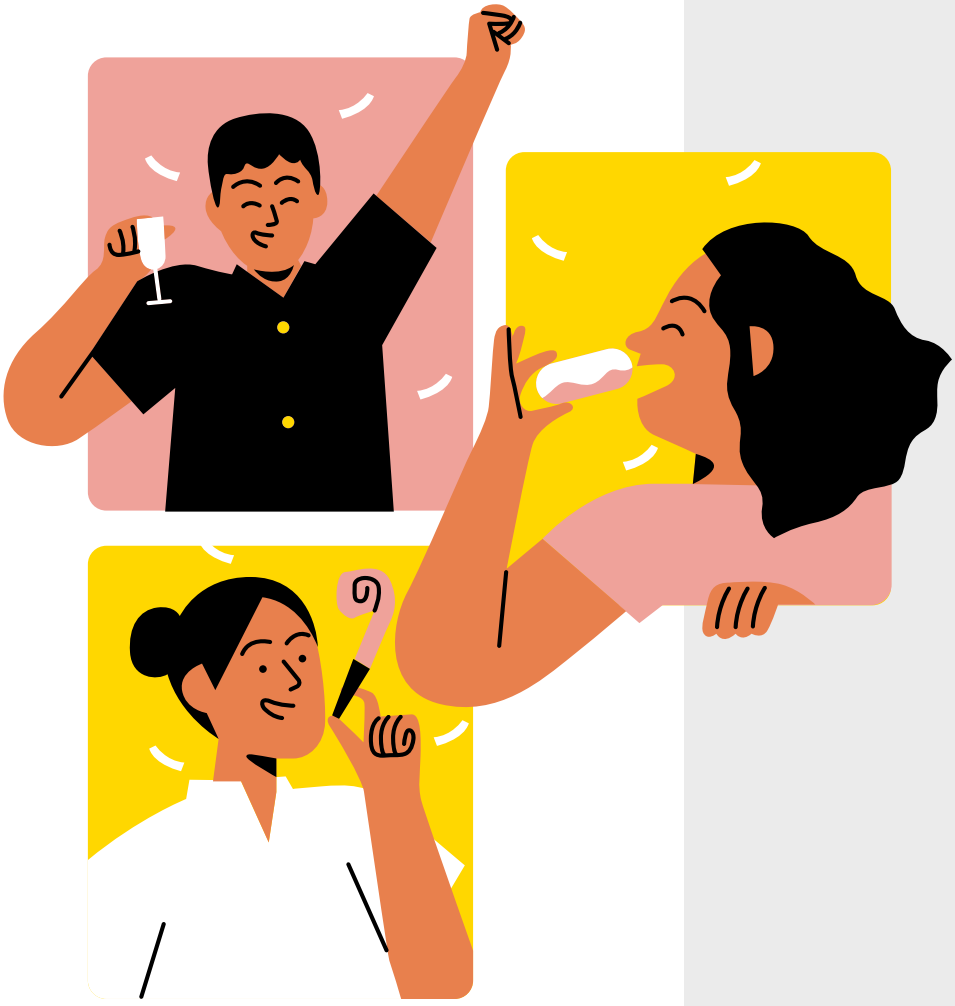
FUNDRAISER PARTY

TOOLKIT



Prepared by Sick Cells. 2026

INTRODUCTION

You can raise money for Sick Cells by throwing a party. Bring together your friends, family, neighbors, or coworkers to eat, drink, and donate. Raising funds for sickle cell disease (SCD) is raising awareness, too.

What is a **Fundraiser Party?**

A fundraiser party, or any type of gathering, is a quick and easy way to raise money and awareness for Sick Cells. It can be at your house, outside at a park...anywhere! Have brunch at your favorite restaurant, a picnic at a park, or coffee at your neighborhood café. Invite folks to attend, tell them why you care about the work Sick Cells is doing in the community, and leave them with an easy way to donate or get involved.

Whatever type of gathering you choose to host, make it unique to you and your guests. You know them better than anyone else, so shape your party to what will best resonate with them.

Where do I **start?**

The first thing you should do once you've decided to host a fundraiser is email info@sickcells.org and **give us a heads up**. It helps to know a little more about your event, the date, and the location. We can help you brainstorm the rest.

Next, **use the tools below to plan your event**. The tools included are:

- FAQ to guide your party planning.
- Party checklist covering everything you need.
- Sample party agenda customizable to your event.
- QR code to Sick Cells online donation page.
- Sign-in sheets so we can follow up with the guests who want to know more.
- Sample email invite for you to personalize.
- Sample thank you email.



FAQs

Q: What kind of party should I host?

