

Academy of Holy Angels Alumni Program

Preparing a Successful AHA Reunion

A Comprehensive Guide

Jesse A. Foley '89
Alumni Officer
6600 Nicollet Avenue South
Richfield, MN 55423
(612-798-2621)
jfoley@ahastars.org

Dear Reunion Coordinators,

With the support of AHA staff, you and your classmates are about to plan a great reunion. A well-planned reunion will have strong attendance, be fun for classmates and will reunite and re-engage alumni to our beloved AHA.

The AHA Alumni office stands ready to guide and support the planning process and we hope that his manual will effectively take you through the process from start to finish. While we are here to support you, it is the reunion committee's responsibility to plan and execute the event.

The most successful reunion is a result of excellent communication, updated address information, timely invitations, and open communication between the alumni office and reunion planning committee. Let's work together to plan a successful and memorable event!

As you dive into the planning process, be sure to keep in touch with AHA staff to discuss problems, address updates, and go over ideas.

You may reach me in my office at 612-798-2621 or by email at jfoley@ahastars.org. I look forward to working with you!

God Bless and Go Stars!

Jesse A. Foley '89
AHA Alumni Director

AHA Alumni Engagement and the Purpose of a Class Reunion

The purpose of the AHA Alumni Program is to serve our alumni in meaningful ways and to keep them informed about how our mission transforms lives and makes a positive impact in the world. From that process we hope alumni will be more naturally inclined and will have a desire to play an active role in supporting our mission. We see class reunions as a unique opportunity to see and serve our alumni and inform them about AHA.

From the AHA Advancement Team to our Reunion Planners:

Our hopes for AHA Class Reunions

- We want to be involved and support the reunion planning process
- We hope to gather updated contact information about our alumni
- We want to have appropriate staff representation at the reunion and be allowed to greet, inform and speak to the group on behalf of AHA.
- Where appropriate, during a reunion year, we hope that each reunion class would consider supporting AHA in some way as a gesture to show gratitude towards their alma mater. Of high priority to AHA would be helping to sponsor a scholarship for a high-need student.
- We want to send a follow-up letter after the reunion thanking the class for gathering and where appropriate asking for support.

AHA Alumni Office Reunion Service Plan

Before we cover the step by step process for planning a reunion, we want to outline the support services the AHA Alumni Office is happy to provide. Please read this section carefully. The alumni office has made changes to better support the process and to avoid problems related to classes that have experienced cost overruns.

The AHA Alumni Office services include:

- AHA will provide to each planning group lists of classmates and upon request, past staff addresses, phone numbers and email
- Using updates from class coordinators, AHA will update classmate address and phone information in school data base so updated lists may be produced throughout the planning process.
- AHA will cover printing cost of standard “Save the Date” postcard and reunion invitation.

Note: The printing cost will be covered if a class chooses to use the standard (usually a 5 x 7 inch postcard) version of the postcard and invitation. **Classes that choose to produce an original postcard or invitation (this includes any modifications to the standard templates) are responsible for the graphic design and payment of all printing costs.**

- Cover postage expense for “Save the Date” postcard and reunion invitation.
- Upon request, provide address labels for mailings
- Promote reunion event information in the following ways:

On the AHA Web Site Alumni Pages
On the AHA Alumni Facebook page
In the Summer Communique
Through AHA's monthly electronic alumni newsletter

- If necessary, cover cost for one current or past AHA faculty member to attend reunion event.
 - Provide AHA spirit items for give-a-way gifts at the reunion.
- Provide on-going support for reunion planning committee members before, during, and immediately following the reunion. An AHA staff member will attend first reunion committee planning meeting and will be available as needed for additional assistance.

Reunion Theme Ideas

There are countless reunion ideas to choose from, here are some to get you started!

Formal evening event	Event around AHA Homecoming Weekend
Casual evening event	Family picnic at a park
Golf Outing	Class Mass in the AHA Chapel
Event in a home	Brunch with tea & coffee
Luncheon	Bowling/ice skating event
AHA tour with refreshments	Professional entertainment
Buffet, sit-down or hors d'oeuvres	Event at AHA's Stars Are Out Tonight
Event at AHA's Rock the Lawn	

Reunion Roles and Responsibilities

The reunion planning process will be easy with a committee that will share the workload. It is important that decisions be made with the entire group to ensure the many opinions impact the final details of the reunion. We recommend the following positions for your committee:

Reunion Chair:

- The Chair is the overall event coordinator. The Chair is responsible for
- Plan meetings
- Establishes timeline
- Serves as primary liaison between the AHA Alumni Office and committee members
- Establishes reunion budget and ensures that all expenses are covered by classmate payments. Works with alumni office to develop "Save the Date" postcard and reunion invitation.

