

TO: Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes Volunteer Coordinator
FROM: Cathy Finck, Interim Project Director
RE: Ideas, suggestions, and tips for soliciting neighborhood support



Congratulations and thank-you for taking the first step in helping to make your neighborhood safe for youth AND safe for all residents!

Your role is important and I want to support you. **Feel free to contact me at your convenience at safehomes@CUDTF.org or 404-223-9812.** I am happy to answer questions and offer support.

There are 4 simple yet important steps to fulfilling your role:

1. Become familiar with all materials in the Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes folder
2. Distribute Safe Homes information and Agreement to all residents in your neighborhood
3. Collect signed Safe Homes Agreements from neighborhood residents annually
4. Keep a record of all Safe Homes Agreements collected from residents

Begin by reviewing the [helpful tips for each step](#) listed below, and share any thoughts/ideas you have that I may pass along to others.

1. Become familiar with all materials in the folder –

- *You'll find many answers for questions you may be asked by neighbors, included in these materials.*
- *If you want to learn more, visit www.CUDTF.org – there's lots of good stuff there. You will also find a Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes page where you can download additional copies of any materials. You and others can also register to receive 3 electronic newsletters annually on this website too; including issue updates, safety tips and reports from the field.*

2. Distribute Safe Homes information and Agreement to all residents in your neighborhood – There are many ways to do this. [Make sure to insert your name and contact information on the Safe Homes Agreement form before distributing.](#)

- *If your neighborhood has an email directory for all residents and you would like to distribute information electronically, we have posted all materials on our website. Select materials you choose to forward to residents – see comments below for suggestions.*
- *If you will be distributing printed copies, you are free to duplicate any materials. I suggest however that often less is more. At a minimum, residents will need a copy of the Safe Homes Agreement and the FAQ sheet. Distribute selected materials with a personal "Dear Neighbor" note to include a brief introduction, the telephone number for the police department or precinct that serves your neighborhood (if you do not know or can't find it, call me) and your contact information with some instructions for returning the tear off section of the signed Agreement to you.*
- *If your neighborhood publishes a newsletter, consider using some of the information in the folder for a series of newsletter articles. Feel free to be creative and/or contact me for assistance, I can help you prepare any additional materials/articles you may want/need. Information offered in small doses and with some repetition over time, is often the most effective method for eliciting the kind of buy-in from all residents we're looking for.*

- *If your neighborhood publishes/distributes a directory of residents, you may consider recognizing Safe Homes participating residents by putting an * by their name in the directory each year – but you will need to let neighbors know you plan to do so. Or you may want to publish a list of participating residents, in a neighborhood newsletter, or poster on neighborhood property perhaps. These may be good strategies; using positive peer pressure so that more residents will want to send you their signed Safe Homes Agreement ☺ AND families may appreciate the public acknowledgement and/as it might help them be more comfortable and encourage informal networking ☺. **Note:** it's the public agreement to follow the Safe Homes principles and steps that makes this project work!*
3. **Collect signed Safe Homes Agreements from neighborhood residents annually** – Your neighborhood may be eligible for community recognition and be declared a “Safe Neighborhood” should you collect a significant number of signed Safe Homes Agreements.
- *It is important for you to receive Agreements that are completed, signed and dated. Asking residents to send back an email with “I agree” will not provide the same level of commitment, so please – no shortcuts here.*
 - *Select and include a date/time/location for returning signed Agreements when you distribute Safe Homes materials to residents. I suggest a limited timeframe for distributing and collecting – if you let residents return Agreements “whenever”, “whenever” never comes. If your neighborhood has a deadline and system for collecting association dues, you may want to consider piggy-backing on that process.*
 - *Expect to send reminders – residents may need clever “encouragement” to get signed Agreements back to you, be creative here! Engage other neighborhood volunteers; set and advertise a date for your Safe Homes crew to go door-to-door, recognize or give prizes for streets that have the most residents with returned Agreements in by a certain date. Be persistent, but make it fun!*
 - *If you get pushback from some resistant residents, let me know AND keep your association board informed - together we might be able to come up with some ideas for removing resistance barriers.*
4. **Keep a record of all Safe Homes Agreements collected from residents** – Your neighborhood has agreed to report the total number of residents in your neighborhood and the total number of Safe Homes participants each year. You will need to keep copies of all signed Safe Homes Agreements collected.
- *Simply create a folder or safe place for them so they don't get lost/misplaced, and you know where to put them as they come in to you.*
 - *You may choose to create a database of Safe Homes resident participants to help you manage – this would be particularly useful if your neighborhood chooses to publish a list of those residents participating, but it's certainly not required.*
 - *You will need to decide if/how/who will know the residents who have returned signed Safe Homes Agreements – consider sharing the list of names with neighbors in some of the ways mentioned above, but check with your neighborhood association board to get their support first.*

It has been my intention for this to be brief (not so very – huh?), yet helpful (I sure hope so). Please let me know if you have suggestions/ideas for improving it, and any other materials in the Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes folder. Do not hesitate to contact me with questions, comments, and/or for any assistance – Cobb Safe Neighborhoods/Safe Homes will work because of YOU!

Thank you so much for volunteering.