A: That's up to you. You know what your friends would enjoy most. Are they sit-down dinner people, or more of a backyard barbecue crowd? A tea party, a church gathering, a park playdate, and a game night all work. Some people host as part of another celebration, like a birthday or anniversary. It doesn't have to be fancy. Light refreshments are great, and the less work you take on as a party planner, the more you can focus on the mission of your event.

Q: I don’t know Sick Cells work inside and out. Should I still host?

A: Absolutely. Use the resources in this toolkit to get familiar, or share them directly with your friends and family. Talk about your own experience with Sick Cells, with sickle cell disease, or with why the cause matters to you.

Remember: the best way to connect with your guests is to share how your own experience connects to the Sick Cells mission and what inspired you to take action.

Q: What’s the best way to promote my event?

A: If you send your invite through an online platform, it will have built-in features that make it easy to communicate with your guests. Evite and Paperless Post both work well. Take advantage of social media to spread the word, and ask each guest to bring a friend or two along. Expand your guest list even further by co-hosting with a friend or colleague. Bonus points if you don't have overlapping social circles.

FAQs Cont.

Q: How should my guests and I make our donations?

A: Great question. We have made it simple for you to collect donations using one or more of these options:

1. Ask your guests to donate online at sickcells.org/donate. We included a QR code in this toolkit. They can donate before the event, after it, or from their phone during the party. Guests who cannot make it can give online as well.
2. Collect cash during your event and donate it online afterward. With this option, your guests will not receive a donation receipt.
3. Guests can also give through Venmo at @sick-cells.
4. For anyone who brings a checkbook, checks should be made out to Sick Cells and mailed to: 2100 Manchester Road, Suite 1040, Wheaton, IL 60187.

Q: Is there a suggested donation amount?

A: Any donation is appreciated. If someone wants a suggested amount, $10 or $100 both go a long way, and every gift goes toward our programs. If a donor seems inclined, ask them to make it monthly. Recurring gifts are what let a small organization plan ahead.

Q: Can you send a speaker to my event?

A: You can be your own speaker. Share your story and your connection to Sick Cells. If you would like, we will mail you a packet with information about Sick Cells, background on sickle cell disease, and printed materials for your guests.

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

A: Anyone who gives online or through a Facebook fundraiser receives a receipt automatically. Cash you collect and pass along does not generate receipts for the individual people who gave it, so if receipts matter to your group, point them to the donation link instead. For gifts made directly to Sick Cells, we send an acknowledgment.

Event Ideas

Not the party hosting type? You can still get creative. Raising funds is also a way to raise awareness about SCD.

Here are some event ideas for fundraisers:

Community Stroll
A walk is a lot to plan. A stroll is not. Gather friends, have each pick an amount to donate, and walk a park together.

BAKE SALE
Bake some goods. Find a location, like a library, college campus, park district, job, church. Sell them for a cause.

MOVIE NIGHT
Instead of a party, host a movie night. This is a great option for the introvert type.

Gamer Tournament
Gather your fellow gamers. Host a virtual meet up online to game together. Ask them to donate to play.

BLOCK PARTY
Work with your local town to host a block party. Raise funds through games, music, ticket sales, etc.

CHURCH DAY
Ask your church if you can choose a day to donate to Sick Cells. You can even host an event there.

PAINT NIGHT
Gather some friends. Each picks an amount to donate. Paint together. Add another layer by raffling the paintings to friends and family.

BBQ
Instead of just a party, why not host a cookout?! Your friends can donate an amount for a plate of food or even to attend.

SPORTS GAME
Host a local sports game (basketball, football, soccer, bocce ball, etc). Ask your friends to donate to join the game.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN EVENT

There are many ways to gather people and raise money for a cause. Bowling, fishing, gamer nights, cake walk, music concert, any event that you are comfortable with is a great way to get the word out.

Event **Start to Finish Checklist**

4 - 6 WEEKS OUT

- [ ] Decide on your location, date and time. If you can't have the party at your home, consider local businesses or community centers that might be willing to host.
- [ ] Set a fundraising goal. People will be more motivated to donate during your party if the finish line is in sight, and they can help you cross it. Your goal can be anything small or large. We suggest a goal of $100-$500 per event.
- [ ] Email info@sickcells.org with the date, location, and a few details about your event. We will mail you materials, and we would love to feature your event on our socials.
- [ ] Create your invite list. Not everyone will be able to make it, so invite more people than you need.
- [ ] Send your invites out. Email, Facebook, e-vite, or mailed invites all work great. Go with what's easiest for you and your guests.

