



Guide for Hosts

The Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey is pleased to announce the debut of a new nationwide fundraiser—**Talk About It! @ Dinner**. The information included in this document is designed to provide hosts with all the tools you need to have a successful fundraising dinner party.

What is Talk About It! @ Dinner?

Throughout the year, Epilepsy Foundation national and affiliate staff, board members, and friends of the Epilepsy Foundation across the country will host “at-home” dinner parties to raise awareness and money for the Epilepsy Foundation and its mission. **Talk About It! @ Dinner** capitalizes on the enduring popularity of food-oriented events and home entertaining. This initiative is both a valuable fund-raiser, public awareness campaign and a cultivation opportunity all wrapped into one event.

How Does Talk About It! @ Dinner Work?

Collaboration between the Epilepsy Foundation national office, all Epilepsy Foundation affiliates, and our stakeholders will make the event a success. The Epilepsy Foundation has developed tools that will help you plan and implement a successful party. The tools that make up the **Talk About It! @ Dinner** Kit for hosts are downloadable from our website.

You can make this event a success by following the step by step process listed below.



Get Started and Have Fun!

You will be able to use this Talk About It! @ Dinner Kit to send invitations to your friends, neighbors and colleagues. Kits include the tools a host will need to plan and implement a successful event.

The Host's Dinner Kit includes:

- This Guide for the dinner host
- 'Templates' for Invitations
- Overview of the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey cause to send with the invitation
- Sample solicitation letter for local food and beverage vendors
- DVD to play at the dinner
- 'Templates' for Thank-you notes

So You're Going to Have a Dinner Party!

You may feel you need more time or less time to accomplish your goals. Here is a general timeline for getting things done:

2 Months Prior to Dinner – The Logistics

Decide how many people you'll invite.

Set a date.

Create a budget for the dinner and decide on a menu.

Secure sources for food, beverages and other party needs.

If you're going to provide all the food and beverages, make a detailed shopping list for each store you'll need things from.

If you're going to ask stores or restaurants to donate food or beverages, modify the sample 'solicitation' letter and get it ready to send. If you know the grocery store manager or restaurant owner, be sure to direct your request to him or her.

Decide on any decorations you might want.

What about a raffle or silent auction to raise more money?

One Month Prior to Dinner

Extend invitations to neighbors and friends (see section on Invitations)

If you've decided to hold an auction or raffle to raise more money, secure auction items, raffle prizes, etc.

You are excited about the idea, but the question is, where do you begin? There's no need to panic. Here are some helpful hints on having a fundraising dinner:

As with everything else, a good dinner party starts with a good idea and support for the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey is a great one. You'll need to provide something tasty to eat, have a short presentation about what the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey does (we've got a great short video for you to show), ask people to donate whatever they can to the cause, and encourage people to Talk About It! Only through talking about epilepsy will the stigma surrounding the disorder be done away with!

Since this is a dinner party, food certainly plays a role in its success. Talking about epilepsy and the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey is the centerpiece of the event, but of course you want your guests to enjoy the food as well.

To help ensure the success of your bash, be sure to map out the details on the food arrangements way ahead of the event. Pick your dishes carefully either in relation to what you are comfortable making for a group of people or what the restaurants and/or other stores you have contacted have agreed to donate. And you may want to provide at least one vegetarian dish.

After deciding on the menu, you now have to take care of the rest of the party's particulars: entertainment, decorations, music, etc. While this may not be as important as the food, they still deserve your attention as they contribute to the general atmosphere and feel of your party.

With all these taken care of, it is now time to send out the invitations. Sending invites makes things more personal and adds pizzazz to your dinner.

Invitations

We have two different 'templates' you can use to set up your invitations and print them out. One is set up to print out 2 invitations on each piece of 8-1/2" X 11" piece of paper. The other is set up to print one invitation on each 8-1/2" X 11" paper.

Simple Full-Page Invitations

Click on the Word document called '**Invitation Full Page**' to see the way a 'full-page' invitation can be done. This is probably the simplest way to make an invitation. Just click your mouse next to where you want to add the first bit of information about your dinner (what it is, date, time, place, etc.) in the area provided. When entering your address or something that takes up more than one

line, be sure to TAB to the next line to save space. You can get some nice paper at an office supply store or stationery store and print out as many invitations as you'll need, address the envelopes (business-size envelope will work fine), and send them out!

Folded Invitation Note Cards

For slightly fancier invitations, click on the Word document called '**Invitation Notecard**' to open and see what these invitation cards look like. You'll need to customize the invitations with the information your guests will need such as what the event is, the date, the time, the place, and how to R.S.V.P.

For these invitation cards, two invitations are set up on each page, and each page has a front and a back. The front of the invitation has the **Talk About It! @ Dinner** logo, so you won't need to add anything there. On the 'inside' panels of the invitation, just click your mouse next to where you want to add the first bit of information after the word 'For:' You can then fill in all the information you need on the lines below as well. When entering your address or something that takes up more than one line, be sure to TAB to the next line to save space. That way, you won't push the rest of the information over onto another page.