Site Coordinator:

- The site coordinator is the point person for researching event locations, establishing communications with a representative at the location, possible music and decoration resources. The Site Coordinator also is responsible for:
- Negotiates with selected event locations
- Is responsible for the details of event contacts and price
- Researches menu and beverage options
- Works with class coordinator to handle final payment of all event contacts.

Class Coordinator:

- The Class Coordinator has the important job of pulling the class together through energy, communications and creativity.
- Ought to establish a process to reach classmates through web, social media, phone and personal contacts
- Works with all committee members to research lost addresses and other contact information. Communicates with alumni office to ensure that information is sent back to AHA and is updated in the official record
- Coordinates processing of reunion invitation.

Attendance and Banking Manager

- The Attendance/Banking Manager is responsible for establishing and maintaining the class bank account. They also:
- Accepts RSVP's and event payments from classmates
- Maintains accurate attendance list
- Forwards attendance list to alumni office for name tag processing
- Collects "walk-in" payments at event
- Produces final expense records for reunion planning committee.

Memory Book Designer and Editor

- Distributes Memory Book Questionnaire
- Gathers memory book details from classmates.
- Develops memory book using text and/or incorporating photos and other information.
- Provides camera-ready copy to AHA for photo copying
- Distributes book to classmates at event.

Photographer

- The official class photographer has the responsibility of gathering old and (hopefully) fun photos from high school and posting them on facebook to drive excitement
- Take new photographs at the reunion.
- Forwards copies of photos with complete list of names (including spouses and guests) to alumni director for inclusion in the Communique and for the web.

The Reunion Planning Process

Every AHA graduating class is unique and so we hope you will tailor your event to meet the personality of your class. Some committee members have already planned a class reunion and others are involved because they want to see changes in the event. Still others are bright-eyed and brand new and will be happy with anything! No matter how much experience you have with the process, we encourage you to listen to each other, try something new, and learn from other classes. You may also contact other schools, surf the web, or head to the library for ideas. The following planning information should serve as a place to start. Best of luck!

The Early Stages

- 1. Recruit a planning committee.** At least one year before event, the alumni office will publicize upcoming reunions in a variety of ways including: the AHA website, on the facebook page, on the Alumni Newsletter, in eblasts and in the Communique. Whenever possible, we will include names of those planners who have already expressed interest, and will ask others to come forward to help in the planning process.
- 2. Attend the first meeting and the reunion training session.** Class committee members should find a time and location to gather and meet with an AHA staffmember who will provide advice about reunions. We strongly recommend that all committee members attend this initial meeting to obtain planning materials, class lists, and be part of a question and answer dialogue. While these sessions are not required, we are confident that the information will greatly benefit your reunion event.
- 3. Set the second committee planning meeting.** Gather planners to discuss role assignments. Examine the class list. Discuss plan for obtaining correct addresses and photo information. Brainstorm to determine the components of your ideal reunion event. What is essential, what would be “nice”, and what does your group want to avoid? You should get an initial idea of location and other details such as foods, beverages, entertainment, and decorations. Event price should also be discussed at this first meeting.
- 4. Set goals for your next meeting.** What work would you like completed? What information needs to be researched? Do you need to recruit additional committee members? Set a follow up meeting date. Determine the follow up meeting agenda.
- 5. Create a contact list.** Place committee member names, phone numbers, addresses, emails and role assignments on a contact list. Ask the event chair to distribute this list before the next meeting. Send a copy of this list to the AHA alumni office.

Gathering Information

- 1. Updating the class list.** AHA tries very hard to update alumni information throughout every year. Unfortunately our records are never as updated and accurate as we would like. AHA will provide the best class list we’ve got and every committee member will be provided with a class list electronically or hard copy upon request. The list will include names, spouse names, addresses, phone and email information for classmates. It will also indicate if addresses are lost and if a classmate is deceased.
- 2. Researching graduate data.** There are many ways to determine that correct mailing and phone information for classmates. As a committee, eyeball the list and make changes to information you know is incorrect. Contact your schoolmates to see if they know where the missing people are. Siblings and parents may also provide corrections to information on the list. Using facebook, LinkedIn and other internet search sites are also good tools to use.

