

Class Reunion Planning Tool Kit

Helpful Hints from The Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools

1. **Getting Started.**

- Start, ideally, two years in advance of the actual dates of the reunion.
 - Often site selection of the reunion activities need to be booked a year or two in advance.
 - Locating classmates can be very time consuming.
 - However, if you have only a year or even less, a nice reunion can still be planned in a short amount of time.

2. **Committee Formation.**

- Include a variety of former students to provide balanced planning and encourage diverse, creative ideas to help attract as many of your former classmates as possible.
 - 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 a 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 Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools 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 your school's Webmaster to post your reunion plans on the school's alumni Web page.
 - Contact the school principal's office to schedule a tour of the school. The school will require you to 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 for 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 in Room 160 of the Federal Building.

(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 Foundation will provide you with a mailing list of last-available addresses of your class. The Foundation can provide this information as a paper list, or electronically as an e-mail attachment in Excel format. **<Contact the Foundation> ((MAILTO: FOUNDATION@LPS>ORG))** to obtain a class list to update, in either hard copy or Excel format.
- If you are working from a paper list and feel you have it updated and as accurate as possible, send a copy to the Foundation to update our files and print a set of mailing labels for you. Address updates done manually from a paper list may take more time. Please give us advance notice to make these updates for your group. Three weeks to a month is appreciated. (Note: Remind your classmates to keep in touch with the Foundation through the years as this will make your job easier for the next reunion!)
- If you have a classmate that is an employee of the Lincoln Public Schools, their address label will be an LPS inter-school mailbox number or location. Watch your labels for these, and bring them to the Foundation. We will mail them through the inter-school mail system at no charge.
- If you choose to work with the Excel version of your mailing list, you will also receive specific instructions on how to manipulate the data and how to return the corrected information to the Foundation to be imported back into our database. Whether you are working from the Foundation's paper list or the electronic list, the Foundation would appreciate receiving the corrected information to update our data.
 - 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 is.
 - ❖ Developing a relationship with reunion committees from classes previous to and directly following your class to check for siblings, their friends, etc.
- Delegate duties to avoid time- consuming meetings.

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 for 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 Foundation can help you:
 - Make a gift to your high school's Fund for Excellence.
 - Set up a scholarship.
 - Honor a teacher.
 - Think of creative ways to support your alma mater.

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

For additional resources and help, please contact:

Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools
5901 O Street
P.O. Box 82889
Lincoln, NE 68501

Alumni & Gift Coordinator
402-436-1612
E-mail foundation@lps.org

Appendix A

Sub-Committee Suggestions

Treasurer and Finance Committee—

- ❖ Prepare budget for committee.
- ❖ Establish checking account.
- ❖ Maintain all financial records & 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, and 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 Foundation to aid in future reunions and mailings.

Note: Neither the Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools nor the Lincoln public 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).
- ❖ A golf outing, late night breakfast, or a family picnic.
- ❖ Ride in a Limousine.
- ❖ Remember unique venues for your event, such as Salt Dogs Stadium or 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 events.

- ❖ 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. How about a hog roast or serving six-foot submarine sandwiches?
- ❖ Find the perfect location or caterer for your event.

www.downtownlincoln.org or call Downtown Lincoln Assn., 434-6900
www.lincoln.org or phone Lincoln Lancaster Co. Convention/Visitors Bureau, 436-2350
www.lincolnreport.com
www.discoverourtown.com

For more suggestions of locations, photographers, bands, caterers, or activities, refer to the ALLTEL phone book “Getting Married” section in the back of the Yellow pages.

Visit your high school Web site:

Northeast – <http://lne.lps.org>
Southeast – <http://lse.lps.org>
East – <http://le.lps.org>
Lincoln High – <http://lhs.lps.org>
Lincoln Southwest – <http://lsw.lps.org>
Lincoln North Star – <http://lns.lps.org>

Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools – www.foundationforlps.org

The Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools 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 Foundation provides this information as suggestions to find helpful resources and does not endorse any one business, service provider, or Web site.

The Foundation asks you to 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 of the commercial People-Find sites like www.classmates.com mentioned above

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 (6:00-10:00 p.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!

Please indicate which of the events planned you will be able to attend, and return your registration no later than ***(Date)** to:

(Name of Contact Person)
(Street Address)
(City, State/ Zip)

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

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

(Optional) Gift of \$_____ to my high school's "Fund for Excellence." Make this check payable to **Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools** and mail to:

(Your high school name) Fund For Excellence
Foundation for Lincoln Public Schools
5901 O Street
Lincoln, NE 68510

REMEMBER TO INFORM FOUNDATION FOR LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS ANY TIME YOUR REUNION INFORMATION CHANGES

Current Last Name _____ Maiden Name _____ First Name _____

Previous last name if remarried _____ Preferred Nickname _____

_____ High School _____ Graduated (year) _____

New address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Previous address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone # (Optional) _____ email address (Optional) _____

Business information (Optional) _____

Work Phone # (Optional) _____ Birth Date (Optional) _____

The Foundation maintains alumni information for class reunion mailing lists and for general fundraising purposes for the Lincoln Public Schools.

Mail to: Foundation For Lincoln Public Schools
5901 "O" Street
Lincoln, NE 68510