

# Paraclete High School

## Let's Have a Reunion!

### How to Organize a Spirited Reunion

Thinking of organizing a reunion? This is where the Alumni Relations can help! We want to help you plan a reunion to remember!

### Getting Started

Contact our office! We have the resources to contact your classmates and we can get the word out that your reunion year is coming up. Team up with a few of your fellow alumni to spread the workload. It is sometimes useful to send out any initial letter or email to the group to gauge the level of interest for the reunion and what preferences there are towards the locations and type of event. Facebook is an excellent tool to garner interest in your reunion.

### Decide Who to Invite

Do you want to include fellow alumni from just one year or make it a multi-year reunion? Will you invite spouses/partners, children, former teachers?

Contact us so that we can give you contact information (email and mailing addresses and telephone numbers) we have for your former classmates. Be aware that the details we hold are only as up to date as our graduates have provided us.

We ask that you keep the alumni office updated with any new contact information you may find for your fellow graduates. Any new contact information we gather from attendees of the event will be updated in our database to ensure we have accurate data for your next reunion!

### Choose a Date, Time and Venue

Will your reunion be during one evening, all day, or a full weekend? Only your classmates' individual budgets and ambition limit the possibilities.

If you are already in contact with your group and may live locally, you may be able to pull the event together quickly. For best attendance, we encourage you to set the date as much as a year in advance, so people can plan vacations, etc. around the reunion. While your reunion can be held any time during the year, may we suggest holding your event during Homecoming Weekend? This is usually in October. You can view Paraclete's calendar of events to find out exactly when it is this year (unfortunately, the date isn't confirmed until early June of each year). Another idea is to hold your reunion during the A. V. Fair - you can even get together in the grandstands during one of the concerts. Typically grandstand seating for concerts is free with A.V. Fair admission. Here are a few places locally where PHS reunions have been held: Medrano's (Lancaster site has a banquet room), Fresco II, Gino's (Lancaster & Palmdale), Yard House, Bravery Brewery (outside area), and The Main Event (on Lancaster Blvd.). Some classes choose to hold their reunions in other cities (one class held their reunion at an outdoor area of the Grand Californian Hotel at Disneyland Resort!). Some classes enjoy their reunions at a classmate's home.

Another option is to hold your reunion at the **Annual Old Timer's Barbecue** held on a Sunday in October at the A.V. Fairgrounds. Here is the link to the event's webpage: [oldtimersbbqav.com/](http://oldtimersbbqav.com/). See old photos, friends, cars, books, history of the A.V. and enjoy a delicious barbecue for a reasonable price. Send your questions to: [oldtimersbbqav@gmail.com](mailto:oldtimersbbqav@gmail.com).

### **Put Together Your Program**

You may want to set up a meeting to help facilitate the following:

Determine the maximum cost per person for the reunion.

Would you prefer a sit-down dinner, buffet, BBQ, or just drinks and mingling?

Will your class participate in a Class Gift Campaign for Paraclete's Alumni Department to offset the costs of the PHSpirit Newsletters or perhaps a gift to the school's Annual Fund?

You may have payments for your reunion collected by Paraclete – cash (paid in person at the school, with receipt given to payer), checks, or credit cards only. To do so, please contact me (see below) so we can discuss the details of this arrangement.

You could also consider other additions to the day/weekend:

A Commemorative Mass

Tour of the school

Display of photos or memorabilia from your years at Paraclete.

### **Letters, Emails and Event Promotion & Other Ideas**

Use social media to promote your reunion. Consider posting classmate photos, current event memories, and music clips from your high school days.

Consider getting business sponsorships for the reunion to offset the costs and to possibly have money left over for a gift to Paraclete. A recent multi-year class reunion was very successful doing this and was able to donate \$3500.00 to help with financial aid for tuition.

Consider getting donations from businesses for raffle prizes. Hosting a raffle at your reunion could increase your revenue, again, for the purpose of giving to Paraclete.

All of the above could be shared on social media to increase enthusiasm and interest.

About four-five months before the reunion:

Save the date card/email goes out to all invitees. (What, where, when, and invite others to help plan the reunion).

About three months before the reunion:

The second letter/email/phone call is to stimulate further interest. Tell them how many have shown interest (you could even list names) and that the more people attend, the better it will be.

One-two months before the reunion:

The official Reunion Invitation should contain the finalized program, RSVP method, accommodation details, etc.

