

# Oxford House

## Guidelines for an Open House

*Make this fun and not a chore. This is a chance for the whole house to work together, so get everyone involved in some part of it and make sure they attend. It is an opportunity to become a part of your neighborhood and community, to promote Oxford House, to eliminate any neighborhood fears and to share your home and experience with friends, family and recovery family. You can take pride in what you have accomplished.*

*An open House should be held within a few weeks of opening. All Oxford Houses are encouraged to have one in their area during National Recovery Month of September. It is especially important if you are aware of a possible zoning issue.*

### **INVITATIONS**

- Invitations should include What, Where, When (date and time), Who and Why
- Design: Use bold lettering, graphics, colors, and the above information and keep it simple.
  - Add such information as refreshments, special guests and telephone number to RSVP or call for information. You may want to include directions or a little map
  - Time program will be held
  - Mailing Lists: mail at least 2 weeks prior to event.
  - Hand deliver to neighbors (You may want to take either your brochure or the Concepts/Q&A document for people that aren't familiar with Oxford House)
  - Include invitations to treatment counselors, probation, governmental officials and AA/NA groups
  - Be sure you have approval before you list any person or agency on the invitations.

### **FOOD**

- Plan a menu: Could be potluck from other houses, cake and coffee or hors d'oeuvres. Donations Work!
- It is nice to have a sheet cake with "Welcome to \_\_\_\_\_ Oxford House written on it.
- Arrange to have all equipment and serving items on hand the day before.
- Items may include large coffee pot, punch bowl, hot water pot for tea, platters, hot & cold cups, napkins, forks, spoons, creamer and sugar containers.
- Prepare as much of the food as is possible the day before

### **DECORATIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS**

- Plan your food serving area so that it is not congested.
- You may need to remove and rearrange some of the furniture in the food serving area and the area where the program takes place. Remember this is an open house and not everyone needs to be seated. You will want people to mill around and mix.
- It is nice to have a guest book at the door. A spiral notebook is fine, name tags are also helpful.
- Have a table cloth and flowers on the serving table. Balloons on the outside announce “this is the place”
- You may also want directional signs or a welcome sign.

### **PROGRAM**

- Confirm your main guest well in advance. This could be the Mayor or other council member, your county or state drug and alcohol representative or some other outside representative that supports Oxford House.
- Send letter 2 weeks prior to event to confirm. Include time they are to speak and location.
- Select an M.C. usually your house President or Chapter Chair.
- Introduce house members and any other Oxford House Officers i.e.: Chapter State, World Council, and National. You may have them say a few words, but keep the speech part short.
- The most important part of the program is our house members that tells their story are is relates to Oxford House (allow 5 to 10 minutes)
- If you have a large crowd you may want to show the “60 Minutes tape” off and on throughout the day.
- Designate members that will show guest through the house and act as hosts and hostesses.

### **MEDIA**

- Contact your local newspapers. Generally the best results are from the reporter that covers the local new or living section.
- Either by mail, hand deliver or Fax, send them an invitation along with Oxford House Concept/Q&A.
- Don’t limit yourself to just the daily newspaper. Contact the weekly, radio (community service) and/or TV.
- Most media organizations require a follow up a day or two before the event. A reminder is always good to send out.