you when you begin reaching out.*

*Step 2: Find an Ally: Ask a neighbor you already know if they might be willing to co-host with you!*

*Step 3: Create a Block Map: Complete the 8 Front Doors Block Map, and determine whom you will invite.*

*Step 4: Invite Your Neighbors: Hand deliver invitations to your neighbors.*

*Step 5: Host Your Party: Host your Get-Together and encourage a neighborly vibe.*

## Resources and Services:

*A list of resources and services is provided on the last page of this guide.*

*As you prepare for your 8 Front Doors Get-Together, remember simplicity and sustainability are just as valuable over a huge blowout party! A small and short gathering with 3-5 neighbors is a HUGE success. We also encourage you to be Free to Fail! It is OK if it doesn't turn out exactly as you've imagined. No matter what happens, you will gain new information about your neighborhood that will help you move forward.*

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## *Step 1: Establish Neighborhood Presence*

Make yourself visible and present: It is much easier to approach neighbors if you are already somewhat familiar to them. A few weeks worth of groundwork to simply establish your presence in your neighborhood can go a long way to make neighboring feel more natural. It is important to always keep safety in mind (a buddy system is highly recommended!), but a great way to start is to walk your block or complex every day for several weeks. Try to walk the same route and preferably at a similar time of day. You will start to see your neighbors out and about and they will start to see you.

You do not have to talk to them immediately. You can simply smile and/or wave, building up courage week-by-week for longer interactions. You might also try walking at some different times to catch different neighbors in their varying routines. The point is to be as consistent as possible so that you will be familiar when you are ready to approach neighbors and introduce yourself or invite them to your gathering later on.

There are other ways to do this. Try doing your gardening, your reading, or your grilling in your front yard. Take your headphones out and make yourself look present and open to interaction, even if you aren't ready for too much interaction yet! The possibilities are endless; be creative and be present!

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## *Step 2: Find an Ally*

Throughout this week, you have two goals: 1. find an ally willing to co-host the 8 Front Doors Get-Together with you, and 2. begin imagining how you will gather.

**Find an Ally:** We have learned that neighboring happens more consistently when we do it with a partner. Finding an ally will help you widen your connections and create natural accountability for yourself.

If you know someone on your block, ask them to co-host. Keep it simple and short. If they agree, involve them in the rest of the steps. If not, don't worry —this might be your first step in finding an ally!

Decide on the type of gathering you want to host. We've provided a brief agenda and ideas for simple neighborhood Get-Togethers, but choose something that feels authentic and achievable for you and your neighborhood.

**Get-Together Ideas:** We recommend sticking with an outdoor gathering to start. Neighbors are more likely to come if they don't have to come inside your home.

- Front-Yard Hangout! Bring your lawn chairs for an informal front-yard hangout. Bring your own beverage or snack to share.
- Bubble Party! We will have bubbles on our front porch next Thursday at 6pm. Come by and say hello!
- Yard-Game Fun! I am pulling some yard games out for a neighborhood gathering!
- Go-nuts for Donuts! Saturday morning, I'll make a fresh pot of coffee and have donuts to share with neighbors!
- Crafting on the Corner! I'm inviting neighbors to join me for a crafting night. I'll have the supplies; you bring the creativity!
- Holiday Gathering! Pick ANY holiday and use it as an excuse to gather.

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## *Step 3: Create a Block Map*

During step 3, you will determine whom to invite by completing the Block Map included in this guide. Follow the instructions below to help you determine whom to invite to your gathering.

1. Take your block map to your front door, and while standing outside your door, consider the 8 doors closest to your own, or pick 8 homes of neighbors you feel comfortable inviting to your gathering.
2. Write down everything you know about each home. Names, interests, approximate ages, etc.
3. Determine what kind of relationship you have with each neighbor. Are they strangers, acquaintances, or connections? Next to each block, write "S", "A," or "C" based on these definitions.  
**(S) Stranger:** neighbors whose names you don't know.  
**(A) Acquaintances:** neighbors whose names and contact information you know.  
**(C) Connection:** neighbors whom you know by name, you have their contact info, and you know some of their interests, and other relevant information.
4. Invite a good mix to your party! If you prefer a smaller party, 8 homes might be the perfect size. For some blocks, apartments, or neighborhoods, it may feel more natural to invite everyone in a given area. Determine what feels comfortable to you, and stick with it!
5. Attach the Block Map to your refrigerator, and add new info as you discover it!

