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House Party Host Packet Frequently Asked Questions

What role do house parties play for OLCV?

House parties are a great way to introduce your network of personal contacts to OLCV's work and help build the OLCV family - neighbor by neighbor, city by city. House parties also provide opportunities for existing OLCV members to become more closely involved with the organization. Finally, house parties give OLCV staff the chance to talk personally to a wide variety of Oregonians, so we can learn what people think of the work we're doing.

Money raised at the your house party will go directly to support OLCV's important work to elect pro-environment candidates to office, lobby the Oregon Legislature on important environmental bills, educate Oregonians on how our elected officials vote on the environment, and hold our elected officials accountable.

What is an OLCV house party like?

The program portion of OLCV house parties lasts about an hour. An OLCV staff or board member will talk about OLCV's work in the Oregon Legislature and the role we play in elections. He or she will describe what OLCV does to help elect pro-environment candidates and how we work in the Legislature, answer questions, and make an appeal for volunteers and donations to support our work.

We ask you, the host, to gather 25-30 people to attend your house party and to raise \$750-\$1,000. The hard part is getting the people there. But if you get 30 people in attendance, we will raise the money. We know from experience with house parties that this goal is reachable if the fundamental steps we've outlined in this packet are taken. To help you meet your attendance goals we will provide you with the know-how and support you need to make your house party a success.

What is my role as a house party host?

As a house party host, you are expected to:

- **Create a list** of friends, family, and neighbors to invite. You'll need to invite three to four times the number of guests you want to attend. To get 25 guests at your party, invite 75-100 people.
- **Choose a location** for the event (i.e., at your home, a friend's home, your office?)
- **Choose a format** for the party (i.e., backyard BBQ, dessert-and-coffee, wine tasting, garden party, general get-together?). Offering simple refreshments is fine!
- **Send out invitations** to potential guests.
- **Very important: Follow up** with the invited guests with a phone call to confirm attendance or answer questions – this is absolutely imperative.
- **Have fun!**

How much money should my House Party raise?

You should strive to get at least 25 people to attend your party, and ensure that they are prepared to make a thoughtful contribution to OLCV. Our fundraising goal is \$750 per house party.

What is a typical agenda for a House Party?

Although your party can truly begin and end whenever you like it to, keep the program portion of it to about an hour. For an evening party, a good schedule is:

- 7:00-7:20 Guests arrive, mingle, and eat/drink.
- 7:20 Host gathers guests to one spot and welcomes them, explains why OLCV is important to them personally, asks guests to introduce themselves (if the group is small), and introduces speaker from OLCV.
- 7:30 Speaker makes presentation, and answers questions.
- 7:45 Speaker and/or Host makes pitch for contributions.
- 8:00 Program ends; party can end at this point if you like, or guests can stay on for continued conversation.

For an afternoon party, you could modify the above schedule by starting the party at 3:00pm and ending the program portion at 4:00pm.



House Party Host Packet

Planning a Successful House Party: Steps to Success

1. Choose a location and date for the party

Choose a place to hold your party. Your home, or that of a friend with lots of room or a nice garden, is usually the best and easiest place, although your office could work too. Pick a date convenient for you and communicate with OLCV's House Party Coordinator to make sure OLCV staff can attend on that date. Contact info for the organizer is at the top of the first page.

2. Set a dollar and guest target for your party

Our goal is to raise \$750 per house party, but feel free to set a higher goal for your party.

You can determine how many people to have at your party by dividing the target \$ goal by the amount your guests are likely to contribute. For example, if you want to raise \$750 and think your guests will give \$20 each on average, you'll need between 35-40 people to attend. Or, you could raise \$1,000 from 25 people if they each gave an average of \$40. Similarly, if your guests gave \$100 each, you would need 10 to attend... and so on.

You can also raise money from invited guests who cannot attend. They can send checks to us with a note so we know to attribute it to your party, or can give online at www.olcv.org/donate.

Don't forget: invite three to four times as many people as you would like to have attend. Also remember that couples usually give just one gift between them.

3. Put together your guest list – 4-5 weeks before the party

The most important part of a successful event is the invitation list. Brainstorm a list of 75-100 people you can invite to your party.

Some sources of names (see an expanded list of sources on the last page of this packet):

- Your own rolodex or address book
- Neighbors
- Parents of your children's friends
- Your holiday card list
- Co-workers
- Family members
- People in your book club or on your sports team
- Members of civic, political, or religious groups to which you belong

Think broadly. People may decide to come because they are interested in OLCV or just because they like you. You may want to ask enthusiastic guests to help you by inviting their friends or preparing food, etc.

