



GENEROSITY

DINNERS



**COMMON
CHANGE**

Helping you pool resources with people you know,
to share with people you care about

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projects → people
transactions → relationships
isolation → collaboration
scarcity → abundance

We're excited that you're interested in hosting a **GENEROSITY DINNER**. This handbook tells you everything you need to know about how Common Change works and how to host a **GENEROSITY DINNER**. If we've left anything out, drop us an email at:

generositydinners@commonchange.co.za

Common Change was born out of a vision that still guides us: that there is enough for all who inhabit the planet and that we all have a desire to know and be known, to care and be cared for. Common Change is built around genuine relationships, with a desire to help you pool resources with people you know, to share with people you care about. This is more than charity or benevolence; this is about a call to friendship.



WHAT'S A GENEROSITY DINNER?

GENEROSITY DINNERS are opportunities to gather in a comfortable and personable environment, share a meal, and participate in giving together to meet the needs of people you care about. **GENEROSITY DINNERS** introduce individuals to the Common Change model, demonstrating in a hands-on way how collaborative giving works and exploring the underlying principles.



OUR VALUES

People versus Projects.

Give in ways that always maintain the dignity of those receiving, honouring their privacy and personhood.

Relationships versus Transactions.

Maintain the primacy of relational connection in all giving and seek to dismantle the power dynamics entrenched in cross-socioeconomic resource sharing.

Collaboration versus Isolation.

Honour and value all contributions and the wisdom of the group - whether money, expertise, experience, time, connections, opportunities, or suggestions.

Abundance versus Scarcity.

Demonstrate an economy of enough in an economic context that has modelled scarcity, disparity and unjust distribution of wealth. Start with what we have between us.

GETTING READY

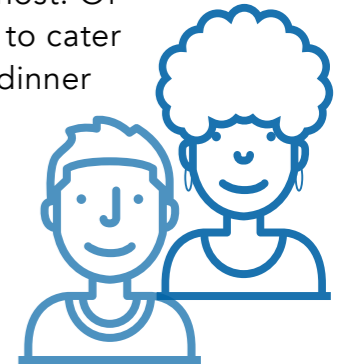
Here are some tips as you think about creating space:

Why the Table? We know from experience that when we gather around the table, deep connection and openness happens. The table is a place that invites us to welcome and friendship, to intimacy and vulnerability, to presence and proximity.

“We come to the table because our hunger brings us there. We come with a need, with fragility, with an admission of our humanity. The table is the great equaliser, the level playing field many of us have been looking everywhere for. The table is the place where the doing stops, the trying stops, the masks are removed, and we allow ourselves to be nourished, like children. We allow someone else to meet our need.”

SHAUNA NIEQUIST

Why a Potluck? We like the potluck format, because it demonstrates the principle of collaboration and abundance – we each bring what we can, with an eye to meet not only our own needs but those of others, and the table reflects the sufficiency of enough for all. Also, it's less admin for you as the host! Of course, you may wish to cater yourself or host your dinner at a restaurant, but the personal space of the home invites relational connection.



WHO TO INVITE?

Your **GENEROSITY DINNER** can be as big or small as you'd like. Decide what's manageable. In order to facilitate healthy discussion but keep the process moving, we recommend 8-10 guests.

Think of people in your life who have expressed an interest in collaborative giving, who are looking for creative ways to share their resources or those who you think would be open to experimenting with you.

In addition, think about those who may not have been thinking about how to share resources, but might be open to learning about collaborative giving... Something new!

INVITE YOUR GUESTS

There are many ways to invite guests to a **GENEROSITY DINNER** – a phone call, ask them the next time you see them, drop them an email or create a Facebook event. We have found it useful to send written information covering the basics, to all guests before the event.

You can use the **GENEROSITY DINNER** invitation template which includes the following information:

- Date and time
- Type of meal
- What guests should bring
- Venue and address (a Google map link can be helpful for guests)
- Include basic information about the principles of **GENEROSITY DINNERS**
- Are children welcome to participate and how will you keep them engaged?

// Name of file: Guest Invitation Email //

PREPARE YOUR GUESTS

Once guests have replied, we suggest that you send an email one week before your dinner, inviting guests to consider needs to present and giving guidelines for how to present an opportunity, as well as banking details for donating to the group fund. Also, remind them to bring a dish to share.

// Name of file: Guest Info //

“It was great being in a group where the aim is to help others. It is sometimes difficult to help others of your own accord.”

GENEROSITY DINNER PARTICIPANT

GENEROSITY DINNER DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

You'll hear lots of great ideas during the course of the night. While you may not be able to put funds toward each request, try to honour each person making a request by exploring alternative ways the need could be met. Try to limit the discussion around each idea, to allow time for all to share.

Questions and short discussions around each request are encouraged; try to come up with at least one actionable suggestion, resource, connection or idea which can support the requester in their concern, even if the group chooses not to help financially. Ask questions to learn more.

Learn about the relationship that has brought the need to a person's attention. Requests should be on behalf of an individual or family the requester is connected to.

How long have you known this individual? What is the nature of your relationship?

Get as specific as you can. It is easier to identify with (and respond to) specific needs.

A neighbour's car is having trouble: Do they need a tune-up, brakes replaced, new tires, a new car, a rental or loaner while it's in for repairs? Drill down to discover how best the funds could help.

Break big needs down into more manageable requests. Sometimes large needs can feel overwhelming to us. The purpose of this dinner is to help a small group of people make a significant impact, even if they're unable to eliminate a problem entirely.

A friend is undergoing chemotherapy and facing massive medical bills. In all reality, this dinner fund is not going to make a dent in the costs. Are their specific dietary requirements we could help out with? Could we pay for prescription medication? Does the recipient need childcare while in treatment?