**\*\*Never feel obligated to invite a neighbor with whom you feel unsafe. Start with the folks you naturally feel a connection with, and work from there!**

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## *Step 4: Invite your neighbors!*

It's time to actually invite your neighbors. Below are tips for letting people know about your Get-Together:

1. Don't try to be a graphic designer! Informal invitations actually help your neighbors know that this is a simple and small gathering. You can design and print something if that is easier for you, or you can simply write the information on a postcard!
2. Share your information! Share your name, address, email, and phone number on the invitation. One goal of the party will be to share information, so take the first step and lead the way!
3. Hand-deliver the invitations by knocking on each door. This may feel intimidating, but the best way to get neighbors to engage is by making sure they see you face-to-face as you deliver your invitations.
4. Ask for RSVPs. Ask neighbors to text you with an RSVP, which will both let you know if they are attending and give you an excuse to get their phone number!
5. Tell people how long the party will go. This keeps you from having to host longer than you want. It really is fine to keep things to an hour!

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## *Step 5: Host your party!*

Setting an agenda for the gathering may seem rigid, but it is good to avoid being an overly "chill host." Without structure, people may not connect in a way that promotes neighborliness. Here is a brief agenda you can adapt for your party:

**Gathering Activity - 10 Minutes:** Draw a neighborhood map on a large piece of paper and ask people to write their names and phone numbers next to their homes as they arrive. Let them know that participation is optional and that you will share the contact info with anyone who participates.

**Introduce Yourself - 5 Minutes:** Introduce yourself, and share why this is important to you. Here is an example of how it might sound: "I recently learned that neighborly relationships can help us be safer, healthier, and more connected. I have some questions and activities that will help us get to know each other a little bit."

**Opening Conversation - 15 Minutes:** Ask neighbors to introduce themselves to the group by using questions below:

- What is one interesting or unique thing about your home that other neighbors might not know?
- Why did you move into this neighborhood, and how long have you lived here?

**Discover Abundance - 30 Minutes:** Use the questions below to discover new things about your neighbors:

- What is something you know so well you could teach it to someone?
- What is something you can create on your own?
- What is something that you love to do in your free time?

If your group is larger, do each question in pairs and then invite folks to "brag" about the skills they discover in their neighbors. As folks share, write their answers on a whiteboard, using sticky notes, or on a large piece of paper.

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## *Step 5: Host your party! (continued)*

Once you have everyone's gifts visible, ask your neighbors if they see any connections or themes. If there are any obvious connections, invite neighbors to take action on what they see!

Chill Time - 10-30 Minutes: Invite neighbors to casually mingle for a bit, so they can connect and/or take part in any other activities you have planned.  
Closing - 5 Minutes: At the appointed time, let neighbors know the party is over and tell them you will follow up in the following ways:

- You will send them the contact information list.
- Ask if anyone might be interested in helping host the next gathering.
- Ask if they know neighbors who didn't come but may want to be included.

### Supply List

- Name tags
- A neighborhood map with a square representing each house you invited
- Pens or markers for people to write with
- Written introduction and statement about why this matters to you
- Something to display the neighborhood gifts (Whiteboard, chalkboard, sticky notes, large piece of paper)
- Anything else you need for specific activities you have planned
- A nice gesture after the party is sending each participant a thank-you note. Let them know that you appreciate them for coming and that by participating, they are helping create a safer and happier neighborhood!

**Happy Neighboring!**

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**BLOCK MAP** - In each box write contact information of the neighbors who live in the 8 homes closest to you.

Address:

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Name:

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## RESOURCES AND SERVICES

*Neighborhood Services can provide the following assistance.*

**NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY BOARD** - [cedarhilltx.com/nab](http://cedarhilltx.com/nab)

*These volunteer individuals may be requested to attend and represent the City at neighborhood meetings or events within the City.*

**PRINTING & POSTAGE** - [cedarhilltx.com/printandpost](http://cedarhilltx.com/printandpost)

*Neighborhood Services can assist with printing and mailing out notifications.*

**ANNUAL NEIGHBORHOOD AWARDS** - [cedarhilltx.com/awards](http://cedarhilltx.com/awards)

*Keep in mind, your community engagement efforts may be highlighted for an award nomination.*

**BUILDING ENGAGEMENT** - [cedarhilltx.com/neighborhoods](http://cedarhilltx.com/neighborhoods)

*Check out the Neighborhood Communication Guide and Neighborhood Toolkit to build a more cohesive community.*

**BLOCK PARTY TRAILER** - [cedarhilltx.com/neighborhoods](http://cedarhilltx.com/neighborhoods)

*Reservations are FREE to help you host the best Block Party ever!*

**NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANT** - [cedarhilltx.com/matchinggrant](http://cedarhilltx.com/matchinggrant)

*If applicable, your block party may qualify to apply and receive a matching grant for community engagement.*