

**SJHS/MDHS
DONOVAN CATHOLIC**



**A GUIDE TO
PLANNING A CLASS REUNION**

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A Guide To Planning A Class Reunion

For Graduates of Saint Joseph High School and Monsignor Donovan High School and Donovan Catholic

In preparing for your class reunion, we hope that you find the following suggestions useful. There are no hard or fast rules, so just have fun with the planning and enjoy the actual event.

Getting Started

I. Form a Committee:

Suggested to be done, 9 to 12 months in advance

- Contact the office of Alumni Relations for a listing of class members.

Patti Crimmins Kunzman, Class of '84

Alumni Relations Office

732-349-8801 Ext. 2432

pkunzman@donovancatholic.org

- Call around to classmates to see who is interested in serving on the reunion planning committee. We suggest 6 to 10 people to be on the committee, keeping in mind that some may bow out for various reasons.

Every effort should be made to enlist the help of classmates who represent different aspects of your class, i.e. male, female, athletes, newspaper reporters, health careers, etc. People attend reunions because they know someone else who is going. If your committee is diversified your chances are better for a well attended reunion.

It is a good idea to assign two committee members to a task.

i.e. Invitations, music, prizes, etc.

It is much more fun working with someone and it also allows for a check and balance.

- Choose people for official roles:
Committee chair –a person to lead the committee, call meetings, and generally oversee all planning, so everyone on the committee is kept abreast of all progress.

Treasurer – is in charge of collecting all monies from all persons in attendance (alumni and guests). It is suggested to open a bank checking account in your class name, (do not use the school name). An excel spreadsheet works the best for recording all monies and deposits.

Entertainment Chair – In charge of researching entertainment options.

Location Chair – In charge of researching accommodations of all kinds; Banquet halls, hotels (to hold the event or house guests coming a distance), nearby parks, beaches, and any classmate that may have a large property that may be used for your reunion evening or weekend.

Decorating Chair – Look to classmates that may own a business or to local merchants for donations of flowers, prizes, cakes. Promise to print the merchants information in your program or on poster displays as a means of advertising.

Invitation Chair – In charge of original invitation or notice about the reunion and any additional mailings or bulletins. Do not forget to use “Facebook.” Include a biographical survey asking the graduate all important information about themselves, (occupation, employer, hobbies/interests) spouse, children, and grandchildren.

Alumni Directory Chair – A person to put together a directory of classmates information from responses received for distribution to the class and please submit an updated class list to the alumni office.

** Remember that there is so much to do for a successful reunion that the above are merely suggestions based on past experiences to get you started. It is nice to have additional alumni as part of the committee for their suggestions, help in contacting or locating classmates, decorating, and more.

II. . How the Alumni Office Can Help:

The Director of Alumni Relations and the Alumni Event Coordinator can help committees organize a class reunion.

We can provide:

- Class lists
- Mailing addresses
- Meeting space –at the school or Event Facilities
- Publicity – Announcements on the Griffin Alumni Nation Facebook page and monthly Alumni email
- Access to pictures from yearbooks
- Preparing, securing the Alumni Chapel/Church for Class Liturgy

III. Types of Reunions

Most reunions are semi-formal functions held at local catering halls, but this is not the only format for getting together with your fellow classmates. Other reunions have taken place on board cruise ships, at the beach, at a park with shopping, and a dinner dance also work well with good organization and preparation.

Often the anniversary year that the class is celebrating will dictate the type of event. Sometimes, five year classes have more success with a casual, less expensive function, as they are just getting out of college. Ten, Twenty year reunions tend to be the best attended and is usually more formal in nature. Earlier classes that may have more retirees among the alumni may be able to afford the time and money for a short cruise.

Some classes may even decide to combine with other classes. Combined reunions help to increase the pool of graduates which increases the attendance projections. This can help to fulfill the minimum guest requirement for banquet facilities. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination.

IV. Pick a Date/Find a Location

A) Picking the date

Suggestions are to plan around holidays that may bring more alumni into town to visit family or during the summer when more are available for a mini vacation.

- Once you have the class list, it may be wise as you are looking to form the committee to poll people you talk to for possible date suggestions. Remember, no matter when you schedule the reunion there will always be some that are unavailable. You can never accommodate everyone.

B) Choosing a Location

Some questions to ask yourself:

Are many of our classmates from out of town?

Do we want the reunion to be just one night or a weekend event?

Do we want an inside event or outside?

Do we want a sit down dinner, buffet or cocktail party?

Will we need room for a band or DJ?