What other resources besides money can the group collectively contribute? Think about the collective resources, physical goods, knowledge, expertise, personal and professional networks the group can tap into. What other support does the person-in-need have?

A family lost everything they own in a fire. Are there household goods we have sitting idle? Could one of us invest a couple of hours to help by scouring Gumtree and Facebook groups to replace items on a list? Could one of us make a personal introduction to someone who can help further/give advice etc?

Explore what other options the group might have to meet the need without spending money, thus making dinner funds go farther.

A colleague was involved in a car accident. Connect the person to a mechanic friend who is trustworthy and will give a good price.



Don't be surprised by emotion. The ideas and situations that you'll be discussing are complex and challenging: people may respond with strong feelings, or strong opinions. Make room for people to grow through this process.

Lay conversational ground rules.

- Since you have limited time, and to honour all guests and the process, encourage guests to limit their opportunity presentation to five minutes and then give time for others to ask questions and engage with the need.
- Encourage grace in asking questions and responding. The group will be discussing sensitive information and we want to honour the relationships that are represented. Be sensitive and compassionate, always remember this is about real people and real ways we can draw alongside them.
- Allow guests the freedom to choose when, and if, they want to share an opportunity. Allow guests to pass if they don't feel comfortable.
- Be mindful of time and who has/has not had a chance to share or give input. Don't be afraid to guide the conversation to include those who might be slower to jump in (and to request the active-talkers to allow space for others to share).

DECISION-MAKING

The actual decision-making process can be the hardest part of hosting a **GENEROSITY DINNER**. We have found that after well-structured and engaging group discussion there is often a clear and natural group consensus as to how best the funds can be used. Here are a couple of ways to structure decision-making:

Following the group discussion, reflect back what you have heard and take the lead on suggesting how you hear the group leaning.

OR

Allow the group some time to pray and think over the opportunities presented. Send a followup email the day after the dinner with a short summary of each opportunity presented and the key discussion points and recommendations. Take the lead on suggesting how the funds might help. Allow guests a week to comment and make alternative suggestions.

FINANCES

Common Change is a registered Non Profit Company. We offer full administrative and accounting support to your **GENEROSITY DINNER**, including receiving contributions into your Dinner Fund, providing accounting and reporting, and making gift payments to the individuals you and your dinner guests identify.

Dinner Fund The Dinner Fund is the combined amount contributed by your guests to meet needs of people they care about. Encourage guests to contribute to the Dinner Fund BEFORE the dinner so you know how much you have to work with. We will email you the day of your dinner to let you know the total amount received.

Bank Name: First National Bank

AC Name: Common Change NPC

AC #: 62590513315

Type: Cheque

Branch Code: 250-655

Reference: Please follow the dinner reference format to assign your contribution to the correct Dinner Fund "ASmith-HostSurnameDate". E.G. ASmith-Joshua090216

"A little by a few can go a long way to meet the needs of many."

AMY, **GENEROSITY DINNER PARTICIPANT**

Cash Contributions If you receive cash gifts at the dinner, please have a second person count these amounts with you and send an email to valerie@commonchange.co.za within 24 hours confirming the received amount. Make a single cash deposit into the FNB account within 2 business days.

Benevolence Gifts Once you have decided on who and how to help, we will send a follow up email to the guest who proposed the need asking for contact and payment details for the recipient. We typically try to get all gifts paid within 2 weeks of your dinner. The recipient will receive a gift letter explaining more about the gift and the people who gave it.

FOLLOW-UP

As soon as the minutes from the evening are ready, circulate to all those who were present. Common Change will assist in bringing the conversation to consensus, if needed. Common Change will communicate directly with the person/s who presented opportunities to receive contact and payment details for recipients. The gift payment and a gift letter will be sent within 48 hours of receiving this information.

Common Change will send a final close-out email to your guests, detailing how much was shared and how the dinner helped to meet the needs of people through relationship.

"I am deeply humbled by your generous donation towards my studies/tuition. There are few words that can express my deep gratitude towards all you who contributed to this generous gift. I can now carry on my studies and with that obtain my diploma so that in turn I can give back to those who so desperately need it."

GIFT RECIPIENT

HOST TIPS



Checklist

PRE-EVENT

- Decide on date, time, place and nature of the **GENEROSITY DINNER** event and begin thinking of those whom you would invite.
- Send out invitation email (Guest Invitation Email) to guests 2-3 weeks before the event.
- One week before the dinner send out a reminder email, including the Guest Information document to help guests to start thinking about a request or need, and a reminder about key event information and how to donate to the dinner fund.
- Review the Host tips about facilitating the evening to create a hospitable, welcoming and safe space. Feel free to contact the Common Change team with any questions!

DAY OF EVENT

- Have pens/pencils and a half sheet of paper/post it notes for guests to jot down notes.
- Ask someone to be the dinner scribe and to summarize requests/stories. Keep to 1-2 sentences including the presenter's first and surname (approximately 160 characters).
- Ensure you have preferred email addresses for all guests.

FOLLOW UP

- Ask the scribe to send you the minutes within 48 hours of the dinner. Review the minutes and then send these to the guests along with a follow up email. Encourage them to give any final feedback within a week. Copy valerie@commonchange.co.za on the guest followup email.
- Follow due process with banking of all cash monies collected.
- Sit back and relax.
- Start planning your next **GENEROSITY DINNER**.

CONTACT US

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PHONE 021 761 1168

WEBSITE commonchange.co.za

FOLLOW COMMON CHANGE AT
@4CommonChange and use **#GenerosityDinner**

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK
www.facebook.com/CommonChange

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