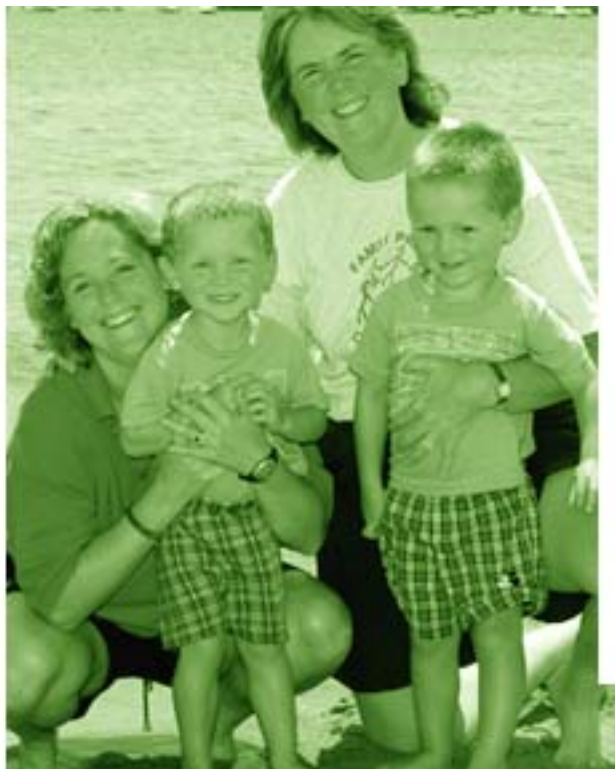


## HOW TO HOST A HOUSE PARTY

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## why host a house party ::

Thank you for your interest in hosting a House Party for Family Pride! The purpose of a House Party is three-fold: to advance the family equality movement, to introduce people to the work of Family Pride, and to financially support the organization.

We've assembled this informational packet to assist you in having a successful party. Please take some time to review it. Once you've chosen the date for the House Party, please let us know; we'd like to be a resource for you and provide as much support as you need. Of course, if any questions come up during your review of the material, just give us a call or send an email, and we'll make sure your concerns are answered.

Please realize that the following information reflects our best thinking based on years of fundraising experience; however, you should always feel free to adapt what's in this handbook to fit the reality of your life and the lives of your friends.

Again, on behalf of Family Pride and the families we serve, thank you.



## getting started ::

Start planning about twelve weeks out. This will give you plenty of time to put together the guest list, determine if the House Party is to gain basic donors or to solicit major donors, select the date, send the invitations, make follow-up calls and get the necessary materials from Family Pride.

### > requesting a house party package

As soon as you know the date of the party, call the Family Pride office at 202.331.5015 and tell us how many people you're expecting. We will send you a house party package, which includes membership forms and information about our upcoming events.

### > creating a guest list

Create a preliminary list without any editing. Brainstorm and write down everyone you know that you think might be care about family equality. After you've created this initial list, take a second pass through according to the criteria listed below. Don't limit your list to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) people or parents—allies can be our strongest supporters.

## > deciding on your target audience

Your House Party will have one of two focuses: gathering basic donor (under \$1,200/year) support or major gifts fundraising (over \$1,200/year).

In order to determine which party is best for you, ask yourself a few questions about each person on your guest list. What is their giving capacity? What is their giving history? What other organizations do they support? Do they have a family of their own, or are they considering having children? What is their relationship to the LGBTQ community? This will help you determine if you classify them as prospective basic donors or major donors.

People tend to give what they are asked to give and not more. If you have several people who are capable of a large gift, and only ask them for \$35, it is difficult to go back to them and ask again.

You may discover that two separate House Parties are in order—one that focuses on basic donors and one that solicits prospects to become major donors.

### > basic donor party

The simplest plan for donations at a basic donor party is to request a donation in the invitation. You can also make an additional pitch for funds during the evening when give your speech.

