



ABOUT: This popular and successful Women’s Forum event brings together a multigenerational cross section of Duke women in an informal setting in their “neighborhood” – close to where they work or live. Alumnae hosts open their homes and provide light refreshments at no cost to attendees. While DAA does not reimburse hosts for expenses incurred at their event, there are several alternative formats to reduce event costs. Alumnae may share host responsibilities, host a potluck event, or host the event at a local restaurant or bar with each attendee paying for their own refreshments.

RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLISTS

CO-CHAIR(S)



COFFEE CHAIR(S)

Coordinate with co-chair(s) to determine ideal dates for coffees and target neighborhoods

5 months before

Contact hosts to explain responsibilities and determine the following: date and time, capacity, address, extra directions as needed (i.e. enter using the side door)

4 months before

Edit and approve invite to be emailed to all area alumnae

30 days before



Reach out to steering committee, past hosts, and past coffee attendees to identify hosts

4 months before

Complete the online DAA event information form

45 days before

Obtain parked report from regional director to monitor registration

30 days before

If desired, work with DAA to obtain email lists of Duke women for personal outreach. A sample message is included in this guide.

30 days before

Attend and/or identify a steering committee member to attend each coffee. Steering committee representatives should:

- Arrive 30 minutes early to assist the host and stay after to help clean up
- Use sign-in sheet mailed to each host and ensure guests are listed on the sheet

Day of

Send Duke a list of attendees

1-3 days after



Share attendee list with coffee hosts

1 week before

Email thank you note to host

1 day after

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Host or identify a host

4 months before

Attend at least one coffee

Day of



Reach out to personal network to boost attendance

30 days before

HOST(S)

The major responsibility of the host is to offer their home and to provide light refreshments at their own expense to attending alumnae. While DAA does not reimburse hosts for expenses, you may choose to hold a potluck style event to reduce costs.

Work with coffee chair(s) to determine the date of your event and provide capacity, address and directions

**4 months
before**

As desired, help with targeted/personalized invitations to Duke women in your area. Sample letter included in this guide

**3 weeks
before**

Encourage guests to complete the nametags sent to your home with their name, class year and degree. Enjoy the connections and conversations with fellow alumnae!

Day of



Make arrangements to provide refreshments to attendees

**3 weeks
before**

Confirm that you have received a box of Duke swag mailed to your home

**2-3 days
before**

Send a thank you email to your guests

**1-3 days
after**

DAA TEAM

Coordinate with co-chairs and coffee chair regarding coffee dates (regional director and alumnae director)

**5 months
before**

Build registration page and email (operations coordinator)

**30 days
before**

Send Duke swag to hosts (staff specialist)

**1 week
before**



Receive and review event information form (regional director)

**45 days
before**

Share parked report with coffee chair for tracking registration (regional director)

**30 days
before**

Send thank you gift to hosts (alumnae director and staff specialist)

**After all coffees
are completed**

OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD CONVERSATIONS IDEAS

House Course: House courses are hosted by an alumna with knowledge of a particular topic. The alumna presents an informal class on a topic in their field. Past events include: Navigating College Admissions Today, Traveling to France, and How to Buy Your First Home.

Restaurant Night: This is a great way to bring alumnae together at local restaurants in your area for a night of conversation and wonderful food! Volunteer organizers make reservations for 8-10 people at local restaurants. Alumnae are then invited to sign up for the restaurant of their choice. Each alumna covers the cost of her meal.

FAQs

What time of day are the events held? It varies. Women working traditional hours enjoy nighttime events (around 6:30pm) while many mothers, retired women, and women who work non-traditional hours enjoy attending morning events (around 10am).

How do I accurately predict attendance? Events typically have a 10% to 20% cancellation and no-show rate due to work and family commitments. As the host address is only provided to alumnae after they register, unexpected guests are rare.

Will DAA reimburse me for expenses incurred at my Neighborhood Conversation? No. Neighborhood Conversations are hosted by alumnae who provide refreshments at their own expense. However, there are several alternative formats to reduce costs including sharing host responsibilities, hosting a potluck event, or hosting the event at a local restaurant or bar with each attendee paying for their own refreshments.

How much do attendees pay? Thanks to generous hosts, Neighborhood Conversations held in the homes of alumnae are complimentary.

What happens at the event? DAA will send nametags for all attendees to fill with their name, class and degree when they enter the home of the host. From there, attendees will mix and mingle with other guests. An important part of each event is to have the host provide a welcome and ask all attendees to introduce themselves and share their class year and degree.

How can I boost attendance at my event? DAA staff can provide you with a list of alumnae in your neighborhood for personal outreach. Additionally, some regions have put together a host committee to encourage attendance.

SAMPLE LETTERS

Sample Coffee Host Request:

Good Morning,

We are preparing for another round of our successful Women's Forum "Neighborhood Conversations." The goal of these events is to encourage Duke affiliated women in our community to meet fellow alumnae, professional colleagues and school parents. We want to provide a forum for getting to know one another, staying updated on Duke, offering feedback to the university and strengthening ties to Duke by deepening our relationships locally.

Given your past participation and enthusiasm, would you be interested in hosting an event? If not, do you know another Duke woman in the area who may host? The dates we are targeting are XXXX. Hosts are responsible for providing refreshments (wine, coffee or cocktails) and light appetizers.

Please respond by XXXX to confirm if you are interested in hosting, and identify a date, time, address, and preferred contact information.

Thank you all in advance for your consideration and for helping us to stay connected. We look forward to solidifying the hosts and locations as soon as possible. Please reach out if you have any questions.

Forever Duke,

XXXX

Neighborhood Conversations Co-Chair

Sample Personal Outreach Email:

Dear Fellow Duke Alumnae,

Greetings! You are invited to come, kick back and connect with fellow alumnae in your area. The Duke Women's Forum is excited to host a Neighborhood Conversation in the XXX area. The event will be held on Thursday, October 27th at 7 pm at my home in XXXX. Come and enjoy the opportunity to meet classmates, neighbors, co-workers and other friends who share our Duke affiliation over a glass of wine or other beverages and light refreshments. All alumnae are invited to attend.

Looking forward to meeting you! Please RSVP here. Registration is free. The exact address will be emailed to you upon registration. See you soon.

Forever Duke,

XXXXX

Duke Chicago Women's Forum

Neighborhood Conversations Co-Chair