

Watch Party Overview

The Situation

Make the case for the importance of debates and why we should ask the candidates about their positions on cancer. It's also important for people to watch the election results and understand what impact the next president may have on cancer. During your party, be sure to have people write letters to the editor about their thoughts on the debate or the election results and send them in!

Making Cancer a National Priority

Share facts about cancer and why it needs to be a national priority. Hand out copies of the candidates' cancer plans.

What the LAF is Doing

The LAF is trying to inform voters about where the candidates stand on cancer.

Most Important

Have fun! This isn't designed to be something difficult; it's no harder than getting friends and family together to watch the debate or watch the election results. Hand out some facts about cancer, build the LIVESTRONG Army and have a good time while doing it.

Your Help— Hosting a Watch Party

A powerful tool for effecting policy change is ensuring that candidates for elected office are ready to make cancer a priority. By hosting a Watch Party, you're making it easy for people who care about cancer to get a better idea of where the candidates stand on this important issue.

The Watch Party Toolbox

This Watch Party Toolbox includes everything you need to host a successful Watch Party. It includes:

- Getting Started—a Sample Planning Timeline
- Watch Party Sample Invitation
- Watch Party Sample Agenda
- Watch Party Checklist
- Watch Party Sign-in Sheet
- Cancer Fact Sheet
- Tips on how to write an effective letter to the editor
- Candidates' Plans for Cancer (available on www.voteyellow.org)

The LAF also is available to answer any questions you have as you plan your Watch Party. Please call us at (512) 279-8362. **Most of all, *thank you* for spreading the Vote Yellow message.**

Getting Started: A Sample Planning Timeline

Planning an event can be easy. You will need to think about things like who to invite, what to do to make it fun and what materials you'll need. This planning timeline can serve as a guide for you as you plan your event.

Three weeks ahead

1. **Choose the date, time and location.** The event doesn't have to be long unless you want it to be. Of course, make sure the date and time are convenient for you, but also consider community or school-related events and holidays. Check those dates before finalizing your date.
2. **Make your invitation list.** Because you want the event to have lots of energy and reach lots of people with your message about cancer, invite more people than you normally would. Generally, about a third to half of the people you invite will actually come, so getting 15 people to your party means inviting 30–45. Consider these tips for building your invitation list:
 - Select people who will care about this issue.
 - Consider co-hosting with a friend or colleague to expand the pool of people to invite.
 - Family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, members of your place of worship, your book club, softball team and car pool members are all fair game!

Two and a half weeks ahead

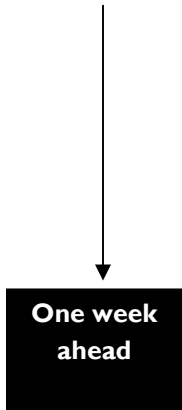
3. **Consider inviting a special VIP guest or speaker.** This can be a great draw for people to attend the event. It could be a supportive community leader, business owner, explorer or person who has survived cancer and has a great story to tell. If you ask someone to make remarks, be sure to tell them to limit them to five or 10 minutes. Make sure your special guest has information ahead of time about your event and about the fight against cancer generally.

Two weeks ahead

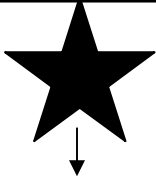
4. **Create and send invitations.** You can be creative with your invitations—the personal touch is best. Send electronic invitations if that works better for you. Keep your invitation simple, very brief and fun in spirit. Send one to your special guest as well.

Ten days ahead

5. **Conduct a walk-through of the space where the event will be held.** This will help you anticipate any logistical challenges that need to be addressed.



