



## *CASA Connections House Parties*

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### ***What is actually involved with holding a CASA Connections House Party?***

It's very important to remember that although this is a fun, social gathering, the ultimate purpose is to raise funds and friends for CASA Sacramento. Your party should last just a couple of hours, with the majority of the time spent with informal socializing. For about 30 minutes we will talk about CASA Sacramento and our community's children and youth in foster care. We want your guests to depart knowing their time was well spent and they've made a difference.

Also, there will be at least two staff or volunteers representing the organization. They will wear name tags, greet people at the door and collect names on a sign-in sheet, help ease the conversation amongst guests, and thank people as they leave at the end of the night.

Here is a sample timeline, for an evening party being held 6:00 – 8:00 pm:

Activity	Start Time	End Time
CASA staff/volunteers arrive	5:00 pm	5:15 pm
CASA staff/volunteers set up registration table and video presentation	5:15 pm	5:45 pm
Guests arrive	6:00 pm	7:00 pm
Guests mingle & snack	6:00 pm	7:00 pm
Guests gather for presentation	7:00 pm	7:05 pm
Host welcomes guests, provides CASA testimonial, introduces CASA	7:05 pm	7:15 pm
CASA shows video, discusses CASA's work and ways to help	7:15 pm	7:25 pm
Host shares personal commitment to CASA and makes ask of guests	7:25 pm	7:30 pm
CASA hands out envelopes and available to take payments	7:30 pm	8:00 pm
Guests mingle & snack	7:30 pm	8:00 pm

#### ***What happens during the presentation?***

The brief presentation will be approximately 15 - 20 minutes long and will consist of:

- You will share your connection to CASA Sacramento and why you think our services are important.
- CASA Sacramento will show a brief 3 minute video and then staff/volunteers will talk about the struggles our community's foster children face, how our services make a difference and a variety of ways your guests can easily help.
- You will finish up by sharing your personal financial commitment to CASA Sacramento and asking your guests to join you in supporting our valuable work well.

#### ***Will I be an effective host?***

The most effective hosts will be:

- Eager to open up your home to your guests.
- Willing to invite your own friends and family to the party.
- At the party, your guests will:
  - Prepared to plan the party from beginning to end.
  - Able to make a donation of your own to the organization.
  - Comfortable asking your own friends and family to make a donation as well.



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#### ***Where can I hold the party?***

Your own home is typically the ideal setting in which to share your passion for the project and show your personal investment in its message. But sometimes that just won't work out, so feel free to be creative. You may choose to meet at your place of employment, schools, community centers, restaurants, and other venues. Just make sure it's a warm, inviting, comfortable space that will fit the number of guests you plan on having. What matters most is the spirit and sense of purpose for the event.

#### ***What should I include in the invitation?***

A good invitation sets the tone for the event. If there is a theme, make sure that is reflected in the invitation. The basics can be covered by answering what, where, when, why, who, how?

- What: CASA Connections House Party
- Where: Your Address
- When: Date/Time
- Why: In one sentence, explain your connection to CASA Sacramento and that you are fund and friend-raising for the agency.
- Who: Make it very clear party benefits CASA Sacramento – you don't want anyone to be surprised. The purpose of a house party isn't to ambush your friends, but to get others excited about our work and raise donations. If you let people know ahead of time you will be asking them for money, people who don't want to be asked will self-select out. It will take the pressure off of you and ensure that you have a receptive audience.
  - Be sure to note that all charitable donations are 100% tax-deductible.
- How:
  - Suggest a minimum donation to attend. We recommend asking for \$50 or more. They would likely spend that much on goods from a home-based business show, but instead this is a tax-deductible contribution which helps better the lives of local foster youth. Guests certainly may attend without making a donation, but please encourage everyone to contribute. Remember, it's a party with a purpose!
  - For guests unable to attend, suggest they still support this cause that is important to you with a direct link to our credit card page as well as an address for checks.

#### ***How many guests should I invite?***

It's safest to assume that a large percentage of invitees will be no-shows, so invite three or four times as many people as you would like to show up. Only about half of those you invite will RSVP "yes. And of those, about 20% won't show up. Therefore, if you want 20 people to come, invite at least 60 people. About 25-30 people will RSVP "yes" but 6-8 of them will be "no shows" leaving you with 17 - 24 guests. One way to boost the show-up rate is to make follow-up phone calls to each of your invitees after the initial invitations have been sent.

To quickly calculate how many guests you should invite, simply divide the number of people you hope will attend by .4 – this is a good starting point.



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#### ***When and how should I send the invitation?***

Be sure to send the invitations out with plenty of lead time - at least 3 to 4 weeks in advance - so folks have time to get it on their calendars.

It is good to send the invitations a few different routes so that people pay attention. Everyone loves mail, and if you have the time and budget to send your invite this way, that's great. It adds a personal touch, which people appreciate and respond to in an age of email.

If you're pressed for time and cash, the cheapest and easiest way to publicize the event is via the internet using a service such as evite and/or Facebook events. This allows people to easily RSVP and invite others to come along. You can do some follow up with email, including extra information that might get people thinking about the cause. Be sure to send out a reminder a week before the event to folks who haven't RSVP'd.

Be sure to follow up with people you don't hear from by the response date. A personal phone call is most effective. Don't hassle people, but if you know them, be sure to let them know that this is something that means a lot to you and you'd like them to come if they can.

#### ***How is money for CASA Sacramento raised at the house parties?***

This will happen in a few different ways:

- On the invitation, you will ask your guests to contribute a minimum suggested donation. We recommend asking for at least \$50. Guests certainly may attend without making a donation, but please encourage everyone to contribute. Remember, it's a party with a purpose!
- On the invitation, you will suggest guests who cannot attend still support this cause that is important to you with a direct link to our credit card page as well as an address for checks.
- You will then make an additional ask after we have a pleasant group conversation about CASA Sacramento and our community's children and youth in foster care. We recommend identifying someone, whether that be yourself or another guest, who will be able to make an additional contribution to start off the giving. CASA staff and/or volunteers will be on hand to accept cash, checks and even credit cards.

Feel free to be creative and come up with other money-making ideas as well. Some suggestions:

- Secure some fun prizes and hold a raffle.
- Combine your party with a home-based sales business (think Tupperware, Pampered Chef, etc.) that incorporates a fundraising component into their business model.

#### ***Will my guests be pressured to give money?***

We will absolutely not pressure anyone to make a donation. We will, however, ask. That's one of the primary purposes we are having an event and our goal is to raise \$1,500. With that being said, raising friends is just as important to us as raising funds.