

SUGGESTED FIRST STEPS

MAKE FRIENDS

- ✓ **Create a Core Group:** In the early stages, most of the work of establishing a park group is done by a handful of dedicated people. These can be people you already know, or people you find through your first general interest meeting. This group should meet often and regularly to do the real organizing, then report on their progress to—and get feedback from—the general membership.
- ✓ **Hold a General Interest Meeting:** In order to find people who care about the park (either before or after creating a preliminary core group) schedule a meeting in a public place, invite everyone you know, post flyers all over your neighborhood, and announce the meeting any other way you can think of. Use the meeting as an open forum to discuss the park and what people want done there.
- ✓ **Keep on Recruiting:** Take every opportunity to bring more people into both the general and the core group. There is power in numbers.

SET YOUR GOALS

- ✓ **Decide as a Group:** Decide together what “helping the park” means. If you set the goals all by yourself, you might leave out something that is important to someone else, and you’ll lose their support in working to achieve them.
- ✓ **Be Realistic:** You can’t completely renovate your playground next week, but you can host a clean up as a first step. Start small and build, otherwise you’ll get frustrated and burn out.
- ✓ **Be Specific:** If you clearly define your mission it will be easier to convince others to help you because they’ll know exactly what you’re about.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

- ✓ **Contact Important People:** Make sure to let everyone know about your group—your city councilmember, your block association, your local police precinct, the deli across the street. Before people can help you, they have to know who you are.
- ✓ **Meet the Parks Department:** From the very beginning, you should be in close contact with your Outreach Coordinator, and with the Supervisor and Manager responsible for your park. They are there to help you help the park.
- ✓ **Host a Visible Event:** As soon as you can, host an event in the park (a clean up, a family picnic, a nature walk, even just a sunset-viewing gathering). Advertise everywhere. Make sure to have a table at the event for recruiting new members and talking about the group. Holding a visible event gives you legitimacy and attention.
- ✓ **Network:** Everybody knows somebody who can help you, whether it’s a lawyer who will help you fill out IRS forms, an artist who will design posters for you, or an old friend of your City Councilmember. Different people have different skills and connections, and you need them all.