



House Party Toolkit

Thank you hosting a House Party!

Hosting a House Party is a wonderful way to support Marathon Scholars and introduce us to new friends and potential supporters. This Toolkit will make it easy for you to plan your House Party and reach out to your network. We look forward to helping you plan a successful House Party!

Why Host?

- ★ Demonstrate your support of the promising young Scholars enrolled in our programs.
- ★ Introduce the work of Marathon Scholars to potential new supporters and volunteers.
- ★ Inspire people in your network to invest in young people from under-privileged backgrounds.

How do I get started?

Contact Wendy Patton at 503-235-2500 or wendy@marathonscholars.org to select a date for your House Party. Wendy will work with you to identify your guest list and find volunteers to help you with cooking, set up, clean up, etc. Marathon Scholars Board and staff members will attend your party to greet your guests and sign them in.

Contents

- ★ Checklist that covers everything you'll need to host your House Party.
- ★ Customizable event agenda.
- ★ Frequently Asked Questions.
- ★ Sign-in sheets so guests who want more info about Marathon Scholars can stay informed.
- ★ Suggestions for designing your House Party invitation.
- ★ Sample thank you email.
- ★ Logos and banners for social media postings

House Party Checklist

Getting Started

- ★ Pick a date! Contact Wendy to discuss when you're planning to host your party so we can coordinate and ensure Marathon Scholars Board and staff members can attend to help you.
- ★ Set a location. You can host a party in your home or office. If you can't host at home or at work, consider approaching your favorite restaurant or local community center.
- ★ Decide on the food and beverages you will be serving.
- ★ Decide on any themes or entertainment you would like to include.
- ★ Set a fundraising goal. Consider pledging a matching gift amount. Your guests will be motivated to donate during your party if you announce a goal and that you will be matching their gifts.
- ★ Coordinate the program with staff, including whether to invite a Scholar to speak and who will be making the ask.

4-6 Weeks Out

- ★ Create your invitation list. Keep in mind not everyone on your list will be able to make it. We recommend a guest list 2 to 4 times the number of people you would like to show up.
- ★ If you don't have enough guests to invite, let us know. We keep a list of folks who are interested in attending house parties.
- ★ Send your invites, either by email or USPS mail. We recommend you have a little fun and design your own invitation using eVite. See our Suggestions for Designing your invitation on p. 7.
- ★ In addition to sending invitations, consider posting info about your House Party on your personal Facebook page or creating a Facebook event to invite people you're connected to on Facebook. It's easy and fun to do, and an efficient way to collect RSVPs.
- ★ Start collecting RSVPs!

2 Weeks Out

- ★ Follow-up with anyone on your invitation list who hasn't yet responded. Consider reaching out personally with a phone call or text, in addition to a reminder email (you can adjust settings in your eVite for reminder emails to be sent automatically).
- ★ Encourage guests who can't make your party to consider making a donation through the Marathon Scholars website and provide them a link (<http://marathonscholars.org/donate/>).
- ★ Plan your menu, determine decorations (if any), and create a shopping list.

- ★ Confirm the program with staff, including which board, staff, and Scholars will be attending.

1 Week Out

- ★ Send a reminder email to those who RSVP'd "yes" and let them know how excited you are about your party. Include any special instructions about parking, etc.
- ★ Make sure you have all the supplies and decorations you'll be needing for the party – linens, plates, cutlery, cups, serving trays, flowers, etc.

Day Before the Party

- ★ Get the house ready. Think about how your guests will mingle in your space. Determine seating arrangements, if any. If you're using a theme, set up decorations and props.
- ★ Set up a table for info about Marathon Scholars and donation envelopes. Staff will bring org literature and donation envelopes.
- ★ Print a few copies of the guest sign-in sheet included here. If you don't have a printer let the office know and staff will print these for you.
- ★ Test your music playlist if you've got one! If you're having live music, determine where musicians will perform and do a soundcheck.

The Big Day!

- ★ Finish food and drink preparations and set up any serving stations.
- ★ Greet your guests, introduce them to each other, and introduce them to any Marathon board, staff, and Scholars in attendance.
- ★ When it's time for the program, gather your guests together, share with them why the work of Marathon Scholars is important to you, and remind them of your fundraising goal for the evening and any challenge gifts that will be used to match their donations. Make the ask or introduce the Marathon board or staff member who will be making the ask. Either way, explain to your guests why you support Marathon Scholars
- ★ Make sure your guests sign the sign-in sheets. At the end of the evening, give completed donation envelopes to a Marathon staff member.
- ★ Thank your guests for their support! If there's time, you can tally donations and announce whether you've made your fundraising goal for the evening.

Post Party Activities

- ★ If any guest sign-in sheets or donation envelopes are still at your house, please let Wendy know so she can make arrangements to get them from you.
- ★ Let your guests know how much you appreciate their attending the House Party and supporting Marathon Scholars by sending a personal thank you email or card.