4. Prepare and send out your invitations – 4 weeks before the party

Be sure to include vital information about your party, including the address, two ways for guests to RSVP (i.e., your phone number and email address), and a description of the party (i.e., it's a barbecue; it's a dessert party; it's kid-friendly; come taste some of my favorite wines; etc). It's

also important to note that this is a fundraising event for OLCV (see sample invites, beginning next page).

A note on email invitations: We can now prepare a unique, personal webpage for you that you can use in an email invitation or as an email follow-up to a mailed invitation (see sample on the next page). (Your House Party Coordinator can send you a link to a sample webpage, if they haven't already done so.) This includes a way for your guests to RSVP to your party, and to make a donation to OLCV if they cannot attend the party.

But people are still far less likely to respond to an email than a mail invitation. Also, those who say yes to an email invite are far more likely to forget about the event and fail to show up.

So if you do send out e-mail invitations, please note that it is even more important that you follow-up with a phone call (see next step). Another good idea is to insert "Please Reply:" at the start of the subject line of the e-mail invitation.

5. Follow-up phone calls – the most important step!

Generally speaking, about 25% of people who RSVP "yes" to a printed invitation, but do not get a phone call, will not actually make it to the party. And closer to 90% of people who RSVP "yes" to an e-mail invitation and do not get a phone call will end up not making it.

To ensure a good turnout, make follow-up phone calls at least 10 days to two weeks before your party. (See a suggested script for these calls in this packet.) Your guests may have lost your invitation (this is especially true if you have sent e-mail invitations), or forgotten to write the date in their calendars, and will appreciate the reminder. It happens all the time!

Making an additional, second round of reminder calls a couple of nights before your event to everyone who said they would attend will greatly improve your attendance.

The key to a successful party is good planning and good follow through. Don't underestimate the need to confirm your attendees, even if they are good friends.

Remember to remind your guests that this is a fundraiser. People will be much more comfortable with being asked to give money if they know to expect it.

6. Throw the Party!

On the day of the event, have a table near the entrance to hold:

- Donation slips/envelopes
- Volunteer sign-up cards
- Pens
- OLCV literature

(The OLCV representative will bring these materials with them.)

OLCV has a 6-minute video that can be shown at your party if you like. Let the House Party Coordinator know if you'd like the OLCV representative to bring the DVD with them.

After the OLCV representative speaks to your guests, it is very effective if you can tell your guests why you support OLCV, **then ask your guests to make a contribution to OLCV.** If you are uncomfortable making the ask, the OLCV rep can absolutely do that for you.



House Party Host Packet Sample Invitations and Phone Script

Sample e-mail invite

Subject Line: Party Invite! Please reply

Message text:

Come to our spring bash for the environment!

Visit our special webpage for this party: www.olcv.org/alisonandtom

We are throwing a house party for the Oregon League of Conservation Voters (OLCV). These are the folks who since 1972 have helped us elect politicians who vote for clean air, clean water, and a livable future.

We will:

- >> -- drink wine and beer
- >> -- have some appetizers
- >> -- learn about what's at stake for Oregon in the Legislature/upcoming elections
- >> -- enjoy each other's company
- >> -- be asked to donate to OLCV

Please RSVP by September 6th so we'll make enough food (it's not a potluck). Kids are welcome. (In fact, they're part of the reason we're doing this.) Please bring your passion for a better world and your checkbook.

If you cannot come please consider making a donation to OLCV via our special webpage: www.olcv.org/alisonandtom.

Thank You!

Sample print invite

Party for Oregon's environment!

You're invited to my home for a party to support
the Oregon League of Conservation Voters!

OLCV works to elect candidates to office throughout Oregon who care about protecting our air, water, and land, and combating global warming.

Please join me to learn more about what's at stake in the Oregon Legislature/ upcoming elections and how we can help protect Oregon's air, water, land, and combat global warming.

What: Party at my house to support OLCV

When: <Date and beginning and ending time here>

Where: <Your name, address, and directions here>

What to expect: <any details about your party that are important>

Please RSVP to me at <your phone number and e-mail address here>
by <1 week before event>.

Please bring your checkbook and your desire for a better world!

Sample print invite

Dear Friends, (cross out and put in personal name)

You're invited to a gathering at our house to learn more about the Oregon League of Conservation Voters.

