

The Details

North Miami Block Party
Monday, November 11, 2002
5:00 – 7:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria

Dinner: sandwiches, chips, pasta salad, cake, drinks

Events: Drawings for lots of door prizes, Vendor from Teacher's Delight in Kokomo, Keynote (Cheryl Sigmon spoke on Guided Reading), Grade-level sharing time with teachers

Decorations: Flower arrangements on tables in cafeteria made of ivy with wooden blocks "blooming" (drilled holes in blocks and stuck them on floral wire springing from the ivy), beach balls and cubes hanging from the ceiling (These were some of the door prizes!), door prizes nicely displayed on risers in the cafeteria, banner of the event hanging in the cafeteria

Attendees: Grades K-3 had 138 people; Grades 4-6 had 48; Others were administrators, reading teachers, school counselors, student teachers, and special education teachers.

Countdown to a Successful Block Party!

Six Months Ahead

- Plan a focus speaker or activity that will appeal to a variety of people. (Cheryl was ours!)
- Reserve the date on the school calendar.
- Select a location with plenty of space.

Two-Three Months Ahead

- Order enough door prizes for all people in attendance. (We had paperback books, beach balls/cubes, chartlets, notecards, highlighters, clipboards, stickers, Wikki Stix, pencils, bookmarks, staple removers, pointers, markers, and other useful "teacher things.")
- Form a committee to help with decorations, food, etc.
- Reserve the date, menu, and per-person price with the caterer.
- Arrange for a vendor (teacher store, book store, etc.) to have a booth at the party.

- Plan the schedule for the evening. Include some time for teachers to share with each other at grade levels. Plan time-frame based on the predicted number of participants.

One Month Ahead

- Send out invitations to area schools. (North Miami mailed 106 letters and had 41 schools represented.) Require pre-registration with the cut-off date at least one week before the event. Encourage pre-payment by check or purchase order. (North Miami charged \$12 per person to cover costs.) Send directions to the school. Be sure to include student teachers and administrators in the invitation. Require a phone number or email address from each registrant.
- Notify the corporation/district business office to arrange for the influx of receipts, purchase orders, and personal checks.
- Call the newspaper/media to request coverage of the event. (They invited two—neither showed up! Typical and frustrating!)
- If the Block Party is to be held at the school, arrange to cancel after-school activities that might conflict.
- Arrange for an amplifier system if your crowd is large.

One Week Ahead

- Last-minute preparation and decision-making: door prizes (with plan for distribution), name tags, sign-in sheets, handouts, decorations, signs for the doors and tables, furniture arrangement, and anything else! Also decide who'll be introducing, welcoming, etc.
- Regretfully deny any registrations that arrive after the cut-off date. (This is the hardest part! Be sure that you can comfortably accommodate those you accept, too!)
- Remind the newspapers about your event!

The Evening of the Party

- Appoint someone to take pictures of the party.
- Enjoy!