



PRESS RELEASE

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This summer, Vanessa Elias urges Americans to do something to combat our country's loneliness, social isolation, divisiveness, and the youth mental health crisis – organize a block party (it's easier than you think).

Every neighborhood, the United States of America, June 30, 2023 – As we head into the Fourth of July holiday weekend, Vanessa Elias releases a free Block Party USA Guide to help you organize a block party in your neighborhood this summer.

From inviting neighbors the old-fashioned way by dropping off flyers to each home, to encouraging neighbors to bring a favorite dish from their family table, the Block Party USA guide takes the guesswork out of organizing a fun and unpretentious event.

“Keep it simple!” Vanessa says. “No expensive venue. No decorations or favors. No elaborate menu. Nothing staged for social media consumption. Block parties are about putting away phones, meeting and enjoying neighbors, and fostering more free play for children.”

Block parties have many benefits.

- **Block parties encourage free play for children.** An abundance of free play can make children happier, better problem-solvers, and more energized to pursue learning and develop deep interests.
- **The United States is lonely. Block parties offer social connectedness.** A [recent national survey of American adults by the Harvard Graduate School of Education](#) found that 36% of respondents reported feeling lonely “frequently” or “almost all the time or all the time.” To address our nation’s epidemic of loneliness, the U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek H. Murthy, released [The Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community](#).
- **After block parties, you may see an uptick in teenagers being hired by their neighbors – a win-win!** Babysitting, pet sitting, watering plants, mowing lawns, raking leaves, shoveling snow. Part-time paid work helps teenagers build agency and confidence.
- **Block parties can cultivate a culture of showing up for one another in countless ways.** After their block party, a Connecticut resident shared that a neighborhood child decorates everyone’s mailbox for holidays, and a family with a generator offers charging in their house during power outages.
- **When we get together face-to-face, we realize that we have more in common than we are different.** Block parties all across the country are proof that neighbors may vote differently and they may disagree on many issues, but you can still laugh together and offer a helping hand.

In 2018, Vanessa launched Big Block Party Weekend in her hometown of Wilton, Connecticut with the mission of “building community one block at a time.” The inaugural weekend brought together more than 1,200 residents for approximately 40 block parties. The joy and benefits could be felt immediately and continue to grow. Wilton’s block parties are now a beloved annual tradition.

“I founded Block Party USA as an easy way to achieve connection, civility, and community – and especially to foster free play for kids, which is proven to reduce anxiety and boost their independence,” Vanessa shared. “Neighbor talking to neighbor, away from devices and enjoying face-to-face time. I believe gathering for a block party just once a year can have a profound ripple effect.”

Join the Block Party USA movement. Be a well-being catalyst!

You can download the Block Party USA Guide for free at [BlockPartyUSA.org](#).

About Block Party USA

Vanessa Elias founded Block Party USA as a cure for our country’s loneliness, social isolation, divisiveness, and the youth mental health crisis. Her block party movement is featured as a powerful tool for positive change in [Jennifer Wallace’s Never Enough: When Achievement Culture Becomes Toxic—And What We Can Do About It](#). To learn more about block party benefits, how to organize a block party (it’s easier than you think), and join Vanessa for regular Zoom calls to connect about the joy and importance of block parties, visit [BlockPartyUSA.org](#).

About Vanessa Elias

Vanessa Elias is a mental health activist, certified parent coach, speaker, and writer featured on NPR, PBS, and in the WSJ. She is the founder of [Thrive with a Guide, LLC](#) and serves as a group facilitator for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) as well as a board member of NAMI Southwest CT. Block Party USA is her passion project. Vanessa helps parents achieve healthier family relationships and lasting, meaningful connections. To learn more about Vanessa and her work, visit [Thrive with a Guide](#).

Free Block Party USA Guide

Please see attached or visit [BlockPartyUSA.org](#).

Contact

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