“Neighborhood Coffees” are informal events that bring together groups of women from the Duke community close to where they work or live. These events have been frequent and successful in almost all cities where Women’s Forums have existed. Some locations may host luncheons rather than coffees.

1) **Local Women’s Forum chair/steering committee identifies date range and specific neighborhoods for Coffees** at least six weeks ahead of time. They should proactively find out from their regional Duke Club about any other Duke events occurring in their region during that period so as not to conflict with them.

2) **Identify Potential Hostesses.**
   - Neighborhood Coffees may be held in private homes or in public locations like restaurants (if in a public place, a private room is highly recommended unless the event is to be happy-hour style). Experience shows that most alumnae prefer to go to a private home for a Neighborhood Coffee, but that young alumnae will also attend at a restaurant or bar.
   - The local chair/steering committee should identify potential hostesses in the specified neighborhoods who have homes that will accommodate the expected group either inside or outside (depending on the season).
   - A hostess having a Coffee in her home may elect to provide all the food and drink herself, or attendees could be asked to bring assigned food or drink, or the Steering Committee could identify co-hostesses from that neighborhood who will pitch in for the food and drink.
   - The amount of food and drink varies widely from group to group – some will have simply cake, cookies and soft drinks, all the way up to a fully catered gourmet dinner with wine! Most fall somewhere in the middle, with a few plates of appetizers or finger foods, some veggies and dip, cheese & crackers, soft drinks, wine and coffee/tea. Coffees being held in restaurants can lend themselves to either everyone paying for their own food or the hostesses purchasing platters of finger foods for everyone to share. Attendees usually pay for their own drinks.
   - Seek out and publicize “co-hosts” from varying class years professional schools and affinity groups in order to send the message that all alumnae will feel welcome. Co-hosts are also helpful to market the Coffee to their local Duke friends.

3) **Have the hostess in each “neighborhood” choose a date within the identified date range.**
   Note that you need not plan any programming for the Coffee, which is intended to be an opportunity for people simply to get to know one another. However, many successful Coffees have included some time to go around the room for each person to introduce herself (whether with detail or simply class year) and/or a discussion on a single topic such as “What would today’s you advise the you who was a freshman at Duke?” or “What is your best memory of Duke?” (not a political or topical discussion).

4) **Get your Coffee events on the official Duke calendar and coordinate with DAA to send e-mail invites with information about coffee.** Note that some hosts will not want their home addresses published online, in which case you should list the Coffee’s location as “the home of Jane Smith in Durham” and then provide responders with the specific address after they RSVP. Local Forum leaders should make a list of the zip codes to be included in each “neighborhood” and send these to DAA to send email invitations to all Duke women in the relevant zip codes. Include in the email information about ALL of the Coffees in your region in order to give people a choice of which to attend. In some regions, local leaders have DAA send them the entire mailing list organized by zip code so that they or the hosts can follow up the mass invitation by emailing only their “neighborhood” residents to publicize that neighborhood’s coffee and personally invite each alumna to attend.
5) **Create an easy way for alumnae to RSVP.** Provide a link to register/RSPV online in the e-mail invitation. If the host wants RSVP’s to go to her provide that information as well.

6) **Post all of the Coffees’ details** to the Regional Duke website and/or Duke Women’s Forum Facebook/LinkedIn/social media groups.

7) **Send a reminder to those who RSVP’d** two days before the Coffee.

8) **Keep a sign-in sheet** at each Coffee and assign different people to stand by the door to ensure everyone signs in. After the Coffee, provide DAA with the names of those who attended, which is important for tracking and improving alumnae engagement. Provide to the Women’s Forum chair as well.

9) **Send a thank-you email** to all attendees including encouragement for them to host a Coffee in the future. Chairs/steering committees should personally thank each host the morning after the Coffees either by phone or email.

**Timeline:**

- 6 weeks out - Set date range and neighborhoods for coffees
- 5 weeks out – identify hostesses and locations
- 4 weeks out – pick specific dates and begin publicity; send information to DAA to set-up