

# JoeTalks

the who, what, why

## What:

CitizenJoe is looking for individuals and groups—likeminded folk who dig policy and discussion—to partner with us in engaging Americans in conversation across the country. JoeTalks events promote awareness and dialogue on the issues that matter to us all most—and do so while guaranteeing guests a good time, often with a cocktail in their hand. They're a hit in NYC, and—with your partnership—we think they'll be a hit in your hood too!

## Why:

America's doing fine when it comes to partisanship and spin, but we're short on open dialogue and places where those of us who don't have all the answers can come together, get a little informed, share our views and, just maybe, come out with a better grasp on the issues.

## Why now:

'Cause a presidential election's too good of an opportunity to miss! But instead of betting on a candidate, we're betting on policy—and on Americans' desire to steer the country in the best direction. Yeah, that takes a good leader, but it also takes us all thinking and talking about the policy choices we're facing.

## Who we are:

CitizenJoe is a multi-partisan nonprofit (made up of Democrats, Independents and Republicans) that's been promoting policy awareness and dialogue since 2004. With no real credentials—but just a will to deliver straight info and to get us all talking together—we launched citizenJoe.org, with fact pages and issue briefs on the policies being debated in Congress, and started our “Spirited Dialogue” and “Policy on the Rocks” series, bringing together New Yorkers for engaging conversation.

## What you can do:

Host a Spirited Dialogue, start a JoeBooks club or—if you really want to party—organize a Policy on the Rocks. We'll give you the online tools, tips, materials and support to pull it off. You'll nab the venue and muster the crowds—and be part of the team that's helping to revolutionize political dialogue in America.

## What exactly these JoeTalks events are all about:

JoeTalks work by keeping events informative, friendly and fun. Readings, speakers and “fun factoids” get our guests informed; our “be nice” rule keeps all guests feeling welcome; and cool venues, games and cocktails keep the events light and fun.

**Spirited Dialogues** are low-key events, bringing together 10—25 guests in coffee houses, living rooms or even with a brown bag under a shady tree for informal conversation. Using readings and volunteer presenters—and a stuffed animal—Spirited Dialogues guide conversations to leave participants with greater understanding and appreciation of others' political views on hot policy topics.

**Policy on the Rocks** events take the principles of open dialogue and awareness—and bust them out to parties of 50—150 guests. Using a “two part party and one part policy” recipe, Policy on the Rocks mix expert speakers with policy-themed mingling games and party antics. Trust us, it works. As with Spirited Dialogues, guests get a greater understanding of the issues—and a great party.

**JoeBooks clubs** are just what they say they are—except instead of taking recommendations from O, we'll be asking the country's top policy wonks “What do you think all Americans should read this year?” To be frank, we're just starting one ourselves, but how hard can they be?

# JoeTalks

be a JoeHost

The key to growing a nationwide network of JoeEvents is to find those smart, local leaders who like bringing people together and love fact-based, open nonpartisan dialogue.

Do you get turned on by the idea of open dialogue and love to throw a bash? Then talk to us about hosting a Policy on the Rocks. Like open dialogue, but not so sure about the bash thing? Sign up on citizenJoe.org to host a Spirited Dialogue (starting September '07).

You'll provide the local leadership—we'll provide the tools and supports you need to pull off a hit event. In the end, the JoeEvent will be yours. All we ask—for your event to be a JoeEvent—is that you insure an atmosphere of open dialogue and fun.

CitizenJoe central will provide JoeHosts with:

## Guides and materials

- **Guides** to creating Spirited Dialogues or Policy on the Rocks.
- Suggested **reading materials** for each policy topic.
- **Fun factoid sheets** with engaging visuals and facts to spark discussion.
- **Fun and Games:** instructions, tools and suggestions on how to liven up Policy on the Rocks.

## On-line event management system.

JoeHosts will have access to a sophisticated online event management system where they can:

- Post event information.
- Manage emails, rsvp's and volunteers.

## Help identifying speakers.

CitizenJoe staff will work with JoeHosts to connect local experts to local hosts.

## Other perks

- **Online fun:** JoeHosts and guests have access to blogging, photo posting and comment posting tools on their citizenJoe event page.
- **Tailored invites.** CitizenJoe's graphic design staff will work with Policy on the Rocks hosts to individualize email invites.
- **Spreading the word on-line:** Using social networking tools online, cJ will support local hosts in getting the word out.

JoeHosts bring

We let local hosts do what they have the hometown advantage in, that is:

- **Identify venues.** Whether it's a living room for a Spirited Dialogue or hip bar for a Policy on the Rocks, JoeHosts will know what works best in their city.
- **Guests!** Ultimately being a JoeHost is about inviting JoeGuests—whether on their own or through a host committee.

Ultimately JoeHosts insure that JoeTalks are true to the spirit of open dialogue and fun—that is, all guests are welcomed, guests' views are valued and challenged and everyone gets to have some friendly fun.

**How the network works:** There's no fancy corporate structure here. Each JoeHost will act as an independent affiliate. CitizenJoe will provide support and will also make sure JoeHosts are keeping true to their commitment to open-dialogue and fun. Although acting as volunteers, Policy on the Rocks hosts can charge up to \$10 to cover the costs of their event; anything left over, you can donate to citizenJoe to help build dialogue in other parts of the USA.

**Issues on tap:** While the line up of issues we'll be highlighting is still in the works, we'll be focusing on those issues that Americans say they care about most in the polls, including: Iraq, healthcare, energy, global warming, education, immigration, jobs, terrorism, taxes, government corruption, civil liberties and the American family. See our list-in-the-making (attached).

To find out more about being a JoeHost, contact Julia at 646 732 9616 or [julia@citizenjoe.org](mailto:julia@citizenjoe.org).

citizenJoe provides

# JoeTalks

## topics along the way

We don't have an official list yet of the topics JoeTalks will be covering, but looking at the polls on what Americans say matters most, it may look something like this. As a JoeHost, we'll also be looking to you to tell us what are the questions you think JoeTalks should be asking.

### Health Care

- How much care are we entitled to/responsible to provide?
- Does the market/competition belong in a national health care system?
- Is it the government's responsibility to make sure we all have health-care—or to make sure we're all healthy?

### Energy & the Environment

- Energy independence—do we need it and how do we get it?
- Where do you draw the line between supporting the global economy and stopping global warming?

### Iraq

- We may have broken it, but can we fix it?

### Terrorism

- What should be our strategy to fight terrorism—at home and/or abroad?

### Education

- Are our public schools keeping up with global competition? If not, how do we catch up?
- How do we close the racial achievement gap?

### Immigration

- Is more immigration better for America—or worse for working Americans?
- Is illegal immigration a problem that needs to be solved—or a fact we have to live with?

### Trade & Globalization

- In a globalizing world, how can we protect the American worker?

### Civil Liberties

- Do we have to give up any civil liberties to keep us safe from terrorism?

### Economic Insecurity and Inequality

- Are all Americans benefiting from growth?
- Is economic insecurity a necessary byproduct of a dynamic economy—or should we do something to soften the swings?

### Taxes

- What's the fairest tax system?
- What's the best tax system to keep the economy strong?

### The American family

- Is the American family in crisis—and how can we support it?

### Government waste and corruption

- Is smaller government better government?
- Can campaign finance reform work—and, if so, how?

### Race

- Is affirmative action still needed?

### Poverty

- Does America need to do more to take care of its poor?