You know that popular education and solidarity are the main goals of the Caravan. Pre-caravan events get people talking and thinking about the issues that connect us with our destination countries and spark interest in the actual Caravan visit. An event that is exclusively political can be intimidating or less interesting to new people than an event designed to be creative & fun! Here are some ideas for different kinds of events for the Caravan visit and leading up to it, and some key points to remember while planning.

1) **Festival!** Rent your favorite flicks, pop some popcorn, make your favorite drinks, and invite your neighborhood! You could have this at your school, your church, or in your basement! We recommend films that have a social justice theme. We encourage you to show “Who’s Afraid of the Little Yellow School Bus?” The story of the 23-day hunger strike that broke the US Blockade of Cuba. Don’t have a copy of the film? We are happy to send one to you. Email us at friendshipmentcaravan@ifconews.org to order a copy.

2) **Solidarity Dance!** Get a salsa band or just a few Latin “Exitos Calientes” CDs, put up some Christmas lights, convince a friend to give a mini-salsa class, while another friend mixes mojitos (white rum, fresh mint, club soda, sugar & lemon) & Cuba libres (rum, cola & lemon,) and let the party begin! Virgin drinks without the rum are almost as good.

3) **Have a Lecture Series** on current events at your favorite gathering place, and invite local activists to report on what is happening in your community. Feature the Caravan as a “People’s Foreign Policy,” and invite people to join us! Depending on where you live we can send an IFCO representative to speak at your event. If you would like us to send you a speaker for a pre-caravan event, email us at friendshipmentcaravan@ifconews.org.

4) Call your local radio station or neighborhood paper, and plug an interview with yourself or your caravan planning committee. If you have a local caravanista joining the caravan that year have them talk about why they are travelling to Cuba with the P4P Caravan, or (if everyone’s shy) call one of the P4P staff to set up a time to do it by phone. Use the opportunity to plug your upcoming outreach event and the caravan stop in your community.

5) **Find a bar / café / basement to host a “Peña Cultural,”** * an interchange of art, politics & good food. Everyone bring some food, and everyone gets to talk/sing/read into the open mike. Share recent developments in Cuba-US Foreign Policy.

6) **Campfire / Drum Circle** Summer is here! Find out where campfires are permitted in your community, and let your creativity role! Some might like to stock up on chocolate, marshmallows and graham crackers for good ole fashioned s’mores. Others might want to invite every drum or guitar player they know and have a good sing-around… maybe even dance around… the campfire. *Warning:* people have been known to reach deep inner peace after dancing around campfires near natural sources of water.

**MIX & MATCH, ADD YOUR OWN, BE CREATIVE!!!!**
Points to Keep in Mind….  

1) Make sure you **ask enough people to help you** that nobody gets over-committed or taken advantage of (including yourself!). Don’t be shy about asking new people—many people never get involved simply because they are never asked.

2) **Confirm event times & locations** as early as possible, so you can have time to invite people. If you can, choose a place that already has a following in the community so you’re not starting from scratch.

3) **Organizing an event does cost some money.** Printing costs and other miscellaneous expenses can add up. If someone offers you or you ask someone for a free item/service for your events, IFCO can provide the item/service provider with an “in kind” donation letter. All you have to do is send IFCO a letter with the name of the item/service provider with a detailed explanation of the item/service(s) being donated. Note: do not include a monetary value on the letter. IFCO will send the provider of the item/service(s) with an “in kind” letter directly.

4) Be clear that the point is outreach and education. But don’t forget that **everything costs money**, and some people find financial support an easy way to be in solidarity. It doesn’t hurt to ask.

5) **Inviting local groups** to “endorse” (lend their name & send invitations) or “sponsor” the event (lend their name, send invitations, and actually donate something) can get the word out and save you some cash. If you are going to print invitations, offer to advertise for local restaurants/shops for a donation.

6) **Selling tickets ahead of time** ups attendance by discouraging last-minute mood changes, and can also make you more money than you would have gotten at the door. Selling a second ticket half price can double the size of your event and make you some extra cash. Sliding scale tickets can ensure nobody is excluded, while encouraging solidarity donations.

7) Go out of your way to **invite more than just the usual subjects.** If your crowds tend to lean toward one end (or the middle) of the age spectrum, reach out to a different age bracket through your neighborhood, church, or community agency. Take note if your events tend to be centered around one ethnic group, and intentionally outreach to another. If you’re not sure where to start, ask people you know to take the lead on this.

8) **Don’t skimp on the food / drink.** Be adventuresome and try some delicious new Cuban recipes: [http://www.tasteofcuba.com/cubanrecipes.html](http://www.tasteofcuba.com/cubanrecipes.html)

9) **Providing child care** (ask your niece/nephew, neighbor, etc) will reach people who would otherwise not come. Also consider age appropriate activities for older children.

10) **Announce the event** on your local radio, on flyers in the neighborhood, in your church newsletter, at meetings, in class…. Ask your team to carry & sell tickets for at least two weeks before the event, *and collect in advance!* You can even offer a discount advance-purchase price.
11) Always plan to have **an information and sign-in table**. Include Caravan information, info on US foreign policy and the destination countries, and info on your local organization & activities. IFCO/Pastors for Peace has many available publications. Ask volunteers to take shifts at it so that someone is always on hand to answer questions.

12) Have a diverse selection of **music** available to fit the mood of the event. If you’re starting from scratch, try [www.descarga.com](http://www.descarga.com). Here are some starting suggestions:

- **Nueva Troba/Folk**: Pablo Milanes, Silvio Rodriguez, Sara Gonzalez
- **Jazz**: Emiliano Salvador, Chico O’Farrill, Mario Bauzá
- **Son**: Argenio Rodriguez, Omara Portuondo
- **Bolero**: Elena Burke, Benny Moré
- **Dance**: Los Van Van, Aragón
- **Rap**: Las Orishas, Frijoles Negros, Obsesió
- **Folklór**: Muñequisitos de Matanza, AfroCuba de Matanza
- **Hip Hop**: TechnoCaribe, Concepto Cuba, Anonimo Consejo