Printing: You'll probably want to use a nice paper for the invitations – something slightly heavier than copy paper like card stock or parchment-type paper. An office supply store or stationery store has a wide variety of paper and envelopes to choose from. (For these invitations, you'll need standard note card envelopes that are 4-3/8" X 5-3/4".) The invitation is set to print in red and black, but will print in black (and greys) if you don't have a color printer. Since these invitations have something printed on both sides of the paper, you'll need to print duplex (double-sided) according to your printer's instructions. That means sending the same sheet of paper through the printer twice so that each side of the paper has the correct part printed on it. Once printed, you'll simply need to cut each sheet in two pieces, fold the two invitations you now have in half, and you're set. Just print out as many invitations as you'll need.

Another Option: After you add all the information needed on either the 'full-page' invitation or the 'note card' invitations, you could simply take the file to a local Kinko's-type store and they can print your invitations for you on paper you select.

Foundation Overview

You want your guests to know what it is that you're asking them to support, so we've included a 'template' for some background information on the Epilepsy Foundation of

New Jersey that you should include with the invitation that you send. Two versions in Word are available; one that works well with the 'Full Page' invitation, and one that works well with the folded invitation note cards.

Open either '**Foundation Full Page**' or '**Foundation Notecard**'. They contain the same text and you can change or add anything you would like. The aim is to explain what your Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey does and to ask people to support it financially.

As with the invitations, the 'Full Page Overview' can be customized and simply printed out one per page and included with the invitation when you send it.

The 'Note Card' Overview can be customized and printed so you can include it with the Note Card invitations if you are using them. Just like the Note Card invitation template, this template includes two per 8-1/2" X 11" page so just remember to customize each 'side' and cut the paper in two after you print them out.

Because the Overview helps people understand WHY they should give to help the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey, it's important that it be sent with each invitation.

The Party!

A few days before the party, check if everything is in order. Create a detailed to-do list. Be sure that every kink has been smoothed out days before the event. When it comes to organizing a party, one can never be too careful after all.

At some point during the party, get everyone's attention and say a few words about why you invited them to your home. In just a few words, explain how the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey has helped you or someone you love. Explain some of the great things the Foundation accomplishes. Explain why YOU are willing to hold a dinner in your home to benefit the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey. Tell your guests that any amount of money they can donate will help the lives of people living with epilepsy. Then put on the 7 minute DVD that tells something about epilepsy through several people who live with it every day.

And finally, enjoy! All your hard work will come to waste if you don't. Talk to your guests, mingle, move around, have fun--remember, this is a party.

Thank-You Notes

The 'templates' for thank-you notes are very similar to the invitations. We have two options available, just as with the invitations: one is set up to print one thank-you on

each 8-1/2" X 11" sheet of paper, and the other is set up to print two thank-you notes on each 8-1/2" X 11" sheet of paper. See the instructions below.

Simple Full-Page Thank-You Letter

Click on the Word document called ‘**Thank you card full page**’ to see the way a ‘full-page’ thank-you note can be done. This is probably the simplest way to make a thank-you note. Just click your mouse in the area **BELOW** the large ‘Thank You’ and add your personalized note and anything else you want. You can get some nice paper at an office supply store or stationery store and print out as many thank-you letters as you need, address the envelopes (business-size envelope will work fine), and send them out! Of course, it’s important to thank people for their support of the Foundation.

Folded Thank-You Note Cards

For slightly fancier thank-you notes, click on the Word document called ‘**Thank you notecard**’ to open and see what these thank-you cards look like.

For these thank-you cards, two cards are set up on each page, and each page has a front and a back. The front of the invitation has the **Talk About It! @ Dinner** logo as well as a ‘Thank You,’ so you won’t need to add anything there. On the ‘inside’ panels of the thank-you card, just click your mouse in the area below the standard ‘Thank-you’ lines that are already placed on the inside top panel. Your personalized note will go on the panel below that.

Printing: You’ll probably want to use the same paper for the thank-you notes that you used for the invitations. An office supply store or stationery store has a wide variety of paper and envelopes to choose from. (For these thank-you notes, you’ll need standard note card envelopes that are 4-3/8" X 5-3/4".) The thank-you card is set to print in red and black, but will print in black (and greys) if you don’t have a color printer. And as with the invitations, since these thank-you cards have something printed on both sides of the paper, you’ll need to print duplex (double-sided) according to your printer’s instructions. That means sending the same sheet of paper through the printer twice so that each side of the paper has the correct part printed on it. Once printed, you’ll simply need to cut each sheet in two pieces, fold the two thank-you cards you now have in half, and you’re set. Just print out as many as you need.

Success!

Guests who attend **Talk About It! @ Dinner** parties are introduced to the important work of the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey and may become future participants in other Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey programs, special events and activities. **Talk**

About It! @ Dinner is an exceptional way to gather people together to enjoy friendship and food while supporting the important mission of the Epilepsy Foundation of New Jersey.