

# **Volunteer Action Network Toolkit:**

# HOSTING A SIGNATURE EVENT WATCH PARTY (POST EVENT EDITION)

# Hosting a Signature Event Watch Party

In this toolkit, you will find time-tested guidance and materials to host a successful, entertaining and educational event in your home viewing a recording of the Compassion & Choices 2023 Signature Event: *Heroes of the Movement*.

This resource will help you show your guests the importance of Compassion & Choices' work and how they can help grow the end-of-life options movement. Advocates like you power our efforts, and we hope your guests will join you in supporting us.

A Compassion & Choices signature event watch party is a great way to accomplish three simple goals:

- 1) Educate your guests about advance care planning and end-of-life issues.
- 2) Motivate them to get involved with this movement and an organization you love.
- 3) Garner support to further our mission.

Due to COVID-19, we still encourage advocates to follow their state health authority and CDC recommendations on gatherings. Learn more at the [Volunteer Resource Center](#).

## A Simple Checklist for Hosting a Signature Event Watch Party

To host a successful signature event watch party:

- Create an invitation to share with your personal network or use our sample invite below.
- Prepare a short welcome and introduction to your guests.
- Provide a comfortable space for everyone to gather, watch and listen.
- Consider providing simple, light refreshments.
- Use Compassion & Choices sign-in sheets to easily collect guest information.
- Provide Compassion & Choices materials if you have them. If you need materials shipped, please contact the staff you are working with in your state, or inquire at [volunteer@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:volunteer@compassionandchoices.org).
- Follow up with everyone after the party and thank them for attending.
- Send pictures taken during the event to the staff you are working with in your state
- Send the completed sign-in sheets to: Compassion & Choices, PO Box 485 Etna, OH 03750-9906.
- If you are comfortable, remind people that Compassion & Choices is funded entirely by donations and invite them to support us.

# The Benefits for You and Your Guests

1. Learn more about Compassion & Choices' work and a cause that is important to you.
2. Participate in an engaging conversation about end-of-life planning and options.
3. Support the mission and vision of Compassion & Choices.

## Watching the 2023 Signature Event: *Heroes of the Movement*

Make sure you have the appropriate equipment (TV, DVD player, computer, WiFi, Internet, speakers, etc.) to see and hear clearly. Ideally arrange to connect a bigger screen and external speakers if you are using a laptop to access the event. *Be sure* to do a technology check the day before and the morning of the event to confirm everything is working properly.

***Our movement is powered by our supporters. The Annual Signature Event is a gala, a celebration and a fundraiser.***

The end-of-life options movement needs people involved in numerous ways — as activists, volunteers, ambassadors and donors. Please assure people that there is room for their talents and contributions in this movement. Financial gifts are not required, but they are what allows our work to continue. If you would like help from our team on how to make a fundraising ask at your event, please let us know. If you haven't already seen the event, know that there are a few invitations to donate sprinkled through the second half. Either way, please print our sign-in form to collect the names and emails of people who would like more information.

## A Fun and Successful Watch Party

Good attendance is critical to a successful party. You may have a couple of neighbors over to watch in your home; perhaps you organize something at your place of worship with 20 or more attendees; Whatever suits your schedule and venue. Consider inviting:

- Friends, family and neighbors
- Lawmakers and community leaders
- Doctors and other care providers
- Book club members
- Coworkers
- Civic organizations
- Sports teammates
- Faith members

**TIP:** Consider finding someone to co-host with you. A co-host can expand and diversify your guest list, as well as share the tasks involved in planning and preparation. If you have a great space but not a big social network, or a great guest list but a small space, or a great space and great list but limited time to plan, find a partner to co-host. With a co-host, you can double the resources, double the friends and reduce the workload.

## Creating Your Invitation

### Determine the Details

Every gathering starts by establishing when, where, who and what. Determine the date, time and location for your watch party. The Signature Event recording is 1 hour 15 minutes long, so plan the welcome, Q/A and conclusion around that.