Basic donor parties are likely to be more casual events, often for the whole family, like barbeques or pool parties. Alternately, they can be adult-focused and formal.

### > major donor party

Major donor parties are usually formal events for adults with cocktail party-like atmospheres.

The process of major donor cultivation almost always takes longer than twelve weeks. Cultivation is essential to the success of a Major Donor house party. The house party will likely be a huge success if, prior to the party, you make sure you have:

- > discussed the work of Family Pride with your potential guests
- > confirmed that they are capable of making a significant gift
- > made sure they believe in the need for family equality
- > told them in advance to bring a checkbook or credit card

In addition to the pre-party preparation of the guests, a major donor House Party's success depends on the "ask." The ask is the part of the evening when everyone is listening to you share the work of Family Pride and then you ask them to contribute. As mentioned above, a major gift is defined as \$1,200 per year and up. Keep reading, as there is a specific example of a House Party speech and "ask" in the next section.



## > setting a goal

Once you've decided on the kind of party you are going to have, set a fundraising goal for yourself and write it down. Focus on raising that amount of money; don't be discouraged if fewer people come than expected—amazing things can happen if you have a tangible goal. During your speech at the party, share your goal with people, so that they can be a part of helping you achieve it for the good of the organization. Remember to aim high.

## > selecting the date

Look for possible conflicts and make sure to check the dates right before and after the desired date, in case the party needs to be rescheduled.

## > sending invitations

Please consider sending out invitations that have some sort of personalization, if nothing more than the guest's name and address written on the envelope and your signature. A handwritten note at the bottom of the invite is a nice touch, too.

Invitations should go out so they arrive four weeks before the party. Sample invitations follow for both basic donor and major donor events. They can be used in whole or in part as you wish, but please be sure to include the following critical elements:

- > Date, time and location of the party
- > The significance of the work Family Pride does and the importance of family equality
- > That it means a great deal to you, *personally*, that your guests attend
- > Attire – it's a courtesy that puts your guests at ease





## > creating an evite

An evite is a free, electronic invitation you personalize and send to your guests via email. We encourage you to send out evites, in addition to physical invitations. Evites are a great way to reach all of your family, friends, and coworkers through e-mail. Using an evite makes monitoring RSVPs easy and you can send out reminder emails via evite to your invitees two weeks before the House Party. Follow these steps to set up your evite:

- > Go to <http://www.evite.com/>
- > On the home page, there will be a box that says “party ideas and planning tools.” In that box, there is a link that reads “View all Party Themes”—click the link.
- > Browse the themes to find one appropriate to your party. We recommend a classy Cocktail Party theme for a more formal House Party.
- > Select a theme by clicking on it.
- > Fill out the “create your invitation form.” Be sure to personalize the message your guests will see in their email!
- > Preview your invitation by clicking “preview” in the bottom right-hand corner of the page. Click the “Back” button.
- > When you are satisfied, click “Send” and the evite will be sent to your guests.
- > **To add more guests** in the future or **to send another message** to your guests, log in to your evite account. In the box on the left side of the evite, click “Invite More People” to send the evite to more guests, or click “Send a Message to Guests” to send an evite message to your invitees.

If you have trouble setting up your evite, feel free to contact us and we’ll help you get started!

## > sample invitation for a basic donor house party

### Family Pride in [Name of State or City]

**Who:** Family Pride's Board of Directors, the [Name of Host(s) or Family(ies)] and Family Pride Executive Director Jennifer Chrisler invite you to join the fight for family equality!

**What:** A gathering for the whole family—complete with kids' activities!

**When:** [Date and time]

**Where:** The home of the [Host(s) and/or Family(ies)] at [Address] in [City, State]

**Why:** In 2005, fifteen pieces of anti-family legislation were filed across the country. Now more than ever, it is vital that we stand up and protect loving families!

A vital part of the fight for **equality, OUT in 50 States, Family Pride's** current campaign, combats misinformation with social science research, credible facts, and LGBTQ parents and their children reaching out to the public about their families.