School facilities are available for rental:

The Quad, Cafeteria, Lecture Hall or Gymnasium

The Donovan Catholic website has additional rental information available.

Nearby hotels, Country clubs, and banquet facilities:

The Park Pavilion, Seaside Park (at the Sawmill on Boardwalk)

Joey Harrison's River House at Southwinds Marina, Forked River

The Toms River Hotel, Toms River

The Quality Inn, Toms River
Aqua Blu, Toms River
Eagle Ridge Country Club, Lakewood
Woodlake Country Club, Lakewood
Crystal Point, Point Pleasant
Jenkinson's, Point Pleasant
Doolan's, Spring Lake
Water's Edge, Bayville
Atlantic Club, Wall Township has a picnic package
River Lady, for a majestic cruise along the Toms River

- Book as soon as you can, especially if during the summer months as dates fill up quickly around the shore area.
- Refer to the address and phone list located at the end of this guide.

Once you have chosen a location, usually a deposit is required. The committee members will have to pool their money to provide the deposit and then deduct it from their ticket price.

V. Planning the Event

- Buffet vs. Sit down Dinner

There are benefits and draw backs to both types of dinners. The sit-down dinner may require more time for dining, while the buffet allows for more time to socialize with classmates. Prices will vary considerably with the different types of dinner.

- Cash Bar vs. Open Bar

Again, there are pros and cons to both set-ups and the decision will ultimately be made by the committee. An open bar is easier and more accommodating for a reunion party, but will consume the majority of the ticket price. A cash bar will bring the ticket price down considerably, but may be inconvenient for graduates who did not want to carry extra cash for drinks. Many times both set-ups are combined. Have an open bar for an hour or so and then go to a cash bar.

- Ticket Price

The committee should make every effort to keep the cost of a ticket as low as possible to ensure the maximum attendance by their classmates. When determining ticket price and considering the cost per person, remember to include all expenses for meal/bar, DJ or band, reunion gifts, decorations/flowers, door prizes, additional mailings and comp tickets for faculty guests.

Also keep in mind other expenses classmates may have to incur in order to attend the reunion: additional ticket for spouse or guest, hotel accommodations, and travel expenses.

- **Finding Lost Classmates**

This process should be a priority for your committee, as well as, a job which all committee members can take part. Once you have the full list of classmates from the Alumni Office, divide the list among the committee members and go through to see if anyone can locate a “lost” or “MIA” (Missing in Action) graduate.

In your initial mailing to classmates, include a list of “lost” or “MIA” classmates and ask your class for help in locating these people. Always inform the Alumni Office of anyone you located with new or updated addresses.

- **Invited Guests**

Your invited guests may include but not limited to, former faculty members (the Alumni office can help with locating them), school chaplains, religious classmates, and the present School Administration.

Having invited guests poses the question to “comp” their attendance or ask these guests to pay a reduced price. “Comping” these tickets is usually the norm so remember to include this in your class ticket price.

VI. Making your Event Memorable

A) Reunion Liturgy

At the discretion of the reunion committee, some reunion committees may start their event with a Mass to celebrate the occasion and/or to remember the deceased of their class. One or two members of the committee should be responsible for planning the liturgy. It is recommended to plan the reunion liturgy well in advance of the date of the event to secure a site for the Mass and to invite celebrants and co-celebrants.

Consider holding your liturgy in the Alumni Chapel at Monsignor Donovan HS or at Saint Joseph Church.

B) Decorations

Do not “break the bank” on decorations and keep them simple. Usually the site for the reunion will be tastefully decorated for the season or will include center pieces for the table. Balloons are relatively inexpensive and always add a nice touch. Many classes have their own banner made with the “class of” and the # reunion it is.

C) Door prizes

Door prizes are not necessary, but are certainly an entertaining part of the evening. Be creative, but again, do not “break the bank”; find simple or donated prizes. You can give prizes for the most children, longest married, traveled the

farthest, etc. A 50/50 always adds excitement to the evening and proceeds can be donated to the school in the name of your class or in memory of deceased classmates.

D) Memorabilia Table

A memorabilia table is always popular at reunions. Items to include on this table are pictures, yearbooks, dance programs, prom favors, school newspapers, and old uniforms if available. In the first mailing, ask for submissions to the memorabilia table. Be careful to keep track of what items belong to which classmate.

E) Reunion gifts

It is customary for committees to incorporate into the price of the reunion ticket for a gift for the graduates. Suggestions are t-shirts, travel mugs, beach towels, magnets, Christmas ornament, etc. You can create a reunion logo to be printed on the reunion gift.

Perhaps you want to provide something from the school. Check out the school store, "Donovan's Den." Perhaps the Den can help you find merchants to work with.

F) Photographers

Most classes have someone that will serve as the photographer for the reunion. This of course is most cost effective. However, some classes choose to have a professional photographer at their event. If your committee decides that a photographer would be a nice addition to the reunion, then keep the following in mind.

How much time is needed to assemble 150 graduates and or guests for a group photo or class picture?

Time is precious at a reunion, you do not want to waste it posing for a camera.

Does the photographer offer a reunion "scrapbook" or portraits of guests? What would the cost be? If the photographer requires payment at the reunion, you must state that on the reunion invitation.

How many photographers will be available to cover the event and will they be discreet?

Ask for references or check out their past work at other events.

G) DJ or Band

Either form of entertainment adds to the evening and the fun. Perhaps some classmates have their own band that could perform. Some catering halls may offer special packages or discounts for in-house DJ's. Do not forget to ask.

H) Emcee

An emcee is not necessary (especially if you hire a DJ), but can add a special touch. Perhaps the class President, class clown, or someone from the committee that is a good speaker and would like to do it.

VII. A Gift To Your Alma Mater

Reunions are the perfect time to get your class together and give something back to your alma mater. An easy way to do this is to add a fixed dollar amount to the ticket price.

Another approach to raising money for a class gift is to include a donation form in your first letter. This provides your classmates not attending the reunion to feel a part of the event and participate in the class gift. The gift may be made to a specific scholarship, department, Quad Beautification or program.

The monies raised from class gifts could be used as a straight donation to the school, towards a pre-existing scholarship, a scholarship your class might like to start in the memory of deceased members of the class, or could be applied to tuition assistance.

TIMELINE:

Getting Started

- ❖ Get a committee together (6 – 12 members), individual members may be responsible for
 - Chair- contact person for committee and graduates
 - Finding a reunion site
 - Finding a DJ/band
 - Correspondence (writing letters, finding faculty, invitations)
 - Memorabilia table/decorations
 - Door prizes/reunion gifts
 - Reunion liturgy
 - Reunion program
 - Bookkeeping/treasurer
 - Finding lost graduates

You need at least one year to find classmates -18 months is optimal

One Year Ahead

- Book reunion site
- Make hotel arrangements for out-of-town graduates and guests
- Make arrangement for liturgy
- Send out informational flyer to classmates
 - Include:
 - Date or estimated date of reunion
 - Reunion site if known biographical survey
 - MIA list of classmates –requesting addresses
 - Request for ideas, pictures, memorabilia(include date of next meeting)
 - Return envelope
 - Request a deposit

Six to Nine Months Ahead

- Print tickets and invitations
- Set up a bank account
- Send invitations to former teachers or guests
- Book a DJ/Band
- Book a photographer
- Book any other entertainment
- Phone calls by committee members to lost graduates and generate interest in attending
- Start compiling reunion booklet
- Order reunion gifts
- Solicit door prizes
- Send out press release to newspapers, radio stations, church bulletins

Three Months Ahead

- Send invitations to classmates (include deadline for ticket sales)
- Pick Menu

One Month Ahead

- Phone calls by committee members to classmates who have not responded to either mailing
- Contact graduates who sent deposit but did not send balance for tickets
- Confirm with hall the procedure for walk-ins
- Make Name tags

One- Two Weeks Ahead

- Final Count will be due to caterer
- Finalize any last minute details

Reunion Night

- 50/50 Raffle
- Payment to catering hall for balance of reunion
- Committee members take turns greeting classmates at door for the first hour
 - Greet guest
 - Take tickets
 - Hand out Name tags
 - Give out reunion gifts

ENJOY THE EVENING!!!!!!!

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A:**Hotels and Event Sites:**

Days Hotel of Toms River—Toms River 732-244-4000
(formerly the Holiday Inn)
290 State Hwy No 37 E
Toms River, NJ 08753

Clarion Hotel at Toms River 732-341-2400
815 State Hwy No 37 W
Toms River, NJ 08755

Ramada of Toms River 732-905-2626
2372 Rt. 9
Toms River, NJ 08753

Banquet Facilities:

Park Pavilion
Atlantic Club 732-223-3582
Aqu Blue 732-270-1180
Crystal Point 732-899-3444
Dolan's 732-449-3666
Eagle Ridge 732-901-4900
Jenkinson's 732-892-0600
Martell's Water Edge 732-269-3000
River Lady Cruises 732-349-8664
Woodlake Country Club 732-370-1002
On Campus: Flik Dining Services has both buffet brunch, and dinner menus to
choose from. (732)349-8801 x 2412

