

Class Reunion Planning Tool Kit
Helpful Hints from
The Council Bluffs Schools Alumni Association

1. **Getting Started**

Ideally, start two years in advance of the actual dates of your reunion.

2. **Committee Formation**

Include a variety of former students to provide balanced planning and encourage diverse, creative ideas to help attract as many as your former classmates as possible. Suggestions include:

- Classmates who were active in school activities
- Class officers
- Sports participants
- Organization leaders
- Other classmates willing to help get things started

3. **Select Leadership and Date**

Once the committee has been formed, there are some important decisions to make immediately.

- Select a chairperson with strong leadership and organizational skills
- Select a treasurer with strong personal accounting skills
- Select a secretary to maintain records and meeting minutes for future reference
- Select a date as soon as possible
- Inform the Alumni Association of your reunion dates, and send a copy of your schedule in case one of your classmates calls for information.
- As soon as your plans are finalized, contact the Alumni Association to post your reunion plans on the alumni web page (www.cbalumni.org)
- Contact the school principal's office to schedule a tour of the school. The school will require you fill out a facilities use form.

4. **Start-up Funds**

Funding for temporary operating expenses such as postage, printing, and deposits can be a problem, especially for a first time committee. The committee members could advance "seed money" for these operating funds and later, their donations could be used toward paying part or all of their registration fees. Another idea is to approach alumni-owned businesses to sponsor an activity in exchange for some advertising. Be creative. Use the internet to appeal to other grads for some start-up funds.

A Common concern:

Opening a bank account. Rather than using a committee member's personal information to open a short-term account, it is recommended that your group apply for a tax I.D. number. Apply for a number specifically for this purpose at no cost by requesting Form SS4

(The number will allow your group to keep funds in an account on a short-term basis while planning your reunion and paying your final expenses.)

5. **Locating Classmates**

The Alumni Association will provide you with a mailing list of last-available addresses of your class. The Alumni Association can provide this information as paper list, as mailing labels, or electronically as an e-mail attachment in Excel format.

Double-check the list we provide against your old yearbook and graduation programs and add any names that are missing from our database.

Divide the list among committee members and begin searching for classmates by:

- Local phone book
- Internet online phone books
- Online alumni search web sites
- Sharing the list with friends who may know where a lost classmate lives
- Developing a relationship with reunion committees from classes previous to and directly following your class to check for siblings, their friends, etc.

If you are working from a paper list and feel you have it updated and as accurate as possible, send a copy to the Alumni Association to update our files and print a set of mailing labels for you. Please give us advance notice to make these updates for your group. Two weeks is appreciated. (Note: Remind your classmates to keep in touch with the Alumni Association through the years as this will make your job easier for the next reunion.)

Whether you are working from the Alumni Association's paper list or the electronic list, the Alumni Association would appreciate receiving the corrected information to update our data.

6. **Contracts**

All vendor arrangements for the reunion should be in writing with no exceptions. Be sure that all contracts contain the type of service, date, time, price, equipment to be used, menu items, tips, etc.

7. **After the Party is Over**

- Schedule a post-reunion meeting or gathering to celebrate a job well done with other committee members
- Discuss what worked well and what didn't work so well
- The secretary should record responses for reference planning the next reunion.
- Discuss who will be responsible for housing the records, leftover yearbooks, decorations, etc.
- Discuss what to do with leftover funds. The Alumni Association can help you:

- Make a gift to the Classroom Grant fund for teachers in the Council Bluffs Community School District
- Honor a teacher
- Think of creative ways to support your alma mater
- Set up a scholarship

Enjoy! Reunions are fun and rewarding. Thanks for your efforts. Remember to keep in touch and to inform the Alumni Association of address changes when you move.

For additional resources and help, please contact:

Community Education Foundation
 300 West Broadway Suite 212
 Council Bluffs, IA 51503
 712-322-8800

Sub-Committee Suggestions

Treasurer and Finance Committee:

- Prepare budget for committee.
- Establish checking account
- Maintain all financial records and pay bills.

Decoration Committee:

Establish a theme for the reunion and design table and room decorations from your era.

Display class memorabilia that might include letter jackets, pep club sweaters, buttons, bumper stickers, play programs, or pictures. Example: If you graduated in the 1970's, items might be a lava lamp, beanbag chair, an eight-track tape and tape player.

