



St. Mary's Springs Academy
Tradition Never Graduates

SMSA Class Reunion Planning Guide

We are happy to support your planning efforts. Here is what the Office of Alumni Relations will provide to you:

- Support and work with the class connector and planning committee.
- Provide a class list with contact information from SMSA's database.
- Add information about your reunion to the SMSA website, Facebook and alumni email communications.
- Provide your class picture board with easel for the classes of 1913 - 2001.
- Provide welcome banner(s) you can display at your event.
- Provide SMSA giveaway items.
- Provide a tour of St. Mary's Springs Academy Campus.

Here's what you can do:

Plan Your Reunion

Start planning your reunion 6-9 months in advance – up to a year ahead is even better.

- Develop a reunion planning committee – many hands make light work. Include a variety of people with different skills and gifts.
 - The Chair: Someone with great organizational skills to keep the train on the track.
 - The Treasurer: Is there a bean counter in your class? Have them track expenses and payments.
 - The Promoter: Who are your class social butterflies? Get them to spread the word.
 - The Producer: This is your “can do” and “make it happen” person.
- Lock down a date. Popular times are summer, since people seem to travel more frequently and fall, when Homecoming or another football game can be part of the fun.

- To plan your reunion around an athletic event, [click here](#) for SMSA's athletic calendar.
- Determine event style and location.
 - One night event or weekend event perhaps including golf, bowling or a Ledger sporting event?
 - Casual gathering: Consider a pub, park or classmate's home.
 - Seated or buffet dinner: Consider one of Fond du Lac's banquet facilities.
 - Determine budget. Will you need to charge for attendance? How much?
 - [Click here](#) for a complete listing of local businesses you can partner with to make your reunion a huge success.
- Mass or SMSA Campus Tour?
 - Contact Holy Family Catholic Community if you would like mass to be part of your celebration. Ask them about reserving pews and a class blessing during mass. 920-921-0580 ~ info@hffdl.org
 - Contact Chris Gilles if you would like to incorporate a campus tour into your reunion. See if you can locate your old locker and see how your old stomping ground has evolved!
- Trivia anyone? Class acknowledgements?
 - Do you need items to give away for trivia prizes or acknowledging who traveled the farthest, who married their high school sweetheart, who has the most grandkids, etc.? Contact Chris Gilles for some fun SMSA "swag."
- Will you need a photographer?
 - Will there be someone who was on the yearbook staff attending? Is one of your classmates a photographer by trade or as a hobby? Tap into them so your reunion memories can be captured.
- Will there be music at your reunion?
 - Is there a DJ in your class or someone who just loves music and has a good speaker? How 'bout someone who participated in the music department during high school? Ask them to take charge of the music for your event.
 - Create a play list: Music can make or break an event. Remember the top hits of your day? So do your classmates! Ask them to provide their favorite tunes from their high school days when they RSVP so you can create the ultimate throwback play list. Whether you are swinging, rockin', doing the disco or hip hopping, you will want to be sure you are jamming to tunes from your graduation decade!

Promote Your Reunion

Spread the word! People can't attend if they don't know about it. Keep in mind, there are typically two spikes you will see in RSVP's. The overachievers (you know who they are) will respond immediately! The procrastinators (we know a name just

popped into your brain), will reply the week of the event. Knowing there will be a lull, here are a few tips to keep the momentum going:

- Set goals and timelines. Are you aiming for 50 attendees, 100, more? Set a goal and then build your promotional plan.
- Start communicating “save the date” 6-9 months in advance. Some of your classmates will need to make travel plans. Get your reunion date on their calendar now!
- Follow up with a finalized invitation 12-16 weeks in advance.
- Reach out once again 4-5 weeks in advance to those that have not yet replied, (sometimes we all need a memory jog).
- Communicate a “final call” 2 weeks in advance.
- Think about what channels you will use.
 - Mailed invitation
 - Email
 - Facebook (many classes establish their own FB page)
 - Personal contact - Tap social influencers from your class who were part of different social circles and activities while in high school. Ask them to promote the reunion within these groups.
 - SMSA website and alumni email communications – provide Chris Gilles your information (who, what, where, when) and she will make this happen!
 - Combination of several or all of the above.

Host Your Reunion

After all of the planning, the day to celebrate has finally arrived! Take a breath and enjoy the camaraderie. Here are a few tips to make your reunion the success you imagined.

- Check in: No matter how formal or informal your event is, you will want to have a check in table. People like to be welcomed to an event rather than wander around feeling lost (been there...right)? It is also your chance to keep attendance, re-introduce yourself, and let your guests know where the food and drinks are located.
- Name tags: This is a must! You may not recognize your class mates if they still aren't rocking the mullet, crewcut, or bee hive they sported in high school.
- Step up to the mic - you can do it! It's only appropriate to thank your classmates for making the effort to attend – some have traveled many miles to spend time to be with their fellow classmates. The key is to keep it short. Let's face it, they didn't travel from Timbuktu to hear a drawn-out speech. Connecting with others is what they came for. Not comfortable doing this – delegate another classmate.
- Pause for a moment of silence for those classmates that have passed away.
- Before your event is over, and everyone goes their separate ways, be sure to take a group picture.

Stay Connected

You just had one heck of an event. You connected with classmates – some of which you haven't seen since, well...graduation! Now let's keep that Ledger spirit alive!

- Send pictures from your event (small write up appreciated) to Chris Gilles.
- Send updated classmate contact information to Chris Gilles.
- Post pictures on social media.
- Thank your attendees for coming.
- Follow up with a survey to those who attended. Find out what they loved (or loathed) about the reunion. Don't be afraid of negative comments – this feedback will help you plan spectacular future events.
- Thank the host committee for their time investment in planning your gathering.
- Consider getting together more frequently than the typical “every 5 years” standard. Let's face it, no one is getting any younger and who doesn't want to enjoy time with old friends again? How 'bout planning these “off year” events as a casual gathering that includes the classes surrounding yours. For instance, if you graduated in 1970, include the classes of 1969 and 1971 for a casual lunch or happy hour.
- Be the messenger. There are big moments – both happy and sad – that you all will experience before you get together once again. Keep classmate emails and share these updates to stay in touch.
- Show your Ledger Pride throughout the year with spirit wear. [Click here](#) to order apparel and other SMSA items.
- Visit SMSA's website often to see what's happening at your alma mater.
- Let us know how we can help YOU stay CONNECTED!