You may also make a plea for classmates to track down friends in order to update information in the “Save the Date” postcard.

Please notify the alumni office of all updates in an orderly manner as you receive them.

Where to have your class reunion?

Research the event location. During the first committee meeting your group developed a vision for the reunion. You probably discussed location, price, entertainment options, food and beverage ideas and everything else! With these ideas in mind, the site coordinator has the important job of researching event options.

On the AHA Campus

The alumni office would like you to consider AHA as an event location. AHA has undergone a number of facility improvements including a bright and attractive “Commons Annex” that looks out on the beautiful courtyard. By holding your event on campus, your class can see that their generous donations have helped our school expand and improve its facilities. **We hope that an on campus reunion will help put you in the right perspective to travel down memory lane with your classmates.**

An on campus event provides you with many options in terms of environment and pride. You are free to create a casual or formal event. Your class could have a barbecue or do a sit down dinner. AHA can host 20 to 200+. Plan a daytime event for families. Hold a class Mass followed by a brunch. Hire a caterer or provide your own food and beverages for the event. We will provide the tables and chairs. Bring in balloons and a banner or go crazy with decorations. Use our sound system, projectors or other technology to make your reunion special. The kitchen is often available.

An on-campus event can include the following options:

- Park in the AHA or St. Peter’s Parking Lot
- Meet in the lovely AHA Lobby or go directly to the Commons
- Gather and socialize in the Commons/Cafeteria
- Dine in the AHA Common’s Annex overlooking the beautiful courtyard
- Have a tour inside and/or outside
- See the library, theater, renovated classrooms, parlor, Convocation Center and much more!
- Hold a class Mass in the chapel

An on campus event is a great option and the price is right. Depending on the facilities used, the class will be charged a minimal fee to cover the cost of maintenance support and clean up.

Contact Jesse Foley in the alumni office for a facility tour. We think you will like what you see!

Off the AHA Campus

If you are more interested in an off-site event, start calling early. Spaces book up quickly for summer and fall events. When looking at event spaces and services, get a clear picture of what is available and what the contracts require. We suggest you ask the following questions:

- If the location is outside, what happens if it rains?
- What is the room fee? Is it negotiable if attendance is strong or not strong?
- What is the charge for other services? Consider tip, bartender, setup, and cleanup.
- Is there a “minimum” charge you are responsible for no matter how many people attend your event?
- **You must plan for tax and service fees. There will be added to your final bill. Know exactly what this expense will be before you set your event price!**
- What is the final confirmation date for # of people attending? A location will usually prepare enough food for 3% above the confirmation #. Be sure to ask if you have room to grow. You do not want to be in a situation where there is not enough food!
- Will the food service provide a limited # of special meals for vegetarian requests?
- Is the space “flexible” depending on the number of people attending.
- Are you required to pay for the room reservation in advance?
- Can you bring in outside food or beverages?
- Can you select your own DJ, or are you required to use theirs?
- Exactly what time can you begin set up in the event location?
- What time will the site, band, or DJ be set up?
- What is the latest your group can be in the space?
- What limitations do you have regarding decorations?
- What happens if you cancel?
- How does the location handle final payment? Will they bill you for amount due, or are you required to pay the day of the event.
- When negotiating a contract, be very conservative about the # of guests you plan on. Plan on fewer than $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of all classmates. Do not include spouses in your totals. You can always add people to your totals on the day you guarantee your count. You can always order more food at this time as well.

Things that can make a reunion special

Memorials are a wonderful way to remember your classmates who are deceased. Classes often do a prayer at the beginning of the event. As the name of each deceased classmate is read, a rose is placed in a vase to remember the classmate.

Giveaways are fun for everyone and AHA is happy to provide some spirit items. Encourage classmates to donate items from their company or items they have purchased. Place classmate names in a bowl. As you pull out a name, recognize the door prize donor.

Invite classmates to gather for a community service project. The alumni office can put you in touch with a number of agencies needing assistance or you can assist with the AHA All-School Service Day which is held each May.

Honor classmates who have made significant contributions to their community. Invite classmates to submit nominations before the event.

Invite as many past faculty and staff members to your reunion as possible – it means so much to them to be invited! Offer to sponsor a few of these special guests.

Put together a slide show of old pictures

Invite classmates to submit photos and stories, share the funny stories with all

Offer a vegetarian food option for your classmates. Include this option on your invitation and RSVP card.