Registration and Mailings Committee:

- For help finding missing classmates, a commercial web site that may help is www.classmates.com. There is a nominal charge for their service.
- Prepare items for check-in areas such as nametags with graduation photo, name in large print and current city and state of the attendee.
- Ask for volunteers (perhaps from the class before or after yours) to serve as hosts for each event.
- Design registration materials to be sent out-a sample invitation letter is available to be downloaded from this site.
- Create your class web site with e-mail address of a contact person and link to your school's web site.
- After the reunion, send a copy of your updated address list to the Alumni Association to aid in future reunions and mailings.

Note: Neither the Alumni Association for nor the Council Bluffs High Schools are able to use their bulk rate postage meters legally for your reunion mailings. A direct mail marketing company is sometimes able to help for a nominal fee, but many classes use postcards or simple one-page folded flyers. When in doubt, contact the post office.

Reunion Activities Committee:

- Contact your school for a form to schedule a school tour
- Consider a city bus tour (or ride on Molley the Trolley)
- Plan a golf outing, late night breakfast, or a family picnic.
- Ride in a limousine
- Remember unique venues for your event, such as a large room at one of the museums in town

Site and Food Selection Committee:

- Set the dates and select a location.
- Contact motels, hotels, country and golf clubs, banquet halls, and other facilities to host your event
- Secure a block of rooms for out-of-town attendees. Many hotels/motels will offer a discount whether you hold your event at their facility or not. Ask them!
- Select a menu (or caterer) for your event and determine the final price to charge those attending. Be creative with your food and beverage choices.

The Council Bluffs Schools Alumni Association is happy to provide suggestions for possible locations, caterers, activities, services, and commercial web sites that may assist reunion planners as they make decisions regarding their special event. The Alumni Association provides information as suggestions to find helpful resources and does not endorse any one business, service provider, or web site.

The Alumni Association asks you be cautious when working with online resources.

Faculty Contact:

- Invite some of your favorite teachers. Decide as a group who to invite.
- You may need to provide transportation to the event for these special guests.

Publicity Committee:

- Mail a postcard six months to a year in advance to let classmates know reunion dates and provide a phone number or e-mail address for a contact.
- Finding lost classmates is difficult, even when they may live locally. Try newspaper ads and broadcast public service announcements during winter holidays to catch people who have returned home for the holidays.
- As the date draws near, send press releases to local media.
- Ask your school office if they can post your information on their outdoor marquees.
- Try one if the commercial People-Find sites like www.classmates.com

Reunion book:

Will your class publish a yearbook of reunion activities and personal biographies? If you decide to do this, will the book be available before, during or after the reunion weekend?

- Get bids from several printers (you may be able to have printing done as an alumni donation).
- Sell ad space to alumni with business interests.
- Have the general committee make final approval.

Sample Reunion Invitation Letter

Dear classmate:

We can hardly believe it's been ___ years since our (graduation or last reunion). We don't want to let another year go by without the opportunity for all of us to get together to get reacquainted and make new friends. A group of your classmates has formed a committee and planned a reunion for the weekend of _(Month , date-date, year). We hope you will make plans now and be able to attend.

Activities will include a :

(Casual gathering/elegant affair/picnic at (your class's favorite place) Friday evening (date) from (6:00-10:00p.m.)
Saturday (date) will be a formal dinner/pig roast/barn dance/picnic at (location from (time) to (time)

A tour of the school will be held (date and time)

Many of our classmates will be there and it promises to be loads of fun!!

Check out the Council Bluffs Schools Alumni Association web page at www.cbalumni.org for information about other alumni events taking place.

Please fill out the registration form no later than _____ and return it to:

Name
Address
City, State ZIP

Reunion Registration Form

Current Last Name _____ Maiden Name _____ First Name _____
Previous Last Name if Remarried _____ Preferred Nickname _____

Address: _____

Phone # _____ E-mail: _____

Friday (Date) event at (Location) \$Cost if pre-paid by *(Date above): \$Cost if paid at door

Saturday (Date) event at (Location) \$Cost if pre-paid by *(Date above) \$Cost if paid at door

Note: (A higher cost at the door encourages pre-registration and allows you to be able to estimate number attending.)