We are strong supporters of OLCV's work to elect candidates to office in Oregon who CARE about protecting our air, water, and land. We are making strides in Oregon to reclaim our reputation as environmental leaders. Please come to our party to learn more about what's at stake in the Oregon Legislature/upcoming elections and what we can do to help.

It will be great to see you and share some time and refreshments together.

(We'll be asking for money, too!)

John and Jane Doe

Date

Time

Address...

RSVP Phone Number & E-mail by ____ (date)

Sample print invite

Ready for a change?

Then please come to our house party to benefit the **Oregon League of Conservation Voters**. OLCV is a great organization that uses the political process to protect Oregon's environment.

OLCV is the only group in Oregon focused exclusively on getting pro-environment candidates elected, educating voters on where their elected officials stand on the environment, and holding our elected officials accountable. We're sure you'll agree with us that this is crucial work that needs doing.

Please join us at our party to hear more about OLCV's plans for the Legislative session/upcoming elections, discuss Oregon and its future, and enjoy each other's company.

Date & Time:

Address:

RSVP to (phone/email) by (date)

What to expect:

Please don't forget to bring your
passion for a better world,
and your checkbook!

Sample Phone Script for Reminder Calls

The following is a *sample* phone script to use when you make your reminder calls. Feel free to use your own words.

Make sure that you make your follow-up calls to those who have not RSVP'd at least 10 days to two weeks before your party. This will give them ample time to plan to attend the party. Call those who have RSVP'd in the week before the party. Your guests will appreciate the reminder.

When calling, emphasize that the reason for the party is to introduce them to the Oregon League of Conservation Voters and to raise money for our election work. Please try to talk to each of your invited guests.

Sample Script

“Hi. I am calling to see if you can come to my house for a fundraising party I am having for the Oregon League of Conservation Voters on _____. The party won't be the same without you, can you join us?”

If **YES**, “Great, remember it's on _____ (date/time). I'll see you then. Don't forget to bring your checkbook.”

If **MAYBE**, “I hope that you will come. OLCV is the only conservation group in Oregon working to get pro-environment candidates elected to city, county and state offices. This is extremely important work that no-one else is doing.”

If **NO**, “I'm sorry you can't come. I hope you'll consider making a contribution to OLCV to support their work. If you send a check to me, I'll forward it to them, or you can contribute on our special donation page www.olcv.org/alisonandtom.”

Additional sources of names for your invitation list:

- *Family:* Parents, grandparents, kids, siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and in-laws.
- *Friends:* Your own friends, of course - but don't forget the friends of your significant other.
- *Social Acquaintances:* Old friends you see only on occasion. Friends from college/school. Your teachers and professors. Friends from your old job. The parents of your children's friends. Your babysitter. Your childcare cohorts. Members of your bowling league, volleyball team, pick-up basketball crowd. People you go birding with. Members of your cooking group. Your bridge club or poker buddies. People from night classes, aerobics class, dance class, yoga class, gym. Your housemates, friends from ski weekends, beach trips, surfing trips, camping trips. People in your choir, fellow musicians. Your salsa partner. People you shop with, go caroling with, garden with, vacation with, talk about politics with.
- *Neighbors:* Next door, upstairs, downstairs, down the hall, down the road, across the lane, on the next ranch. People on the block who you always run into when you walk the dog or go to the grocery store. Your tenants' association. Your landlord. Your tenants. Your car pool. Your harvest team.
- *>From Church, Temple, or Mosque:* Your clergyperson, priest, minister, rabbi, or imam. Church activists. Regular attendees. Friends who may be not-so-regular attendees. The people you share holidays with.
- *>From Work or Volunteering:* Teachers, secretaries, teacher's assistants, school colleagues. Former colleagues, partners, clients. People who used to work in the office but recently left. Colleagues from community work or charity work.
- *>From Your Labor Union:* Union leaders and activists. Your business agent. Other union staff. Your co-workers. People from the union at your old job.
- *Members Of:* Your neighborhood/block association. Your political club. Your community group. Your food co-op. Your local peace group. Your PTA. Your community or neighborhood association.
- *Professionals You Know Personally:* Your car mechanic, insurance agent, lawyer, dentist, doctor, chiropractor, pharmacist, barber, hair stylist, broker, butcher, baker, dry cleaner, vendors, and suppliers.
- *People on Lists You've Made In The Past:* People you invited to your last party. Your holiday card list. The program from your last reunion. Your rolodex, home or work. Your personal phone book.