Sample Party Agenda

6:00-6:30	Greet your guests. Ask them to sign in using the sign-in sheet provided here. Give your guests time to socialize. Serve drinks and snacks/appetizers.
6:30-6:35	Formally welcome your guests and remind them that the evening's event is a fundraiser for Marathon Scholars and the opportunity to learn more about the organization's work. Let them know there will be a short presentation in a bit and encourage them to mingle and have fun. If you have special guests (e.g. musicians, a sommelier, a professional chef), now might be a good time to introduce them.
6:35-7:30	More mingling, plus food and drinks. Plus, any additional entertainment, if planned.
7:30-7:45	<p>Ask for your guests' attention and share with them your reason for hosting tonight. Tell a personal story about your connection to Marathon Scholars or your own journey with a supportive mentor or as a first gen college student.</p> <p>Introduce the Marathon speaker/s who will talk about the org's program and impact.</p> <p>After the short program presentation, introduce the person who will be making the ask if it's not yourself. With support from Marathon board and staff, circulate baskets with donation envelopes. Also consider providing a way for your guests to make donations online in the moment.</p> <p>Thank everyone for their attention and their contributions. A Marathon board or staff will then thank the host and all guests.</p>
7:45 on	More fun, including any additional performance or entertainment you have planned.
Wrap up	Add up donations and announce results! Thank everyone again and encourage them to sign in if they haven't already.

Frequently Asked Questions

I'm not familiar with all the programs Marathon Scholars offers. Can I still host?

Of course! We will have board and staff members attend your House Party, and possibly a Scholar, who can talk about our programs and impact, and answer specific questions your guests might have.

What's the best way to promote my House Party so I get a good turnout?

Follow up your invitation with phone call reminders, texts, or emails to let people know how excited you are about the party. Let your friends, neighbors, and colleagues know about your party and why it's important. Post a notice on your Facebook page or make a Facebook event page to promote your party.

What if I don't have a large network of people to invite?

We can work with you on building your guest list, including providing names and contact info for people who've told us they are interested in attending a House Party to support Marathon Scholars.

How can guests make their donations?

We will provide donation envelopes for your guests to fill out at the party. You can also set up a computer open to the donation page on the Marathon Scholars website for guests who want to make their donations securely online while at the party.

For people you invite but who can't make it to your house party, encourage them to make a donation by including the link to the Marathon Scholars donation page in your email communications with them. Here's the link: <http://marathonscholars.org/donate/>

How can I create incentives for my guests to give more?

Consider announcing a matching gift challenge where you match your guests' donations dollar for dollar up to a set amount.

Are my guests going to get tax receipts for their donations?

YES! All gifts made to Marathon Scholars are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. We provide acknowledgement of all gifts made to us.

Email Invitation

Subject: You're invited to a House Party for Marathon Scholars!

Dear [NAME],

Please join me for a House Party to benefit Marathon Scholars, an organization that helps make the dream of college a reality for low-income, first generation college bound students in the Portland area.

[ADD PERSONAL INFORMATION ABOUT WHY THE WORK OF MARATHON SCHOLARS IS IMPORTANT TO YOU]

When: [DATE]

Time: [TIME]

Where: [LOCATION & ADDRESS]

We will be serving food and beverages and enjoy [LIST ANY SPECIAL ACTIVITIES OR PERFORMANCES].

I'm looking forward to sharing with you why I support this wonderful organization. My fundraising goal for the House Party is \$[DOLLAR AMOUNT].

Please RSVP by [DATE]. If you're not able to make it but want to show your support, you can donate securely on line [here](#).

Hope to see you on [DATE]!

[YOUR NAME]



Instructions

Update the information in brackets [] and tweak this template to include specific details about your party, such as whether guests should expect a meal or snacks, any special themes, and any planned activities (e.g. wine tasting) or entertainment.

Consider inserting a Marathon Scholars logo just below your name.

Include a link to the donation page for guests who may not be able to attend your party.

Marathon Scholar logos are provided in the back of this toolkit.

Using Evite

Evite is a free online tool that can help you create an attractive electronic invitation for your House Party, featuring a wide variety of design templates that you can customize with the details of your House Party. You can browse designs and create a free invitation at www.evite.com.

To get started, you'll need to create a free Evite account if you don't have one already. Then search for Charity/Fundraisers to bring up design templates for fundraiser events. Select a design theme that reflects the mood and theme of your house party and customize with your event details. That's all there is to it!

Selecting the Premium Invitation option allows you to create a more customized invitation and include an envelope option. Premium pricing is:

Event up to 15 guests = \$12.99

Event up to 50 guests = \$24.99

Event up to 750 guests = \$49.99

Special features allow you to easily and conveniently track RSVPs and send reminder emails automatically.

You can add your Evite event to your personal Facebook page with a few simple clicks. Go to Guest Options under Step 1 when you are creating your invite, and if you have already sent your invite, Guest Options is located under Manage Invitation and Edit Details. Under Guest Options, check the box to **Allow Guests To Share Event**, which will allow guests to RSVP from Facebook.

Thank You Email

Subject: Thanks for your support of Marathon Scholars!

Dear [NAME],

Thank you for attending my House Party in support of Marathon Scholars.

Thanks to your generous support, we raised a total of \$[DOLLAR AMOUNT].

Your support helps make the college dreams come true for first generation college bound students from under-resourced communities. Your gift ensures access to caring mentors, educational opportunities, college readiness activities, and financial scholarships.

In gratitude,
[YOUR NAME]



Instructions

Update the information in brackets [] and personalize this template to include a memory from your house party.

Consider inserting a Marathon Scholars logo just below your name.

Images



