



CHAPTER START-UP KIT

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Hi!

Thank you so much for your interest and enthusiasm in starting a Birthday Project chapter in your area. Many people find that celebrating their own Birthday Project as a part of a group is more impactful and fun than doing it on their own. Chapter members encourage each other, share ideas and help one another celebrate – plus, it's a great way to meet some really awesome people who want to use their birthdays and other milestones as a catalyst to make the world a better place!

Organizing a group can be hugely rewarding but it does take thought and effort. This Start-Up Kit is meant to make that job a little easier. However, there is no right way to do it. Do what is right for your group. Kindness (and creativity!) know no boundaries.

To connect with other people in Birthday Project Chapters worldwide, join the conversation on [The Birthday Project Facebook Page](#). Once you have decided to start a Chapter, you will need to take this quick, [ten-question survey](#) about your Chapter. To see a list of other Birthday Project Chapters, check out "Find a Group/Chapter" tab on the website.

Please keep me posted. I am very excited to hear how and what your Chapter is doing. Write to me on the [Facebook Page](#) or email me at thebirthdayproject@aol.com.

Thanks for helping me change the world, one birthday at a time!

Warmly,
Robyn Bomar
Founder, The Birthday Project

Tips and Suggestions

If you are the Chapter Organizer, congratulations! That work takes thought, effort and commitment, but will be very rewarding for you and for your group. Here are some tips for organizing and leading an effective Chapter.

First Things First.

- * Any number of members can make this an effective group but ideally the more, the merrier. The best way to get started is to record members' birthdays on a master calendar. Consider other important dates as well (anniversaries, holidays, children's birthdays and other dates that hold special meaning for each member of the group). The Chapter Organizer can be in charge of the main calendar or you can set up a [Google Calendar](#) online for everyone to access and view.

- * Decide how/when/where you'll meet. Will you have a set meeting time at someone's home or a local coffee shop weekly or monthly? Will you only get together to help celebrate each other's birthdays? After looking at the calendar you may decide to fill in the months with no birthdays or special events and plan a day to get together and just spread some kindness.

- * Consider meeting at least once prior to actually celebrating anyone's birthdays so everyone can get to know one another a little bit.

Be a Good Chapter Organizer

- * It is the role of the Chapter organizer to emphasize the philosophy and mission of The Birthday Project. Chapter membership requires commitment by each person to honor other members in the style that they choose to celebrate their birthdays. Some people want to demonstrate kindness by reading to children in a hospital while others would rather stand on the corner handing out dollar bills to passersby. There is no "typical" way to celebrate a Birthday Project and the members of each Chapter need to support and honor each other's unique perspectives and wishes regardless of their own personal style.

- * Be ready with ideas but also be willing to allow the members of the group to share and take responsibility for their own Birthday Projects. Don't feel like you have to run the show.... in fact, think of your role as more of a Facilitator.
- * Show up. As the organizer, your presence is needed at as many Chapter gatherings as possible, even when you don't feel like it (and let's face it, participating in intentional acts of kindness is so fun, you'll probably be glad you did!)
- * Communication is key. Please keep us posted on what your Chapter is up to by posting photos and updates to the [Facebook Page](#) at least occasionally. People are inspired by inspiring people (and it helps us know what's going on so we can direct and advise other Chapters on what is – and is not – working for the various groups). Don't be shy about letting us know what your group is up to!

Make Everyone Feel Welcome

- * Be the first to arrive. Newer, shyer members tend to show up promptly or even early. Make them feel welcome and give them a positive first impression.
- * Be aware that although your Chapter members may have a heart for serving others, they may not necessarily be the most outgoing or extroverted types. Your group will inevitably have many different personality types so be mindful and support each person in their own style of giving.
- * Introduce everyone. Give plenty of time for people to introduce themselves to the other members of the group. Keep the discussion flowing, encourage everyone to have a voice and remain open and friendly to everyone.
- * Get people talking. Invite people to share why they are there; what is it about The Birthday Project that inspires them? Ask who has already celebrated their birthday or other special event in the style of The Birthday Project. Ask them to share some of their personal experiences. These are opportunities to grow the energy of the group by giving everyone the chance to share what they are personally passionate about.

- * Before each Birthday Project celebration, it's a good idea to remind everyone of how people often react to unexpected kindness. It is common for people to be leery or seem unappreciative but do not let that deter you from blessing as many people as you can. Feel free to let recipients know that it is your (or someone else's) birthday and this is how you are choosing to celebrate. If people still reject your offer to assist or give them a gift, a warm smile and a kind word will suffice as you honor their wishes.

- * Please use the name of The Birthday Project and the website address liberally. Directing people to the website will help them learn more about what you are doing and our mission to change the world, one birthday at a time. There are places on the website where people can register their giving and receiving experiences and it just may be someone YOU show some kindness to that shares how meaningful your gesture was.

- * The media LOVES stories of kindness and generosity so be prepared to be interviewed at some point by your local news channel or paper. Again, this is an awesome opportunity to tell people about The Birthday Project so that they can either join your chapter or be inspired to start their own. Please be sure to email us links/copies of any interviews...we'd LOVE to see!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How often should we meet?

