

# Saratoga neighborhood comes together ... for some ice cream

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Photographs by  
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Janet Totman used to know all her neighbors on Vendura Court. Through the years, though, people she knew moved away, and she never took the time to introduce herself to those who moved in.

Then Totman came across Dreyer's Ice Cream essay contest that promised a block party for those with the winning submissions. There were 19,000 entries and only 1,500 winners, and Totman was one of them.

So Dreyer's sent her a "Party in a Box" with aprons, spoons, nametags and invitations to the party.

"They thought of everything when they sent that little box," she said.

As Totman walked from house to house, notifying her neighbors of the July 11 event, she was able to meet people she otherwise wouldn't have ever spoken to.

"I had the added benefit of

going door to door and finding out what was going on in these people's lives," she said.

About 30 people attended the party and enjoyed some of the slow-churned frozen dessert Dreyer's had sent Totman. The ice cream had been sent in a box full of dry ice. The ice cream was so frozen, Totman said, that everyone had to wait about 20 minutes for it to thaw out.

Some of the crowd's favorite flavors: the classic vanilla and French Silk, a mixture of vanilla mousse, mocha mousse and chocolate chips.

After the ice cream was gone, neighbors still stuck around to chat and even talked about doing block parties again in the future.

"I hope we do," she said. "We don't do enough of that."

Totman's winning entry:

"Many neighborhoods are quiet and reserved. Everyone on the block silently pulls out of their garage each weekday morning and slips back in without any commotion each evening. What

goes on in their sanctuary behind the big closed door is each family's privacy, and yes, seclusion. This describes our neighborhood.

"How unfortunate it is that we are not able to share with one another. Gone are the times when we could talk to our neighbors over the fence or go next door to borrow a stick of butter. It would be easier to share our life story over the Internet! We don't even know the names of our neighbors.

"How wonderful it would be to be able to know how we could help each other without being intrusive. We could help shop for the neighbor with Parkinson's, or pick up the paper for the lady with Alzheimer's down the street. But how can we meet them?"

"I can think of no better way to lure people out of their homes than to have a good old-fashioned block party ... especially with Dreyer's Slow Churned Ice Cream. I don't think even our reserved neighbors could resist an invite like this. I think we deserve to give it a try!"



The residents on Vendura Court in Saratoga were all able to share rewards that their neighbor, Janet Totman, received for writing a winning entry in the Dreyer's Ice Cream essay contest. Totman, above right, who won a block party for her essay, looks over the many flavors of ice cream Dreyer's sent to her in Saratoga.

Little Sydney Shimabukuro, at right, is having a little trouble deciding just which flavor she will chose at the Vendura Court block party. Thanks to Janet Totman and her winning essay, there was enough ice cream for everyone in the neighborhood.

At left, Chuck Totman (left) serves up some ice cream for Austin Shi (center) during the Vendura Court block party. Totman's wife, Janet, won the block party with a winning entry in the Dreyer's Ice Cream essay contest.