Please join us and learn how you can help to support the mission of equality for all loving families. Dress is [insert appropriate description]. RSVP by [insert your contact information—email, phone, address—however you want people to RSVP; if you have set up an evite, link to it here].

We look forward to seeing you here!

[your name/partner name/family name]

*Family Pride is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.  
Visit [www.familypride.org](http://www.familypride.org).*

## > sample invitation for a major donor house party

Your Name(s)  
&  
The Family Pride Board of Directors

Cordially Invite You to a Fundraising Reception  
To Support the Work of  
Family Pride

Please join us to learn about Family Pride's mission of achieving equality for all loving families and how you can support them by becoming a major donor.

Date  
Time  
Location

Please respond to:  
Your Name(s)  
Area Code and Phone Number or Email or evite link  
by (Date)

Dress is \_\_\_\_\_

Your timely response is greatly appreciated.

## > doing follow up calls

This is the **single most important thing** you can do to ensure a good turn-out. People may be able to ignore an invitation, but they will respond to a personal call from you! What's most important about the call is that you mirror what's in the invitation: tell your prospective guest that their attendance matters to you, and that it would mean a great deal to you personally if they attended. Be honest with them, and stress that this is a fundraiser. Ask them to have a checkbook or credit card with them. Again, if this is a major donor affair, it is essential that you have cultivated your prospective guests in such a way that they are prepared to make a significant financial contribution. Otherwise, the invitation and follow-up call should be sufficient.



## preparation for the party ::

Plan on having refreshments for the party and structure the party so the speech you give comes at the peak of the attendance. At an evening event from 6:00 – 8:00 PM, that's usually around 7:15 PM. You can tell when most of your guests have arrived and it's always better to begin before any guest leaves.

You may also want to consider that a House Party designed to raise major gifts of \$1,200 or more should be somewhat more formal than one in which you're asking for basic gifts.

## > set up

Remember to plan in advance for the following items:

- > **Kids.** We encourage most major donor events to be adult-only, if possible. It's more common for basic donation events to be for the whole family. Either way, count on some people bringing their children and have some toys or an activity available. It's helpful to have a friend ready to escort the kids to another room just before the speech.
- > **Music and TV.** Should both be turned off during the speech.
- > **Positioning.** Note where the best location is for you to stand when making the presentation, so that the greatest number of people can see and hear you.
- > **Materials.** Have plenty of pens, pledge forms, and writing surfaces conveniently placed around the room. Better yet, ask a few friends to help distribute cards and pens for you during your speech.
- > **Practice.** Give yourself some quiet time before your guests arrive to review your speech and your goals; more important than a perfectly constructed speech is one that comes from the heart.



### > **speech outline**

At the peak of the party, gather everyone together in the pre-determined place, take a deep breath, and smile!

- > Welcome everyone and introduce yourself.
- > Thank those who attended—acknowledge that they could have been elsewhere, yet showed up to support Family Pride and family equality.
- > Outline the plan for the talk:
  - > History of Family Pride
  - > Mission
  - > Accomplishments in 2006
  - > Plan for 2007
  - > How Family Pride impacts you and your family—and all loving families
  - > How each attendee can make a dramatic difference for families by supporting Family Pride
- > Then it's back to the party!

**NOTE:** A member of the Family Pride development team will work with you to write and edit your speech, and can also coach you on public speaking.

### **after the party: thank you notes ::**

Even though every contributor will be acknowledged by Family Pride, nothing beats a hand-written thank you note to each of your contributors. It is considered good form to have the notes sent out within one week of the party.

### **do you have more questions? ::**

Contact our development team at [development@familypride.org](mailto:development@familypride.org) or 202.331.5015. We're always happy to help!

### **thank you! ::**

From our family to yours, thank you for joining the fight for family equality. To learn about more ways to help us secure equality for all loving families, visit [www.familypride.org](http://www.familypride.org).