The more often a group meets, the more quickly people will get comfortable with each other. However, people have a limited amount of time and if belonging to a Birthday Project Chapter begins to feel like another in a long line of “obligations”, it defeats the purpose of what you are doing in the first place. Take the temperature of your group. At a minimum, there should probably be an opportunity to get together for some acts of intentional kindness at least once every six weeks.

Why belong to a Birthday Project Chapter?

You can have a very successful, enjoyable Birthday Project on your own, but joining a Chapter offers lots of advantages:

- * **Structure and Accountability** – Having a scheduled time to focus on something outside of ourselves makes it more likely we’ll do it, and it won’t slip to the bottom of the list in the midst of our busy lives. Sharing the experience with others not only makes it more enjoyable, it serves the dual purpose of being kind to others while being kind to ourselves by providing a social outlet with some pretty cool people.
- * **New Perspectives and Ideas** – When we think by ourselves for too long our thoughts become stale. A group of people reveals new insight by providing fresh perspective, creativity, personal experiences, and encouragement.
- * **Support** – In our world today, it can be easy for people to question how much they matter, what they really have to offer others, and how to make a lasting impact on the world around them. In addition, life is not always filled with happy moments. When trials and trouble come, it is important to have a group of people who can help us find a way to bring some good of it all as well as serve and support us when we need it.
- * **Something Fun and Different** – Research shows that the more we do for others, the happier we feel. Although most people truly do have a desire to help their fellow man and contribute to making the world a better place, the busyness of life often gets in the way. Having specific dates set on the calendar not only carve out time to focus on others but also make us more cognizant of the opportunities that present themselves in our day-to-day lives. You can pretty much bet the people who want to join a Birthday Project Chapter are going to be kind, fun, creative, lovable people (you know, kind of like YOU!).

What Should We Do When We Meet?

There are truly no rules...do what is right for your Chapter! Many Chapters choose to meet only to celebrate the Birthday Projects of its members. Some groups decide to meet monthly, in between scheduled events to do some acts of intentional kindness in honor of a holiday. Others meet to brainstorm creative ideas for giving, share personal experiences since the last Birthday Project event and help plan future events. Some even choose to read a book about kindness and generosity and meet to discuss it.

Whether your Chapter consists of neighbors, playgroup moms & friends, retirees, classmates, coworkers, Sunday school/small church group members, or complete strangers (or a combination of all the above!), the common desire to use your birthdays as a catalyst to give back to your local community makes the world a better place!

Anything Else We Should Know?

While kindness knows no boundaries, it is imperative to remember to be respectful, smart and safe when dealing with others. Be mindful of the laws in your area. For example, it is illegal to feed parking meters in some cities. If you decide to ignore this law (or any others) in the name of kindness and civility, you do so at your own risk. (A law abiding way to avoid trouble is to tuck some money with an encouraging note inside an already existing parking citation!) When in doubt about the laws in your area, ask!

By being an active participant in The Birthday Project, individually or as part of a local Chapter, you and the members of your group are agreeing that participation in any event or activity may include actions or tasks that could be dangerous. Participants/members of The Birthday Project Chapters assume any and all risk of harm or injury which might occur due to their participation in the event or activity. No participant will hold The Birthday Project liable for any costs and damages which might arise from participation in any event or activity. Minors must have parental/guardian consent to participate in any Birthday Project event.

How to Start a Group

Your chapter will be listed on the webpage and we will be happy to help promote it on the Facebook page as well. However, you will definitely want to create an online presence to get the word out about your group. There are many ways to let people in your area know you are organizing a Chapter. Below are links to some of the most simple and effective ways to do that. It is important to make it as easy as possible for people to sign up, get information, RSVP, communicate with each other and spread the word/invite others.

[Meetup](#) (recommended)

[Google Groups](#)

[Facebook Group](#)

[Facebook Event](#)

Regardless of how you choose to promote your Chapter, please be sure to include "The Birthday Project" somewhere in your name. For example, you may be "The Birthday Project – Your City" or "The Birthday Project – Your City, North" (to distinguish your group if there is already a Chapter in your area).

Enter information, topics, keywords that describe your Chapter. This will help people find your group, so add as many relevant terms and specifics as apply. Be sure to include the words "Birthday Project" to your list of topics and keywords so that people who are specifically looking for a Birthday Project Chapter in the area can easily find you.

Email us at thebirthdayproject@aol.com if you'd like us to send you a high-resolution file of the Birthday Project logo to use on your site.

You may decide to find official sponsors for your Chapter. Among other things, official sponsors pay money to support your group, provide a place for you to meet or supply items, coupons, or gift cards to give to others during your Birthday Project events. Of course you should free to add The Birthday Project as an honorary sponsor as well!

**** Try to schedule your first meeting and get it on the calendar now. Chapters get rolling faster when they have a date to plan for and look forward to. ****

Congratulations on starting your very own Birthday Project Chapter! Have fun and keep in touch!