- Will you host a meet-and-greet before watching the signature event or after?
- Will you or another person share what brought them to Compassion & Choices?
- Gather other important details such as parking directions or building access, and share those in advance with your guests.
- Most gatherings include some sort of refreshment, but keep it light and simple.

### Decide Which Invitation Method(s) to Use

A combination of several will ensure a full house and a successful signature event watch party.

- Email – You can send a group email, individual personalized emails or a combination of the two.
- Paper – Personalize, print, stamp and mail your invitations; print extra copies to hand out face-to-face when applicable.
- Social media – Post on Instagram, for example, or consider creating a Facebook event, which makes it easy to invite friends, provide details about the party, keep track of RSVPs and post reminders. You can also include a link your Facebook event on your Evite or email invitations.
- E-invitations – Easily create invitations and manage RSVPs online using Evite, Eventbrite or other apps.
- In person – Use your unstamped paper invitations, or create a simple postcard or flier with the relevant details to hand out.
- Compassion & Choices supporter list – Ask the Compassion & Choices staff in your area to send an email invitation to boost attendance and connect with other local supporters that you may not know yet.

### Customize Your Invitation

Follow the general structure below, dedicating a concise sentence or two to each of the following:

- Your welcoming statement — let folks know you thought of them specifically.
- The date, time and location, and that you'll be viewing the recording of the signature event.
- Reasons you support the work of Compassion & Choices including any personal story.
- Instructions for how to RSVP — whether an Evite link, an email reply or a telephone number, make sure it's clear how to RSVP.

There is an invitation-letter template in the resources section of this toolkit. Finalize the letter with your personal information and watch-party details.

## After the Party

Complete a few simple tasks to maximize the party's impact.

- ❑ **Express Gratitude.** Send thank-you emails or handwritten notes to attendees with a special thanks to those who signed up, donated, brought food or helped in other ways. If you used an invitation platform like Evite, you can easily generate thank-you emails and share photos of the event.
- ❑ **Social-ize your event.** If you promoted the event on Facebook or other social media, post some photos (with permission of your guests) to keep the momentum going — who knows, you might inspire a friend in another city or state to get involved and host an event of their own!
- ❑ **Follow up.** Be sure to reach out to the people who were no-shows and those who declined. Get them a packet of information and any other materials you provided to the other guests if they want.
- ❑ **Send in lists and contributions.** Within three days, please send your invitation, RSVP and check-in lists, and any donations you may have collected to Compassion & Choices Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 485, Etna, NH 03750-0485.
- ❑ **Repeat annually!** Consider hosting an annual signature event watch party to share updates from Compassion & Choices and the achievements we've collectively made with the help of supporters like you!

## Thank You

Once again, we're so grateful that you've chosen Compassion & Choices as a place to invest your time, energy and talent as a volunteer.

# Resources:

## Sample Email

Copy, paste and edit to personalize.

*Subject:* Join me to Celebrate the work of Compassion & Choices!

Dear [first name],

I hope you'll join me for an evening to learn more about a cause that's important to me, and to honor a few heroes of the end-of-life movement. Compassion & Choices', (an organization I support) mission is to empower everyone to be the decision-makers in their own end-of-life journey so it aligns with their values, priorities and beliefs. Will you join me on November 30th to learn more?

**WHAT:** Heroes of the End-of -Life Movement Watch Party

**WHEN:** Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 5 p.m.

**WHERE:** Your address/venue

Meet storytellers who have impacted the movement's progress by sharing their personal experiences and other champions helping achieve Compassion & Choices' mission.

Will you join me on November 30? I'm certain you'll get energized by learning more about why this issue and the work of Compassion & Choices is so important to me.

Thank you for helping me spread the word about this inspirational event, honoring *Heroes of the Movement*. Volunteers, donors and supporters are invaluable to Compassion & Choices. Join me on November 30th, so together we can improve care, expand options and help everyone chart their end-of-life journey!