Two days ahead



Within a week afterward

6. **Make follow-up phone calls.** The key to a successful turnout for your event is largely dependent on persistent personal contact from you, the host. A personal follow-up call will help get your guest's attention and get them to commit to coming to your Watch Party. Call your special guest as well.
7. **Plan your refreshments.** Refreshments can be as simple as soda and chips or as elaborate as gourmet finger sandwiches—whatever is easiest and most fun for you.
8. **Get supporting material.** You can use information from the LAF or use your own to educate people about cancer and the issues you are seeking to address.
9. **Confirm with your special guest.** Find out if there is anything they'll need if they are going to be speaking.
10. **Make reminder calls.** Make sure your guests remember to attend by giving them a reminder call. This is an essential step—don't skip it!
11. **Show time!** Have a great time at your event and be sure to thank people for coming and caring. Use a sign-in sheet to track who attends your event so you can invite them to participate in other important events in the future.
12. **Report back to the LAF about your event.** This helps us know more about what is happening in local communities and how we can best support you in the future.
13. **Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!** Thank your guests for giving their time, talent, effort and connections to advance the survivorship movement.

Watch Party Sample Invitation

Your invitation, like your Watch Party, should reflect your personality and style. It doesn't have to be fancy, and it should be as clean and simple as you can make it. Here's one example.

Erin Brochovich found eyewitnesses.

Rosa Parks sat in the front of the bus.

***You** can follow in their footsteps. And you won't be alone ...*

Join me in the spirit of these activists and truth-seekers for some fun, fellowship and politics!

Like you, I think it's time that cancer became a national priority. As we gear up for the 2008 Election, it's the perfect time to find out what the presidential candidates have to say about how they'll take action on cancer if they are elected.

Come to my Watch Party and find out more about the candidates' positions on cancer by watching the Presidential Debate or Election Night Results.

There will be great food, great spirits and pen and paper for following up to make our voices heard.

Date

Time

Location

Directions

RSVP by x date
your phone number

Watch Party Sample Agenda

A Watch Party is easy and should reflect your personality and style. The important thing is to maintain a feeling of fun and get people talking about the candidates' positions on cancer. This sample agenda may give you ideas on how to keep the action moving at your Watch Party:

Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)

People will probably arrive at various times, but within the first 15 minutes, create a chance for people to introduce themselves to each other and get acquainted. Circulate the sign-in sheet.

Why we're here: (5 minutes)

Take a few moments to brief people about the situation facing cancer survivors.

- See: Cancer Fact Sheet

Putting a Human Face on Cancer (15 minutes)

Everyone at your Watch Party will probably have a personal story about their connection with cancer. Give people time to share their stories. Brainstorm together about how things could change if cancer were a national priority.

Why Watch the Debates or Election Results? (5 minutes)

These debates put cancer in the national spotlight and signal to the candidates that we are a serious voting constituency that will hold them accountable for their positions on cancer issues. We have come together to use our voices, our pens, a bit of our time and we will make a difference.

While we're taking action under these critical circumstances today, we are building for our future as committed grassroots advocates.

Take Action—Write a Letter (*Optional*; 30 minutes)

If you have the time and inclination, a letter to the editor of your local paper can help keep the cancer issue alive in the media after the debates and the election.

- Provide a short overview of how to write an effective letter and provide a sample.
- Start writing! Have music playing and make it festive; circulate with a basket of yummy treats or a refill on beverages while people write.

Thanks and Celebration (For as long as you want.)

Thank your guests. Let your guests know that this is one of many Watch Parties taking place across the state, and they are part of an exciting grassroots campaign. Make sure they have all signed the sign-in sheet before they leave. Celebrate!

Watch Party Checklist

This checklist will help you organize everything you'll need for the day of your Watch Party:

- ❑ Pens and paper
- ❑ Sign-in Sheet (included in this Toolbox) and sign-in table or clipboard
- ❑ Copies of Cancer Fact Sheet (included in this Toolbox)
- ❑ Refreshments
- ❑ Napkins, cups, utensils
- ❑ Name tags and markers
- ❑ Lots of thank yous for your guests!

Watch Party Sign-In Sheet

Thank you for coming to my Watch Party!

Please take a moment to sign in. Even if I already have your information, please fill in all the columns. Signing in helps me report to the LAF about how this Watch Party went. Your name will only be used for follow-up thank yous!