2 WEEKS OUT

- [ ] Plan your menu and create your shopping list. You are welcome to hire caterers, but a simple setup with fruit, cheese, and crackers works just as well. Sometimes less is best.
- [ ] Follow up with anyone who hasn't responded yet. A quick phone call or text to check in is a nice touch. If it turns out they can't make it, ask if they'd be willing to donate anyway and send them a link to the Sick Cells donation page.
- [ ] Confirm your packet of supplies arrived from Sick Cells. If it hasn't, email info@sickcells.org.

Event **Start to Finish Checklist** Cont.

1 WEEK OUT

- [ ] Do the shopping for any food, drinks, serving supplies, and décor you may need.
- [ ] Send an update to your confirmed guests on where to park, and how to find you if you are meeting up at a park or restaurant.

THE BIG DAY

- [ ] Prepare your space, food, and drinks, don't forget to make space for people to mingle and sit.
- [ ] Greet your guests with a smile, and have fun!
- [ ] Help us collect your guests' information. Ask them to add their name and email to the sign in sheet so they can receive updates and stay connected with us.
- [ ] Guests can donate online, through Venmo, or by check. If you collect cash, you can send it to us afterward.

POST PARTY OR POST EVENT

- [ ] Send a personalized thank you to your guests. Sick Cells can provide you with branded, blank notecards if you'd like to use those.
- [ ] Let us know how it went! Email us with any information you learned from your guests, your total amount raised and all the exciting details. We want to celebrate with you!
- [ ] If you received cash donations, donate the value of what you collected online at sickcells.org/donate. Send checks to: Sick Cells, 2100 Manchester Rd, Suite 1040, Wheaton, IL 60187

Sample **Party Agenda**

6:00-6:30PM	Greet your guests and ask them to sign in using the sign in sheet provided in this packet. Give your guests time to socialize over drinks.
6:30-6:40PM	Briefly welcome your guests and remind them that the evening's event is a fundraiser for Sick Cells. Let them know you'll be sharing more in a bit, and encourage them to get to know one another and have fun!
6:40-7:15PM	More mingling, plus food or appetizers. Now's the time for a quick icebreaker, introductions, or game if that's your style.
7:15-7:45PM	Grab your guests' attention and share with them your reasons for hosting an event to raise money and awareness for Sick Cells. A personal story about your connection to the cause, focusing on one or two of the issues most important to you, is a really great way to get started. Finally, ask your guests to donate. They can take out their phones for Venmo, payment online, or write checks. You can hand out a collection basket. Make sure they know it's not required but that it's very much appreciated.
7:45PM and on	Have a great time bonding over your shared passion for elevating the voices of the SCD community.

Communication Templates

Email Invitation Template

Tweak this template to include a few specific details about your party! You can also just send a group text too!

New Message

To

Subject You're Invited: House Party in Support of Sick Cells

Dear (Name)
Please join me for a party to raise money for Sick Cells. September is Sickle Cell Awareness Month. Sick Cells is a national SCD advocacy nonprofit. The organization elevates the voices of the sickle cell disease community and focuses on eliminating stigma tied to the disease. [INSERT YOUR CONNECTION TO SICK CELLS].

When: (Month, Day, Year and Time)
Where: (Your address and directions to the event)

Refreshments will be served. Dress casual.

You can donate now at sickcells.org/donate. You'll also have the option to contribute to Sick Cells at the party by making a check, cash, or online donation.

Please RSVP by (month, day). If you are unable to make it but would like to show your support, donate online at sickcells.org/donate.

See you there!
(Your name)

SEND

Communication Templates Cont.

Email Post Event Thank You Template

New Message

To

Subject Thank you for supporting Sick Cells

Dear [Name],

Thank you for coming out in support of Sick Cells. Together we raised $[amount], and every dollar goes toward making sure people living with sickle cell disease are heard where the decisions about their care get made.

A few of you asked how to stay involved, so here are a few ways:
Sign up for the Sick Cells newsletter at sickcells.org for treatment news, policy updates, and stories from the community.

Follow Sick Cells on social media @sickcells and share what you see. Awareness is a real contribution.

Consider becoming a monthly donor. Recurring gifts are what let a small organization plan ahead.

Thank you again for being part of this.

[Your name]

SEND

Sign In Sheet

Sign up to stay connected with Sick Cells for events and updates

Name	Email	Phone	Notes

Event name and date: _____ Host: _____

Make a **Donation** to Sick Cells

Scan Me

Or find us on Venmo

@Sick-Cells

Other ways to **Get Involved**

Sign up for our **Newsletter**

Follow us on **Social Media**

@sickcells