The Bank Account

The reunion committee banking manager is responsible for opening a reunion account for your event. The bank will cover the fee structure and procedures for the account. We recommend that the reunion chair and banking manager have signing privileges on the account. The bank may require a minimum opening balance. Each committee member could provide “seed” money for the account. Once the account is up and running, the “seed” money can be applied to the event fee for committee members attending the reunion.

The Decision Phase

- 1. Hold the next meeting.** There will be a lot to report at the second meeting. Allow each member time to report on their research assignment. After considering all the information, begin to make some definite decisions about the date, time, location, entertainment and decoration details, menu, and price.
- 2. Develop a budget/set a price.** This is the most difficult part of reunion planning. You must plan for every expense and leave a cushion for surprises and omissions. A thorough expense plan will help you set a fair price. The event fee should be affordable to most. Be sure to consider the age of your group. Are you including spouses and significant others? Shoot for the moon in terms of “services” and then be ready to cut back so the event is accessible to all. People plan to pay more for a sit down dinner and dance. They may prefer a lower event fee that requires them to pay for their own beverages. Remember- this is not a wedding. The dance is not required. Fancy decorations are probably not necessary. Your classmates will want to visit and catch up. Everything else is secondary!

It is impossible to predict exactly how many classmates will attend your event. Attendance will affect your bottom line. The earlier and more often people receive information on the event, the more likely they will attend. If it is affordable, they will probably attend. If their friends are going, they will maybe attend. If the date is free and known well in advance, they might attend. **Bottom line- Do not expect everyone to attend. Do not set your event price with this standard. Plan on one third to one half of all classmates. Do not include spouses in the #'s plan. If you book a space with an aggressive attendance goal, the site will base its projected food and beverage sales on this aggressive attendance plan. You may be locked into these projections even if your attendance falls well short to your predictions.**

To help your group finalize the event price, use the reunion budget sheet included in this manual.

Final Details

1. **If you plan to create a memory book and you want assistance running copies, please give the document to the alumni office for photocopying 5 days prior to the event.** The memory book must be camera ready.
2. **Process name tags.** The alumni office will produce name tags for all classmates attending the reunion. Present a copy of your attendance list **5 days prior** to your event. Name tags and memory book copies will be available for pick up one day prior to your event.
3. **Assemble a reunion supply box.** You will want to bring a number of items to the reunion. A possible list of items would include:
 - Name tags (blanks for walk ins)
 - RSVP list (remember to update as walk ins occur)
 - Cash box for walk ins
 - Sharpie markers
 - Pens
 - Memory books
 - Roses or items for memorial recognition
 - Give-a-ways
 - Decorations
 - Tape
 - Copy of all event contracts
 - Final payment if required
 - Drink tickets
 - Camera, film, and batteries
 - Radio/music if providing own
 - Miscellaneous

The Day of the Event

1. **Arrive Early.** Your committee should plan on arriving early to decorate and handle any last minute details. Assign two committee members to welcome classmates as they arrive. Check the attendance list to verify registration and payment status. Keep accurate list of all walk ins and do your best to capture their biographical information. Be sure to collect payment on the spot.
2. **Take photos.** We would like to publish your reunion photos on our alumni facebook page, online and in the AHA Communique. Close ups of small groups are generally the best for use in this publication but we also like whole-group shots to show how many classmates chose to attend. Submit photos ASAP after your event. Please include details of names, spouses, etc as these are needed for the Communique!
3. **Have a great time!**

After the Reunion

- 1. Take a day or so to recover and reminisce.**
- 2. Submit the following to the alumni office:**
 - Final attendance list
 - Copy of memory book
 - Address corrections, if they hadn't been submitted already
 - Reunion committee evaluation form

Conclusion

Successful reunions don't just happen. Your personal commitment and the dedication of your planning committee can and will make it happen. The two keys are teamwork and preparation. Let's do our part to host an incredible event!