Warmly,

YOUR NAME

# Sample Program Schedule

Here is a suggested timeline for hosting your signature event watch party.

- 4:30 p.m.** Greet and mingle; ensure guests sign in and get name tags.
- 4:45 p.m.** Direct guests to assemble for the signature event.
- 4:55 p.m.** Welcome everyone and begin the program, explaining your support for Compassion & Choices.
- 5:00 p.m.** Watch signature event presentation.
- 6:10 p.m.** Conclude by thanking guests for attending and inviting them to support Compassion & Choices.
- 6:15 p.m.** Start discussion and Q&A, and hand out materials.  
  
Thank everyone again.  
  
Make notes on anything/anyone you need to follow up with.

## Sample Printed Program for Guests

# Welcome to Sadie's Signature Event Watch Party!

Thursday, November 30, 2023  
1234 Madison Ave

4:30 Meet and mingle with other guests

4:45 Get refreshments and take your seat

4:55 Hear welcoming remarks

5:00 Watch Compassion & Choices signature event, *Heroes of the Movement*

6:15 Discuss with Sadie and her neighbor  
Milo Chiles, who will share his story, and answer questions

## Sign-In Sheet Template

[Click to download a printable PDF sign in sheet.](#)



# Signature Event Watch Party Timeline and Checklist

## Get Started

- Develop an invitation list from your personal and professional networks.
- Start mentioning the watch party to others.
- Develop invitation details and messaging using the templates provided in the resources section of this toolkit.
- Start inviting people!

## Gain Momentum

- Send out Evite, email or Facebook invitations to your guest list.
- Make a paper invitation that you can hand out or mail.
- Reach out to your Compassion & Choices point of contact *at least three weeks in advance* if you want materials, fact sheets, pens and other Compassion & Choices branded items.

## Keep Going

- Start confirming and recording RSVPs.
- Send a reminder to invitees who have not yet responded.
- Make personal phone calls to your special invitees who have not yet responded.
- Draft an "event program" using the example provided in this appendix.
- Contact your Compassion & Choices point person to ask whether there are any campaign efforts underway that your guests can support by signing a letter or petition, or writing to a lawmaker or committee.

## The Homestretch

- Send out another reminder to your guest list.
- Make a few more calls to those who have not yet responded.
- Finalize the "event program" using the example provided in the resources section.
- Purchase refreshments, flowers and supplies like tissues and name badges as needed.
- Recruit someone to check in guests as they arrive so you can act as host.

## The Finish Line

- Prepare your RSVP list to check people in.
- Print name tags or have markers for blank name badges.
- Print copies of the event agenda.
- Reconfirm with the person who will check in guests at the door.

- ❑ Send out one final reminder with address and parking information to all guests who RSVP'd yes and maybe.
- ❑ Arrange the room so that guests can see and hear the host, any other speakers and the screen.
- ❑ Set up a check-in table at the entrance with name badges, sign-in sheet and Compassion & Choices materials.
- ❑ Prepare and set out simple refreshments, plates and napkins.
- ❑ Have a camera or smartphone ready to take pictures.
- ❑ Have fun!

## Afterward

- ❑ Send thank-you emails or handwritten notes to those who attended, with a special thanks to the guest speaker if you had one and those who donated, brought food or otherwise helped with the event.
- ❑ If you promoted the event on Facebook or other social media, post photos and ask people to contact you for more information.
- ❑ Please make a note of the date and location of the party and your role as host, and send your invite, RSVP and sign-in lists, and any donations you collected to  
 Compassion & Choices Gift Processing Center  
 P.O. Box 485  
 Etna, NH 03750-0485
- ❑ Be sure to follow up with no-shows and those who RSVP'd no. Email them a link to the recording to watch on their own. If you can, get them a packet of information, a donation envelope and any other materials you provided other guests.
- ❑ Send any feedback about the event to the staff working in your state or directly to AJ Hetzler at [ajhetzler@compassionandchoices.org](mailto:ajhetzler@compassionandchoices.org).