## Collecting the Reunion Payments from Classmates

You have options for collecting payments for your reunion. Some organizers use PayPal. Or you can simply send payments to a trusted classmate (perceived as risky by some). Another option is to have the PHS Alumni Coordinator or bookkeeper collect your reunion payments.

Acceptable methods of payment are: checks, cash, and credit cards, but with credit cards the credit card fee will be tacked on to the reunion cost (figure an additional 3% charge). Please ensure that classmates write “Class of [*insert year of graduation here*] Reunion” on the checks, or on a note if paying with cash (done in person if paying with cash – a cash receipt will be given). A credit card charge can be done over the phone, but again, make sure alumni coordinator or bookkeeper knows that it’s for your reunion. A record of all payments will be kept. When you need the money to pay for reunion expenses, she will have a check made to pay the reunion organizer or venue as directed by the organizer (you should select a main organizer, so we know who gets the money). Any money left on the books after the current school year ends is considered an alumni gift from your class. If you would like to have Paraclete help with payment collection, please let the Alumni Coordinator know so that she may communicate the details with the bookkeeper.

## During the Reunion

Your Alumni Coordinator may stop by to chat with your classmates, take photos, and ask for updates on what’s new with the attendees. Consider pooling together a class donation to Paraclete with consideration to the gratitude you have for your education and the spirited events that made up your four years. Consider a fun 50/50 raffle with the winner receiving half of the pot, and Paraclete receiving the other half. Helping Paraclete with its mission would be most appreciated. Please note that a direct request for a donation will not be made by the Alumni Coordinator during your reunion. Your celebration of the anniversary of your graduation is the reason for the gathering.

## After the Reunion

You may want to send out an email/letter to thank all those who attended. Please ask them to keep in touch with the Alumni Relations Office and let us know when they change their address. This will help if you ever want to hold another reunion in the future, too!

## WHY SOME CLASS REUNIONS NEVER GET OFF THE GROUND

If you were a senior class officer, you may feel it is your obligation to organize a class reunion. Many people fail to accomplish this goal for 3 reasons.

The number one reason that people never get the high school reunion planned is that there were unable to generate enough interest. Planning a class reunion requires money. In order to know how much of a budget you have, you need to get some sort of indication from people if they will come or not. As the organizer, the first priority is to get enough people interested that it makes sense to organize an event with a venue, food, and entertainment. To be able to do that you need to know that there will be participation or else you will be financing the class reunion by yourself.

The second reason that reunions sometimes do not get off the ground is that not enough people find out about the event. Ten years or more after graduation many classmates have moved and changed addresses (often more than once). Finding people is a big part of the challenge of generating interest, because if you can't find them, you can't invite them. Social Media helps a lot in the pursuit of classmates. Find a classmate who is savvy with Social Media to help you in tracking down classmates.

Another problem with high school reunion planning relates to the task of collecting funds. Assuming that you found a large percentage of people, and you have succeeded in getting people on board about the class reunion, the next major hurdle is getting them to commit to coming. Many people become procrastinators when it comes time to separate themselves from their money. Therefore, the more options you have for accepting payment the better. The Alumni Coordinator can assist you with collection of reunion payments through our school bookkeeper if you would like.

All three of these potential obstacles can be avoided by creating a website for the class reunion. Creating a high school reunion website is recommended at least a year prior to the event. That will give you plenty of time to generate interest, find people, and collect money. The more time you have the better because classmates can save the date if they have enough notice.

Creating a class reunion website populated with events and trivia from the year you graduated is a great way to get people reminiscing about high school. A website might also act as a point of registration where classmates can update their profile and RSVP online. Websites are viral in nature, so as people find out about it they tell others, who tell their friends, and so on. A reunion website also allows people to pay for a ticket with a credit card. Many people are accustomed to paying for things with credit or debit cards online.

There are class reunion website builders that require no special skills. You will just be filling in forms and clicking on buttons. It is truly as easy as surfing the web or sending an email. Simply Google "class reunion websites" and you will find several to choose from (no endorsement from Paraclete however). Facebook may be an easy site to use to garner interest in a reunion and locate classmates.

Let me know if there is anything that I may help you with. Enjoy your reunion!

Janet (Godde) Bower '74 ♦ Alumni Coordinator ♦ Paraclete High School  
(661) 943-3255 ext. 111 ♦ [JBower@ParacleteHS.org](mailto:JBower@ParacleteHS.org)