



Common Change: *pooling money with people you know, to share with people you care about*

Generosity Dinner: Host Tips

What it's all about

Generosity Dinners are opportunities for interested individuals to gather in a comfortable and personable “home” environment, share a meal, and participate in a giving experiment. Generosity Dinners introduce individuals to the Common Change model, demonstrating in a hands-on way how giving groups work, and exploring the underlying principles of collaborative giving.

Values

1. Relationships > Transactions. Maintain the primacy of relational connection in all giving and seek to dismantle the power dynamics entrenched in cross-socioeconomic resource sharing.
2. Abundance > Scarcity. Demonstrate an economy of enough in an economic context that has modelled scarcity, disparity and unjust distribution of wealth. Start with what we have between us.
3. People > Projects. Give in ways that always maintain the dignity of those receiving, honoring their privacy and personhood.
4. Collaboration > Isolation. Honor and value all contributions and the wisdom of the group - whether money, expertise, experience, time, connections, opportunities, or suggestions.

Get Ready

Here are some things you'll need to decide before inviting guests:

Whether it's a potluck or a wine & cheese evening or coffee and desserts, people LOVE to gather around food. Find a venue that can accommodate your guests comfortably – this could be your home or a local coffeeshop. Your Generosity Dinner can be as big or small as you'd like. Decide what's manageable. In order to facilitate healthy discussion but keep the process moving, we recommend 10-12 guests.

- Date and time
- Type of meal
- What should guests bring
- Are kids welcome to participate and how will you keep them engaged

Invite your Guests

Think of people in your life who have expressed an interest in collaborative giving, who are looking for creative ways to share their resources, or who you think would be open to experimenting with you. There are many ways to invite guests to a Generosity Dinner – call them up, ask them the next time you see them at the gym, drop them an email or create a Facebook event.

Here's what you could put in an invitation:

You are invited to join us for a meal and experiment in collaborative giving! We'll share a meal, pool resources, and collectively explore different ways we can support and draw alongside people, projects or passions in our lives that could do with a little “awesome”.

Each guest will contribute a one-time donation into a group pot and as we eat together we'll come up with ideas of how to share these resources with people that we know could use it.

When: Sunday April 26th, 6:00pm

What: Potluck Dinner. Please bring a dish to share.

Where: [Insert Address]

Donate: Click here to find out more about the [Highway Community Generosity Dinners](#). Click Register and Donate and select [Insert Host Name] from the dropdown menu.



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By the end of the evening you'll have met and chatted with friends, had a fantastic meal AND shared much-needed resources with someone you know - giving them a generous gift of love.

Take a look at this video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ7dF5F38ms>) to see what Generosity meals are all about!

Prepping your Guests

We advise that you send guests an email one week before your dinner, inviting them to start thinking about needs to present:

One of the most amazing aspects of collaborative giving is that it changes the way we react to other peoples' needs. Instead of ignoring or shying away from needs for lack of resources, we get to proactively look for and respond to the needs around us, because we know that we have resources to meet them.

Guests will each contribute to a dinner fund and present opportunities of people, passions or projects which could use a little help. Leading up to the meal, start looking around you for needs you might bring to the table. Think about your co-workers, community members, family, friends or neighbors. To get the juices flowing, here is a small sampling of some needs Common Change groups have met recently.

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- *Tattoo removal for a young person trying to turn their life around and get a steady job*
- *Juicer for a friend struggling with cancer and on a restricted diet*
- *Helping a neighbor with car repairs and mortgage as she changed jobs and tried to support her daughter*
- *Childcare for family while Dad, the primary caregiver, was ill*
- *Bus trip for friend to travel home to see dying mother*
- *PTSD Service Dog training for a young woman*
- *Walker for homeless friend*
- *A new bed for an elderly couple sleeping on the floor*

We encourage you to browse through the Common Change blog for other ideas. In particular check out our 25 #BeTheChange ideas: <https://www.commonchange.com/blog/2014/05/22/one-group-many-needs/>.



Generosity Meal Discussion Helps

You'll hear lots of great ideas during the course of the night. While you may not be able to put funds toward each request, try to honor each person making a request by exploring alternative ways the need could be met. Try to limit the discussion around each idea, to allow time for all to share.

Questions and short discussions around each request are encouraged; try to come up with at least one actionable suggestion, resource, connection or idea which can support the requester in their concern, even if the group chooses not to help financially. Ask questions to learn more.

Learn about the relationship that has brought the need to a person's attention. Requests should be on behalf of an individual, family, a passion or project the requester is connected to.

How long have you known this individual? What is the nature of your relationship?

Get as specific as you can. It is easier to identify with (and respond to) specific needs.

A neighbor's car is having trouble: Do they need a tune-up, brakes replaced, new tires, a new car, a rental or loaner while it's in for repairs? Drill down to discover how best the funds could help.

Break big needs down into more manageable requests. Sometimes large needs can feel overwhelming to us. The purpose of this dinner is to help a small group of people make a significant impact, even if they're unable to eliminate a problem entirely.

A friend is undergoing chemotherapy and facing massive medical bills. In all reality, this dinner fund is not going to make a dent in the costs. ... Are their specific dietary requirements we could help out with? Could we pay for prescription medication? Does the recipient need childcare while in treatment?

What other resources besides money does the group collectively have available? Think about the collective resources, physical goods, knowledge, expertise, and personal and professional networks the group can tap into. What other support does the person-in-need have?

A family lost everything they own in a fire. Are there household goods we have sitting idle? Could one of us invest a couple of hours to help by scouring Craigslist and Freecycle to replace items on a list? Could one of us make a personal introduction to someone who can help further/give advice, etc?

Explore what other options the group might have to meet the need without spending money, thus making dinner funds go farther.

A colleague was involved in a car accident. Could we pay for repairs, lend a second car, get rid of the car sitting in the garage that we only use once a month, explore car-share options, connect the person to our mechanic friend who is trust-worthy and will give a good price, etc?

Don't be surprised by emotion. The ideas and situations that you'll be discussing are complex and challenging: people may respond with strong feelings, or strong opinions. Make room for people to grow through this process.



Decision-making

The actual decision-making process can be the hardest part of hosting a generosity dinner. We have found that after well-structured and engaging group discussion there is often a clear and natural group consensus as to how best the funds can be met. Here are a couple of ways to structure decision-making:

1. Following the group discussion, reflect back what you have heard and take the lead on suggesting how you hear the group leaning.
2. Take the decision (vote) online. Common Change will send a simple follow up email with a link to vote a few days after your dinner. Common Change will keep the survey open for 48-72 hours and have guests weigh-in

Social Media

If you're a Twitter-er, follow Common Change at @4CommonChange and use #GenerosityDinner

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CommonChange>

End Notes

Dinner Prep

- Pencil and paper at place setting
- Make a beautiful place
- Pick a scribe: make a tweet-sized note on each request presented

Dinner Conversation

- Framework at beginning: roadmap
 - Ground rules: whole table conversations (cross table talk); 5 min pitch; grace for the hearts of others
 - Freedom and ease: let folks pick the time of their pitch. Freedom to pass.
- Jumpstart
 - Asset Discovery Question
 - One word check in

Main event

- Be Mindful of time and who is or is not talking
- Max couple questions, move on
- This is a gateway event--opening the door to deeper engagement

Closing

- Make sure collect everyone's preferred email