



POLICE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

National Night Out 2008

The annual National Night Out celebration is the largest anti-crime event in the country. The first National Night Out was introduced early in 1984, with the event culminating on the first Tuesday in August. That first year, 400 communities in 23 states participated in National Night Out. Nationwide, 2.5 million Americans took part in 1984. The seed had been planted. In subsequent years, participation has grown steadily. The 24th Annual National Night Out last August involved 35.2 million people in 11,125 communities from all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities, and military bases worldwide.

Every National Night Out celebration is different, but they all aim to educate residents on crime and violence prevention, bring communities together (including residents of all ages), and generate support for anti-crime programs. National Night Out events also send the message that neighborhoods are organized, and are fighting back against crime.

National Night Out is designed to:

- Heighten crime and drug prevention awareness;
- Generate support for, and participation in, local anti-crime programs;
- Strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships; and
- Send a message to criminals letting them know that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

Along with the traditional display of outdoor lights and front porch vigils, cities, towns and neighborhoods 'celebrate' National Night Out with a variety of events and activities such as: block

The 25th Annual National Night Out (NNO), a unique crime/drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW), has been scheduled for Tuesday, August 5, 2008. On this night, people across the United States will come together to show that they want to keep crime and violence out of their neighborhoods.

parties, cookouts, visits from local police and sheriff departments, parades, exhibits, flashlight walks, contests, and youth programs.

Law enforcement agencies often take the lead in organizing National Night Out celebrations, but anyone can help. Find out if your community is planning for a National Night Out event and, if not, consider having your alumni association organize one, or help assist the local law enforcement agency. Here are a few steps to help plan your event:

■ **Register.** The official 2008 National Night Out registration form is available at <http://www.natw.org/nno/reg.html>.

Simply complete the online form and submit it. (It's free!) Once registered, coordinators receive an organizational kit filled with how-to materials such as: promotional ideas, guidelines, tips, questions and answers, camera-ready art, sample news releases and proclamations.

You will also receive National Night Out "Updates" during the period leading up to the event. Plus, you'll receive information on "Project 365" (a unique component to the National Night Out campaign).

■ **Recruit a group of volunteers to help.** Remember to include volunteers from law enforcement, CPA alumni association members and other local

volunteer groups, local businesses, and Neighborhood Watch groups.

■ **Find a place to hold the event.** Consider a public park, a street, or parking lot that can be closed to traffic — or a local school or church.

■ **Get permits, if necessary.** Find out if any permits are needed to hold your event, and obtain them.

■ **Handouts.** Decide what information you'd like to provide and who should hand it out. Ask local businesses, community groups, and other organizations to hand out educational materials, and prepare your own. It will help if you can estimate how many people will attend.

■ **Police Department booth.** Make sure the local police department has a table at the event to hand out educational brochures and other information. The national Crime Prevention Council (NCPD) has many crime prevention brochures that can be reproduced and distributed at no charge, as well as publications and McGruff products that can be purchased.

■ **Decide what other activities you'd like to have at the event.** Do you want live music? Games for children? One idea could be to have children draw or color a picture dealing with crime prevention, or complete a fun worksheet or puzzle. McGruff coloring and activity sheets are available to download and distribute.

■ **Decide if you want to serve food.** If so, ask a few local businesses to donate or sell items. ❖