

CLASS REUNION PLANNING DURING COVID

Celebrating a Reunion Year?

Is your class celebrating a reunion this year? SYA is here to help but yours is needed to successfully plan a class gathering that is meaningful for your class. Traditional reunions are typically held at campuses, and while some classes plan in advance to hold milestone reunions abroad in the host city of their campus, most try to schedule a gathering in a central location based on where classmates live. Often reunions can complement an SYA event that may be taking place.

For the 2020-2021 year, everything has changed. With physical distancing guidelines and travel limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which vary state by state and are often changing, the health and safety of our SYA family is our primary concern. There will be no in-person events for the foreseeable future and we encourage classes to either postpone physical reunions OR to take advantage of hosting a virtual celebration.

SYA Reunion 101

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Be part of your Class Reunion Committee to encourage your classmates to gather and help plan a celebration for your class!

50TH AND 25TH REUNION CLASSES

Our milestone reunion classes are our first priority. During the pandemic, we'll create opportunities to highlight these classes on our website, social media and through the newsletter. President Tom Hassan and/or others in leadership positions, will join the Zoom to welcome you with brief remarks.

WHAT IS THE CLASS REUNION COMMITTEE (SEE MORE DETAILS BELOW)

Class Reunion Committee members work with the Alumni Office to select a date, review class contact information (and help fill in missing information), schedule the Zoom date and contact classmates by phone and/or email following the evite to encourage attendance. Leading up to the virtual reunion, committee members will introduce the idea of a special fundraising initiative to honor their reunion year.

HOW CAN SYA HELP?

The Alumni Office will help the Class Reunion Committee by:

- providing class contact information;
- helping to prepare mailings, by e-mail and snail mail as possible;
- maintaining a class website presence on your group space on [ConnectSYA](#);
- providing strategies to begin a class gift campaign.

CAN YOU HELP?

[Contact Susan McLean](#), Associate Director of Advancement and Director of Alumni Relations, and let's get started!

CLASS REUNION PLANNING COMMITTEE

A successful class reunion is the culmination in large part to the efforts of its volunteers, particularly the planning committee. Already as class volunteers, Class Ambassadors are a natural part of the committee.

WHO SHOULD BE ON THE REUNION PLANNING COMMITTEE?

Selecting committee members is an important task and should be done knowing that the success of the class reunion will depend on them.

HOW MANY PEOPLE SHOULD BE ON THE REUNION COMMITTEE?

It's easier to plan a virtual reunion; two-three people should be sufficient. We recommend at least two: one for reunion planning and one for class giving.

WHEN SHOULD THE REUNION COMMITTEE START PLANNING AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD THEY MEET?

You should start planning the class reunion as early as possible. Remember that class reunions with high attendance numbers are organized at least a year or more out. Think about what you might like to include on your virtual reunion: a simple round robin of class updates? A panel discussion with a classmate leading a topic?

If you are beginning to plan only a few months ahead of the actual class reunion, then you may need to meet a few times a month. If you have planned ahead and have more than a year before the class reunion, then you can meet as often as needed provided that everyone is getting their work done.

SHOULD WE HAVE A CONCERTED EFFORT FOR A CLASS GIFT?

Reunions affirm that the SYA experience endures for a lifetime, and while the program may change, the values of SYA remain constant.

Bringing classmates back together, even in a virtual setting, helps connect alumni to their philanthropic passions and inspires many to give a gift that enhances the learning through new initiatives, recruits faculty at the top of their fields and launches innovative programs that encourage global perspectives and lifelong learning.

ADDITIONAL TIPS ON CREATING A GREAT TEAM

Spread the Responsibilities: One of the advantages of having a lot of people on the committee is that you can spread the responsibilities amongst everyone. No one person should have to shoulder a larger burden than someone else. Set up different committees (planning, marketing, giving) for assignments.

Define the Responsibilities: In order for the committee to succeed, each individual on it should have a detailed list of responsibilities for their task.

Keep Your Reunion Committee Diverse: Select committee members from diverse backgrounds. Doing so will provide alternate points of view, ideas and solutions. Make an extra effort to include people from different "friend groups." Having them on the planning team will help people that they were friends with feel more connected.

Have a Goal in Mind: Organize class reunion with clearly defined goals. From the very first meeting, you should define what the goal of the reunion should be (reconnect with as many classmates as possible? Attendance? Giving?) By setting a goal, you'll have a good starting point to successfully reaching the outcome you want by planning ways to reach that goal.