Florists

Dayton Floral and Gifts 732-349-3363
John's Riverside Florists 732-349-5565
Narcissus 732-506-6200
Skip's Florist 732-270-5900

Party Supplies

Party Fair 732-286-2727
Party Lane 732-269-7778
Shore Restaurant & party Supplies 732-295-9545

APPENDIX B:

SAMPLE: Initial letter

Class Heading Here

Dear Classmates:

Well the event you never thought you would see has finally arrived—our ____th Year reunion! We are in the process of forming a committee and contacting fellow alumni. We have set a date of _____ *date here* _____ at a location to be determined. So mark your calendars!

In the next few weeks you will be receiving the first of several mailings and we want to alert you so you can keep your eye out for them. Your prompt response in filling out and returning these forms will help us plan our ____th reunion more effectively. Please make sure that you include the e-mail address you most want to be contacted at. As soon as we gather e-mails, we will more than likely begin communicating information via e-mail.

We have enclosed a list of your classmates with lost addresses based on the list acquired from the alumni office. We ask you to look it over and if there is anyone who you are in touch with, please send us their current address.

If you are interested in helping out with the reunion, please indicate that to us and we will let you know when the next planning meeting is.

Thanks again for your help. We look forward to hearing from you and receiving your response from. Until then we will be thinking of you and counting the days until _____ *date here* _____.

Sincerely,

The Reunion Planning Committee: __Add all names here__

May want to include a hotel accommodation information sheet with room prices with this letter or with a "Save the Date" notice.

APPENDIX C: SAMPLE – Response Survey

Last Name: _____ First Name:

 Maiden Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Home Address: (if changed)

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Spouse Name: (First Last, Maiden): _____

Is your spouse a St. Joseph/ Mon Don graduate? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what year did they graduate? _____

Name Children and ages: _____

Grandchildren: _____

Education: _____

Job Title: _____

Employer: _____

How long have you worked here? _____

Interests and hobbies:

Anything else you would like us to know about you?

Please check all that apply:

_____ Yes I will attend the reunion
 # of people to attend _____

_____ Yes, I will attend the liturgy
 _____ I can assist w/music for liturgy

_____ No, I will not be able
 to attend the reunion.

_____ No, I will not attend liturgy

Are you interested in donating any type of door prize? _____

List the prize

Do you have any memorabilia that you wish to donate? (prom items, uniforms, yearbooks, pictures- everything will be returned to you)

APPENDIX D:

SAMPLE Second letter

Class heading here

Dear Classmates:

We are looking forward to seeing you this ____*fall, summer*____). We hope you will be able to join us to spend an ____ (*afternoon, evening*) __catching up with your fellow classmates from _____*school name*_____.

As you know, we have dedicated a certain part of the reunion ticket price for a gift to our alma mater. We hope to raise money for (tuition assistance, scholarships, general upkeep) for students at _____*school name*_____.

If you are not able to attend our reunion, but would still like to participate in the Class of 19____ Gift to _____*school name*_____, please send your contribution in the enclosed envelope to the Class of 19____ Gift.

List return address here

Thank you for your contribution and support.

The Reunion committee

APPENDIX E: RESERVATION FORM

Date: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

Price: _____ **per person**

Summary of reunion event details here:
(i.e. Sit down dinner, open bar, class gift, DJ),

Names of people attending: _____

Make checks payable to: Class of _____ Reunion

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Deposit Paid: \$ _____

Balance Due: \$ _____

No tickets will be issued. Names will be checked upon arrival.

APPENDIX F: ON-CAMPUS FACILITY RENTAL PRICES

Facility Rental:

Quad – fits – unlimited

Cafeteria – fits 300 (banquet set up)

Lecture Hall – fits 125

Pricing:

Quad /or Cafeteria (alone)

\$250.00 /per hour covers maintenance
With option for inclement weather to
move to cafeteria

Quad and Cafeteria (together)

\$400.00 /per hour
Additional fee for use of kitchen

Lecture Hall

\$150.00 /per hour

Tables and chair rental:

Additional \$100.00

Round tables fits (8 – 10 people)

Five - 6 foot oblong tables

Alcohol consumption: State Liquor license required - apply on-line - \$100 fee
(contact Alumni Office)

Security personnel required:

In-house: \$35.00 /per hour

TR Police: \$45.00 /per hour –minimum 4 hrs.

- Request required in writing by school

- Security deposit required before hand of 50%