

12 STEPS TO CREATING A SUCCESSFUL SMALL SPARKS NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT

You have already taken the first step! You've decided to do something fun in your neighborhood and to involve some new people. Here are some helpful steps for creating a successful project:

1. What do you love to do?

Think of an activity you do for fun or something you love to do or are good at doing.

2. What is a small project you can do in your neighborhood?

Brainstorm with your Small Sparks coach and with your friends to come up with a fun, simple activity that builds on one of your pleasures and will be good for your neighborhood in some way. Look at previous Small Sparks projects to get some ideas. Here are some examples of what we mean:

- * If you like to bike, you could set up a bicycle community treasure hunt or bike rides under the full moon ("Moonlight Madness").
- ★ If you like urban adventure, you could get together with people and create a guide of
- * "21 Cool Things to Do in Our Neighborhood for \$10 or Less".
- If you like to lift weights, you could have a "Work It Out" event where people who don't normally work out together come together to life weights in a prominent place in the neighborhood.
- ★ If you like singing Karaoke, you could have a "Karaoke for Kids" night and raise money for local youth projects.
- If you like to garden, you could get together with people you don't know and sow wildflower seeds throughout the neighborhood.

3. How can this project be really fun and creative?

Brainstorm with your coach and friends to make your project as creative and fun as possible. The purpose of Small Sparks is to get people who don't know each other together. Neighborhood projects that are unusual or fun can bring new people out — people who are curious to get involved in an interesting project even though they're not inclined to attend a neighborhood meeting.

4. Can you think of a jazzy name?

Come up with a clever name for your project. Here are a few examples of names that drew attention to Small Sparks projects:

- ★ "Bite Night" (Vampire movies and a blood drive)
- ★ "Westcrest is for the Birds" (building bird houses for a neighborhood park)
- * "The Wheel Thing" (an initiative to bring together people who use wheelchairs, bicycles, unicycles, skateboards and strollers)

5. How realistic is your project to complete?

Make sure your activity is small enough that you will be able to do it in a couple of weeks. Create something that you can complete and feel good about. Remember to set a specific goal so that you will know when you have succeeded. This goal should be the smallest number that would still satisfy you.

6. Who are you going to involve who you don't already know?

Identify "Pockets of People" in your neighborhood — places where different groups of people hang out. From these, choose at least one group of people that is not already involved in community activities to whom you want to reach out.

7. How are you going to meet them?

Think of someone you know (a family member, friend, or neighbor) who has the respect of this pocket of people. Ask that person go with you and introduce you to the group. Remember: "Meet 'em where they are."

8. How are you going to involve them in your project?

Before you meet with this new group of people or a new individual, or at your first meeting, find out what they enjoy doing. Involve them in your Small Sparks project in a way that they can do what they like. People are more likely to get involved if they end up doing something they enjoy or do well.

9. What are the neighborhood assets you can use?

Brainstorm with your coach the neighborhood assets you can use in your project, like your neighborhood park (a place to hold a celebration) or a neighbor who cooks great ethnic food (for a cultural night perhaps). Remember: Whenever you can, substitute creativity for cash.

10. Who are you going to invite to participate in your project?

Phone your Small Sparks coach and other neighbors and invite them to your Sparking action.

11. Are you having a good time?

Do it! Have fun! Thank everyone who helped and participated!

12. Can you come to a Small Sparks celebration?

We'd love to hear you tell your story!