Your Name	Your Mailing Address	Your Phone Number	Your Email Address	Check here if you want to be kept up-to-date on future grassroots advocacy activities!

House Party Host: _____ Date: _____

Cancer Fact Sheet

There are more than 12 million million cancer survivors living in the United States today. This number has more than tripled in the past 30 years. The number of survivors will grow as the population ages and progress against cancer continues.

Incidence and mortality

1.4 million Americans are expected to be diagnosed with cancer this year.

560,000 Americans are expected to die from cancer this year, or more than 1,500 per day.

Nearly 1 in 2 men and 1 in 3 women will develop cancer during their lifetime.

Within the next decade, cancer is likely to replace heart disease as the leading cause of death in the U.S. It is already the biggest killer of those under the age of 85.

Today 65 percent of adults diagnosed with cancer will be alive five years after diagnosis, up from 50 percent in the 1970s.

African-American men and women have the highest mortality rates for all cancer sites combined.

While dramatic survival improvement has been achieved in patients diagnosed with cancer at age 15 or younger and steady improvement has been made against a number of cancers common among those over age 40, little or no progress has been seen in the adolescent and young adult population. In fact, among those aged 25 to 35 years, survival has not improved in more than two decades.

Cancer costs and insurance coverage

The overall cost for cancer last year was \$206 billion, which includes \$78 billion for medical bills, \$18 billion for lost productivity from the illness and \$110 billion due to lost productivity from premature death.

17 percent of Americans younger than age 65 have no health insurance coverage and 24 percent of Americans age 65 or older have only Medicare.

Source: American Cancer Society

TIPS FOR WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An underused resource in grassroots advocacy is the local media. Letters to the editor can be powerful vehicles for influencing or inspiring public debate, making the case for your issue or responding to related events. In addition, decision-makers often read the opinion pages of their local paper because it gives them an idea of what members of their community think. The trick is to write a letter that the editors find compelling enough to print. Use these tips to write a letter that is more likely to be published.

1. **Know the rules.** Do your homework about how to submit a letter and what information you need to include in order to get published. Usually this information is printed on the opinion page of the newspaper itself.
2. **Capitalize on current events.** Find ways to tie stories in the news with your issue. Open your letter with a reference to the recent event, and then quickly build a logical bridge to your issue. Cancer issues cut across topics such as health insurance, employment, health care delivery, community support, education, faith and leadership. These and other angles can help illustrate survivorship in your community's current developments.
3. **Keep it brief.** Most letters to the editor should be less than 250 words. Edit your letter aggressively.
4. **Paint a personal picture.** All grassroots strategies rely on personal stories to convey larger issues. Touch both the minds and hearts of the reader by giving both the broader facts about cancer and your personal cancer experience. Share *your* story!
5. **Be clear.** This may seem obvious, but a surprising number of letters that don't get published just plain don't make sense. Avoid jargon, use common vocabulary and let a few friends or colleagues review the letter for you before you send it.
6. **Use word cues to underscore your point.** For instance, preface your major conclusion with "The important thing is ..." If you have research that makes your case, preface the facts with "Research proves that ..."
7. **Don't overlook neighborhood weeklies and smaller papers.** Often these publications have more room for letters, and community papers have very large readerships.
8. **Include a call-to-action or solution.** If you are illustrating a need or making a case for a specific action, include a line about what people can do to help.
9. **Don't be afraid to toot your own horn.** If you or your organization is involved in work that addresses the issue, include that in your letter.
10. **Be passionate, but not poisonous.** There is a difference between fire in the belly and righteous indignation. Avoid sarcasm, and if you're angry, cool off a bit before sending a final version.
11. **Consider the online editorial page.** Some papers will accept letters to the editor online and some even print additional letters in their online publications.
12. **Don't stop once you're published.** Use your printed letter to the editor to further educate others. Send a copy of your letter to people who want to learn about what you are seeking to change. Friends, family, book club members, support group members, physicians and healthcare professionals with whom you've worked, and the decision-makers themselves, are good places to start.