

# **IVAW's Guide to throwing a Winter Soldier House Party**

Hosting a fundraiser is a great way to support the veterans and service members who are organizing Winter Soldier. Here's how it works: invite all your friends, coworkers and anyone else you think might be interested in supporting IVAW. The goal of the event is to raise awareness for IVAW and provide an easy way for them to contribute to Winter Soldier. You can plan any kind of event you like, but here are a few ideas that you can build on to plan your event.

## **Steps to a successful house party**

### **1. Decide what kind of party you want to host**

- a barbecue or potluck
- a dance party
- Tea Party or wine and cheese tasting
- Contact musicians or bands you know about doing a benefit show.
- Come up with your own unique party idea.
- It's also good to keep in mind that the event doesn't have to be at your home. If you have access to a church or community center that would be willing to provide space for a fundraising event of greater capacity, think about holding a larger event.

### **2. Make your invite list**

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### **3. Decide on a Date**

Pick a date 2 or more weeks in advance to give you enough time to plan for the event and to give your guests enough notice. Think about what kind of party you

are having, the people you know, and whether it makes more sense to hold your event on a weekend or a weeknight.

#### **4. Making Turnout Calls**

You'll get a better turnout for your party if you make reminder calls to the people you've invited. This is also a good time to answer any questions your guests may have about IVAW and Winter Soldier.

#### **5. Party Program**

Your event should include some way for you, as the host, to share information about IVAW (through our handouts, video, etc.) and to ask your guests to donate to IVAW's Winter Soldier. This could mean bringing everyone together so that you can thank them for coming, share information, and ask for support. We have provided informational flyers you can download about our work and ideas for other ways to share this information with your guests.

Depending on your guests you can ask for anything from \$10 per person to \$1,000 or more. IVAW is a non-profit and donations are tax-deductible. You can also raise money throughout the party by:

- Selling drinks.
- Requesting a donation at the door on a sliding scale, especially if your event includes some form of live entertainment.
- Asking a local cafe or restaurant to donate food and putting a donation bin on the food table. You can also ask local businesses to donate gift certificates and then sell raffle tickets. You might be surprised by how willing businesses are to donate their services in exchange for the publicity.

#### **The Pitch**

At some point in the party, perhaps one hour in or so, take a bit of time to present information about IVAW and ask for donations from the guests. The following are some things you can say about IVAW and Winter Soldier (in addition to why you support our work) followed by some guidance from the grassroots fundraising guru, Kim Klein. IVAW is the only anti-war organization led by Iraq vets and

active duty soldiers calling for the immediate end to the war.

- Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan will feature testimony from U.S. veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, who will tell the hard truth about what is really happening, day in and day out, in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- The four-day event will bring together veterans from across the country to testify about their experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan - and present video and photographic evidence.
- In addition, there will be panels of scholars, veterans, journalists, and other specialists to give context to the testimony. These panels will cover everything from the history of the GI resistance movement to the fight for veterans' health benefits and support.
- IVAW is working to make sure GIs and members of the public can view the testimony from anywhere in the world thru the web, check out [IVAW.org](http://IVAW.org) for more information (updated regularly).
- In the past year IVAW has grown from 10 to 40 chapters, and now has close to 750 members, veterans and GIs who have served in the US military since September 11, 2001.

**The following is from great grassroots fundraising expert Kim Klein, from her book “Fundraising for Social Change”**

“Everything at the house party should be built around the pitch. Make arrangements ahead of time with at least two and not more than four people that when the host [you] says “I hope you will make a donation,” they will take out their checkbooks, or hand over checks to members of the organization [house party hosts]. They don’t have to be ostentatious about it, but a few people have to set the tone that this is the time to give money.

Some people object to this practice, claiming that it imposes too much pressure. However, a little more thought will show that it is the considerate thing to do. Few people have the self-confidence to be the first to do anything. When the host (you) asks for money, many people are prepared to give, but everyone has a brief attack of anxiety, “Perhaps this isn’t when you give the money,” or “Perhaps I am the only person in the room who believes in this cause,” or “Perhaps everyone has

already turned in their money and I will look odd if I give my money now.

“The host must be the one who gives the pitch... “I hope you will join me in helping this important cause.” It doesn’t matter if the host [you] is nervous or doesn’t like asking for money. Our proceeds will be cut by at least half without a pitch from the party sponsor...in order for the guests to give money, the host must also say that he or she gives money and wants anyone who agrees with him or her to do the same.

How the pitch is made determines how the money will be collected. This is also decided ahead of time. The best way to get the most money at the party is to pass around donation forms [these are available for download below] and envelopes that you provide immediately after the host speaks. If you would prefer, the host can say, “Please put your donation in the basket over there,” and point to the place.

Like all fundraising strategies, house parties only work if someone actually asks for the money. Otherwise a house party is just a party – fun, but no funds.”

## **6. After the Party**

Besides cleaning up there are a few things to do after the party.

- Send us the donation forms as well as the donations.  
Send to: IVAW, P.O. Box 8296, Philadelphia, PA 19101
- Send thank you notes, by email or mail to your guests