Enclosures

- Reunion Budget Planner
- Event planning timeline
- "Save the Date" Postcard Data Sheet
- Sample "Save the Date" Postcard
- Reunion Invitation Data Sheet
- Sample "Standard" Reunion Invitation
- Sample "Non Standard" Reunion Invitation
- Memory Book Survey Sample
- Reunion Survey

Reunion Budget Planner

Expense Item	Unit Cost	# of Units	Total Cost	Notes
Food				
Beverages				
Room rental				
Decorations				
DJ/Entertainment				
Door prizes/awards				
Specialty printing				
Additional postage				
Paper products				
Miscellaneous				
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$	

Reunion Planning Timeline

12-15 Months: The Early Stages

- AHA Alumni office promotes the reunions for the year and encourages alums to step up to assist on the planning committee.
- Early planners begin the process of recruiting additional reunion planning committee members through word of mouth, social media and other.
- Planning committee sets a first date to meet and receive reunion tips from staff.
- Set second reunion planning meeting for committee members.
- Discuss event components, likes and dislikes.
- Set date and plan content of second reunion meeting.
- Create contact list for committee members.

9-12 Months: Gather Information

- Begin updating class list through a variety of methods.
- Notify alumni office of any address and phone number changes.
- Make sure that the class Facebook page is promoting the reunion date
- Research event location, entertainment, decorations, and other details.
- Establish a class bank account.
- Hold the second committee meeting. Report on all information gathered.
- Develop an event budget. Select an event location, finalize date and time of event. Set the event price.

6-9 Months: Promote the Reunion

- Create a “save the date” postcard/invitation. Mail the postcard to all located classmates.
- Continue to promote the reunion on facebook and in other ways to increase interest
- Continue researching lost classmates.
- Work with alumni staff to publicize reunion in a variety of ways.

3-6 Months:

- If necessary, create and mail another reunion invitation. Choose an RSVP date at least four weeks prior to the reunion.
- If desired, develop memory book survey and begin the work of compiling the piece.

2-3 Months:

- Process reunion invitation mailing, Mail reunion
- Invitation and memory book survey.
- Continue to publicize reunion event

3 Weeks out: Record Keeping

- Record RSVP responses as they come in and keep in touch with the restaurant, bar or caterer if plans need to be adjusted.
- Continue the work of data entry of memory book surveys.

- Phone calls/phone tree for all located non-responders.

One Week out: Final Details

- Contact event site with participant totals.
- Send out “not too late to join” messaging over social media and email
- Review event day supply list.
- Deliver camera ready memory book to alumni office for photocopying.
- Deliver attendance list to alumni office to obtain name tags.

One day prior: Final, final details!

- Pick up name tags and memory books from alumni office.
- Check in with event site to cover any final details. Discuss payment arrangements.

Day of the Event

Have fun, take pictures, and celebrate with your friends!

After the Event

- Submit final attendance list, copy of memory book to AHA, final address corrections, and evaluation to forms to the AHA Alumni Office.

“Save the Date”
Postcard Data Sheet

School Name

Academy of Holy Angels

Class of

Reunion Date

Location Name

Classmate Contacts
(List name, phone and
email if available)

Return Address
(Include name, and full address)

Please submit this form to the AHA Alumni office as soon as the date and location have been set.

Send to:
Jesse A. Foley '89
Alumni Director
6600 Nicollet Avenue South
Richfield, MN 55423
jfoley@ahastars.org

Reunion Invitation
Data Sheet

School Name (Circle one)

Academy of Holy Angels

Class of

Schedule of Events

(Include date/s, start and end times if necessary)

Event Description

(Golf, luncheon, dinner picnic, etc.)

Event Location

(Include location name, full address and phone number)

Describe Inclusions

(Include things like appetizers, buffet style meal, # of beverage tickets, desserts, etc.)

Other details

Event price

RSVP Date

Return Address

(include name and full address)

Target Mail by Date

Send to:
Jesse A. Foley
Alumni Director
Academy of Holy Angels
6600 Nicollet Avenue South
Richfield, MN 55423

Class of _____
Memory Book Survey

First Name _____ Maiden Name (if applicable) _____

Last Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Family Details _____

Job Title _____ Company Name _____

What have you been doing the last ____ years?

What are your two favorite high school memories?

Please return this form by _____ to:

Jesse A. Foley '89
Alumni Director
6600 Nicollet Avenue South
Richfield, MN 55423
jfoley@ahastars.org

Reunion Committee Survey

Please evaluate your class reunion. The AHA Alumni Office will review the information and use it to improve reunion planning in the future.

Name _____ **Committee Role** _____

School Name (Circle one) Academy of Holy Angels

Class of _____

Please comment on the following:

Alumni Office Training Program/Manual

Alumni Office Support/Services

Event Location

Classmate Attendance

Event Price

What would you change about the event or planning process?

Other comments:
