

NORTH CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL
REUNION
PLANNING GUIDE

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WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

PLANNING YOUR REUNION

The Washington Township Schools Foundation (WTSF) has put together this reunion guide to assist you in your reunion planning efforts. Whether you're a first-timer or you've helped to host a past event, we'd like to thank you for your willingness to embark on this planning adventure. Not only will your efforts result in a fun time with old friends, but you also help to further expand the reach of our outstanding North Central Alumni network by keeping contacts current.

What is the Washington Township Schools Foundation (WTSF)?

We are a board of over 30+ members (many of whom are NCHS alumni) supported by a professional staff of five. The WTSF mission is to connect private funding, community, and alumni with Washington Township Schools to support and enhance the unique educational experiences of our students. As the home of North Central Alumni, we assist with reunions, provide a central spot for alumni news and contacts, and help enrich the lives of 50,000+ NCHS alumni!

How WTSF Can Support You

WTSF serves as a liaison between your classmates, the school, and other North Central alumni. We can support your reunion efforts by:

- Posting information such as a link to your class reunion website or FB page on our website.
- Providing periodic updates on our social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, IG)
- Providing a spreadsheet with your class members' contact information and help provide a system for updating that information
- Assigning a dedicated space for your class at North Central Homecoming, should you choose to host your event that weekend
- Sponsoring one mailing (a standard postcard from WTSF) to your entire class.
- Helping to coordinate ancillary activities within your reunion, such as school tours, connecting with NCHS teachers of interest to your class, fundraising and scholarship endeavors
- Most importantly, being a consistent source of support and answers as you embark on planning your event

We know there is a lot of work to be done, and much of it falls on your shoulders, so while we hope this guide answers some of those questions and provides the blueprint for a successful reunion, know that we are available to be a support. **Feel free to reach out to Brittany Wayman, Director of Alumni at bwayman@msdwt.k12.in.us or at 317-205-7262 with any questions.**

Why Have a Reunion?

Think about what you want to accomplish with your reunion:

- Get old friends together and network with other alums
- Set the stage for keeping in touch in the future
- Do a service project
- Celebrate the accomplishments of classmates and the foundation provided by North Central
- Raise money for a worthy cause within Washington Township

TIP

If you are planning a fundraising component within your reunion, be sure to reach out to a member of our staff in advance. We can provide the framework for collecting funds and identify the best beneficiary for money raised by your class.

GETTING STARTED

Since you have received this information, you have probably already informed a WTSPF team member of your intentions to help plan the reunion. If not, please do so by contacting our Director of Alumni, Brittany Wayman at bwayman@msdwt.k12.in.us or 317-205-7262. We can get you started, or perhaps direct you to other classmates who have shown interest.

The Reunion Planning Committee

Once you have found a few other classmates to help you plan, don't stop there. Reach out to other classmates you think may be interested in helping to organize your reunion. As a rule of thumb, a planning committee of about 6 volunteers can be a big help, but be wary of becoming too big. Your structure should include:

- A diverse committee – Find classmates from various affinity groups (athletes, performing arts, etc. to help broaden your appeal and outreach)
- Establish a leader (Reunion Chairperson) who is the point of all committee communication and decision making
- Assign specific volunteer roles:
 - Alumni Outreach (the point person on your data and alumni search)
 - Communications
 - Event (lead contact with venues, décor, etc.)
 - Registration & Information Collection (slideshows, memory books, etc.)
 - Treasurer

When to get started

Try to keep communication going between reunion years and in advance of your reunion to secure volunteers. Planning on the basics and outreach should start at least one year out.

Check out the NCHS Class of 1972's website to get an idea of what you can include on a class reunion website if you choose to go this route.

NCHS Class of 1972's reunion website:
<https://northcentralclassof72.com/3/events.htm>

TIP

Get a contact list early and survey your classmates on best date, desired ticket cost/price point, venue ideas, event activities, giveaways, etc. Let your class shape your reunion ideas!

What does the Planning Committee need to consider when getting started?

There are several things you'll need to consider when you begin to plan your reunion. If you have surveyed your class, some of the decisions may be made for you. All of the tasks below are discussed in more detail in this Reunion Planning Guide:

- Upfront Costs and Financing
- Date Selection
- Venue Selection and Format Options
- How to Locate Classmates and Promote Your Event
- Food and Drink
- Programs & Entertainment
- Photography
- Décor
- Novelties, Door Prizes, and Awards
- Fundraising
- Additional activities the weekend of your reunion

Upfront Costs & Financing

One of the challenges each reunion committee faces is how to pay for up-front costs associated with early planning, before you have begun your ticket sales. Some of the upfront costs you may face are the following:

- Stationery supplies
- Postage
- Printing (reunion booklets, name tags)
- Gifts / novelties / decorations
- Web site development & hosting
- Liability insurance
- Reunion facilities deposit
- Catering deposit
- Entertainment deposit

Some reunions have found it reasonable and successful to have each person put in what they could afford in a petty cash fund to get the reunion started. This is generally referred to as seed money. Once the expenses have been settled, each person can either get their seed money back or donate it to any fundraising efforts. Asking for donations from committee members and friends may be the best way to collect the needed upfront costs. Some classes have asked classmates who own businesses to sponsor their reunions. Check with the committee that organized your last reunion to see if there is any money left over from that event to use for the upcoming reunion.

TIP

When your reunion is over, send a note to those in attendance and solicit donations as “seed money” for the next reunion. Some classes have done this with great success, and the money comes in handy when starting the planning for the next reunion.

Setting your ticket price is very important. Make sure you have all of your costs outlined prior to setting a ticket price. Consider adding a few dollars to the ticket price to donate to WTSF for support of current NC students.

With every reunion, there are classmates that won't be able to afford to come. While that is a reality, you want to find any means necessary to get people there. Many classes offer a discreet way to allow those classmates access. Consider adding this option to your reunion pricing. Some tips to help make it run smoothly:

- Have one point of contact for those to reach out to privately. Respect the sensitive nature of their financial situation
- Indicate a discounted (or free) option is available on your registration page, website or invitation
- Allow other class members a chance to add a “sponsor a classmate” expense to their registration
- Use a pricing tier (like what is shown below) to help make the event more affordable for some as well as offset any cost of providing free admission
 - Early Bird Pricing (Deadline a couple months before reunion) – Cost covers all expenses for person
 - Regular Pricing (Deadline on or just before final count is due to venue) – Cost covers all expenses + extra to cover unforeseen expenses
 - At-the-Door Pricing (Walk-up amount for those who procrastinate) – Cost covers all expenses + surcharge to cover unforeseen expenses and make money for your class

Please keep in mind that while WTSF does have a tax ID number, it cannot be used for reunion gatherings. We have a board policy in place prohibiting third parties from using WTSF, logo or tax ID number to receive non-profit discounts on venues, services, products, entertainment, etc. In order to keep our non-profit status, our tax ID can legally only be used in conjunction with events exclusively raising funds for our organization.

Date Selection

Many classes decide to host their reunions over the NCHS Homecoming weekend, which typically falls sometime in the month of September. This is a popular weekend for many alums because of the annual alumni tailgating event and football game.

Some classes have chosen to have their reunions in the summer so they can enjoy an outdoor venue and take advantage of summer vacation. A reunion on Father's Day weekend in June may give out-of-towners an extra incentive to come back to Indianapolis for the weekend.

Other classes have decided to hold their reunions over a holiday break, such as Thanksgiving or Christmas, under the guise that many people already have plans to come back home during these times. The holiday reunions seem to make the most sense for your first reunions (10-, 15- or 20-year) when it's safer to assume many parents or relatives still reside in Indianapolis.

Venue Selection and Format Options

You may have in mind a particular venue at which you'd like to hold your reunion. If that is the case, your date, of course, would be dictated by that venue's availability.

It is important to keep in mind the estimated size of your reunion, the size of the event space and its cost. A successful event will generally include 10-15% of your living alumni population. So, if you graduated with 800 in your class, having 80-120 alumni back for your reunion would be a success. When you factor in guests, you can increase your expected percentage to approximately 20-25%. Use that number to build your anticipated turnout and select a venue. Keep in mind that as you begin to reach bigger milestone reunions like 30 years and up, your class size will naturally decrease which means your attendance will as well.

TIP

Find a venue that will cover your anticipated numbers, but don't overestimate. A spacious venue can backfire. Empty rooms = unhappy alumni. The more energy and intimacy you can add, the better the memory and conversation. Crowded is not a bad reunion.

The cost of renting a facility can range from only a few hundred dollars to a few thousand dollars. You will need to do some early budgeting and ticket price estimating to determine what's going to be feasible for your class. Remember that, unless you have someone in your class willing to cover the entire cost of the reunion out of their own pocket (good luck with that!), ticket sales may be your only source of recouping the costs incurred for your event.

Below is our list of venues that are possible reunion destinations. Those in red have a North Central connection (alumnus owner). If you use a venue that is not on the list below — and you had a good experience — please let us know about it!

Name of Venue	Location
Balmoral House	Fishers (106th & Allisonville)
Champps Restaurant	Keystone Crossing
Children's Museum	30th & Illinois
Conrad Hotel	Downtown
Daddy Jack's Restaurant	96th & Meridian
District Tap	Clearwater
Fishers Conference Center	Fishers
Highland Country Club	NW Indianapolis
Hyatt	Downtown
Indiana Roof Ballroom	Downtown
Indiana State Fairgrounds	38th & Fall Creek
Indiana State Museum	Downtown
Indianapolis Art Center	Broad Ripple
Indianapolis Zoo	Downtown
Knights of Columbus	Broad Ripple
The Marot	Meridian & Fall Creek
The Montage	Castleton
Murat (Old National Centre)	Downtown
NCAA Hall of Champions	Downtown
Oak Hill Mansion	Carmel
The Renaissance	Carmel
Ritz Charles	Carmel
Riviera Club	Broad Ripple
The Sheraton	Keystone Crossing
The Speak Easy	Broad Ripple
The Willows	Broad Ripple
White River Yacht Club	Broad Ripple

TIP

While reviewing the past few year's reunions, we are seeing a trend that may be the future of class reunions, especially in non-monumental years. It seems that making your event affordable with less emphasis on an expensive sit-down meal or buffet, band, etc. will help in getting more attendance at your event. And using a more casual venue will result in not having to succumb to high prices and expenditure guarantees.

How to Locate Classmates and Promote Your Event

Finding and locating your classmates is always the most difficult part about planning a reunion, especially if it's the first reunion for your class. WTSF oversees the database of alumni information. Reunions are a big part of our updating strategy, so we want to do everything we can to track down members of your class. We will provide a spreadsheet of your class to your committee.

PLEASE keep access to this spreadsheet limited to only those committee members who need to see it, and please keep one master sheet, to avoid varying information. This list needs to be treated as confidential information to ensure no one uses it for any other purpose. After the reunion, please share updated contact information of your classmates with our office. We will update it in our database. Accuracy matters and is incredibly important as you plan the next reunion. The class reunion chairs will have access to that information when needed. We continue to update the database throughout the year.

Tools for Locating Classmates

The class list you received has the most recent known address, phone number and in some cases, email address. Some other tools available to help you locate classmates and promote the event are:

Contact tool	Cost	Complexity	Effectiveness
Word of mouth	Free	Easy	Good for those in Indianapolis still in touch with classmates, but will likely not reach others
Facebook, Twitter and other social media	Usually free	Easy for those familiar with it.	Good, but only for those engaged
Email	Free	Easy, once the mailing list is established	Hit and miss – depends greatly on how many people notice the email
Phone Calls	Free	Not difficult, but time consuming	Very
Mailing	Expensive – bulk mailing less expensive, but no return of undeliverable mail	Not difficult, but time consuming	Very
Creating a class reunion web site	Small cost; free web sites also available	Medium	May be redundant; same information available elsewhere; class web site useful to those not on Facebook
Posting to existing web sites (Craigslist, other public notice boards)	Usually free	Usually easy	Hit and miss – no way to know who might see the notice; The WTSF website has a page with reunion announcements, so be sure you submit information to the office
Classified ads and other print publicity	Free or small cost	Not difficult	Hit and miss – no way to know who might see the notice

Promoting Your Event

Things like email and social media are a powerful, free tools for pulling classmates together. Just make sure to avoid multiple competing pages for your graduating class/event, or classmates will be confused as to the right source for information.

Online events pages or reunion websites can also be a great way to get the word out. There are several online event webpages out there, some with fees only tied into ticket sales, which means you pass the cost on to your classmates. Many of the past reunion groups have built a sites via MyEvent, Eventbrite, EventSmart or others. Fees vary depending on your desired functions. Some are simply event registration sites, while others offer a more permanent home for your reunion, with a social vibe. All should offer opportunities to link to your Facebook page or to your reunion website.

While these are important tools in your reunion planning kit, it's also important to remember that not everyone is on social media, some people do not check email often, etc., so it can be hard to know who has recieved your information. Whether you have a reunion website or a good social media presence, you cannot assume people have heard about your event, so one thing that can be helpful is to post a list of "lost" classmates for folks to access. Many times, they will have an email or address, but just need to see the name to trigger the contact. Then you can add that person to your outreach and help ensure they know about the event.

TIP

Consider a "FLASH" sale the first day that tickets are available. Offer the cheapest discounted tickets you can afford for a very limited period of time, and use it as your first big promotion (email, social media, website, etc.). Drive people to sign up and you've got your first big group of RSVPs and excitement from day 1.

TIP

It is in your best interest that you communicate alumni contact updates with WTSF staff. We will continue to update your class information for future reunions. We have an "update your contact info" link on our website that alumni can fill out 24/7. We update all information that comes in and reach out to confirm with alumni that we updated their information. The most valuable update we can get is email addresses.

What to do at your Reunion

Food and Drink

The three most popular things done at almost any reunion are eating, drinking and socializing. However, there are a variety of ways to do all three. You'll want to take into consideration your budget, venue space and number of people attending. For example, you could have a sit down dinner, a buffet dinner, or no dinner at all. It all depending on you plans and budget.

A dinner will most likely increase the cost of the event, but not every reunion plans a dinner. Many classes find it just as enjoyable to offer hors d'oeuvres and cocktails. Depending on the price you charge per person/per ticket, you may also be able to provide an open bar, a few complimentary drinks for your classmates, or a cash bar. It will all need to be worked out within the means of your anticipated budget and your drink vendor.

Many venues have an in-house food and drink vendor, however, some venues will ask that you find your own caterer. You will want to check if the venue or caterer has a food or drink minimum. If it does, make sure you can make that work within your budget or anticipated attendance and ticket price.

Programs and Entertainment

Remember, keep it simple! People are there to talk and connect, but it can be fun to have a small program of activities, including:

- Playing the NC fight song
- Affinity group performances (A song from Counterpoints alumni, or a cheerleader routine)
- Brief remarks from your class, an NC administrator, WTSF representative or a favorite teacher from your class
- Recognition of those classmates that have passed away
- Classmate recognition
- Have an emcee for the night (generally a committee member)

You'll probably also want to include music in one way or another at your reunion. You could hire a DJ, band or just have someone in your class put a mix of music together, such as music popular when you were in high school! Some classes have contacted NCHS to see about getting one of their many talented vocal or instrumental groups to perform at their reunion. Please contact WTSF if you are interested in going this route.

TIP

Remember that your classmates are there to reconnect and talk, so make sure that whatever you select, that you will not have to scream over the music to talk. Many Reunion Committees have kept the music simple to save costs.

Photography

It's always fun to document this big event. Whether you want to pay to have a professional photographer take photos is up to you. Some photographers only charge for photos they sell after the event but some also charge a flat or hourly fee. You can also consider having a classmate take photos and post them on your website or Facebook after your reunion where names can be "tagged" to faces.

A North Central alumnus, Scott Romer '78, has offered free photography services for many NC reunions over the years. Learn more at www.scottromerphoto.com. Kevin Kiley '76 (317-255-9494) and Ryan Turner '03 (317-828-9072; rtsignature@gmail.com) are also good options for photography.

Some reunions have hired photo booths, which are fun ways for people to document the night. Some companies will provide it for free (charging for pictures taken), while others can work out a per-person charge.

Décor

Again, keep it simple, but give your reunion a good North Central feel, and make it special for your class. Simple red, black and white balloon centerpieces are easy for your committee to assemble. You can also purchase NC spirit wear from the high school and display it, then give it away in raffles or awards. Other ideas to make your reunion unique:

- Memory Books – include old photos, new photos, updates on classmates or any other information you deem pertinent to your class event. You can collect this through registration
- Slide Show – It's simple to have a slide show projected throughout the night. Have every registrant submit an old high school photo, and combine it with photos of newsworthy events from your era for display throughout the night.
- Nametags – Put the senior yearbook photo on each nametag.

TIP

Don't forget to have a registration table where you can welcome attendees as they pick up their nametags. This can also be a great place for people to pick up any other gifts or prizes they receive throughout the event. Note: Some classes cover each others registration tables, helping ensure your volunteers can mingle with their class.

Novelties, Door Prizes, and Awards

It can be fun to give away door prizes, especially if you're using actual tickets. Door prizes can also be used as a fundraising method if you're trying to raise money for a class gift to WTSF. A silent auction is more work, but can also serve as an effective and fun activity that can also help to fundraise for your class. Some reunions have included recognition moments, an "in-memoriam" segment for deceased classmates and have given awards to classmates either in jest (who traveled the furthest to get there) or for, perhaps, more notable accomplishments (who just published their first novel).

North Central Wear: The Spirit Shop at North Central has a huge variety of apparel and other NCHS items which you can either sell during your reunion or use as prizes. The Spirit Shop even has North Central Alumni t-shirts. All items are reasonably priced and all proceeds from the Spirit Shop benefit the North Central Athletic Booster Club. If you wish to pre-purchase items, contact the Spirit Shop Manager to arrange a time for your purchase. If needed, she can also arrange for special hours for your group to shop at the Spirit Shop. And, if you have arranged for school tours at NCHS during your reunion weekend, she can be open during those hours as well. If this is something you are interested in, please contact the WTSF office.

North Central also offers an online Spirit Shop, which can be accessed through the North Central Athletics page, www.nchsathletics.com. The online store offers more than what is available in the Spirit Shop and has hundreds of items that can be customized with various North Central logos. This information is also located on the WTSF website under the alumni center tab.

Fundraising

Reunions can be a great way for you to give back to your school. And this is your chance to help us get your classmates to see the big picture. You had the opportunity for a great education and for personal development at North Central. Now, it's your chance to help create a strong future for the next generation.

WTSF gives dozens of grants and multiple scholarships to worthy teachers, classrooms, programs and graduating students. We encourage you to view your reunion as a chance to generate excess money, which can be donated to:

- **Grants:** Each year, we award over \$110,000 directly to teachers across the district to make programs come to life in their classrooms. Each year, the grants are different but just as impactful. Your class could help sponsor a grant!
- **Programs:** WTSF helps underwrite the costs of several notable programs at North Central, including Panther Quest, AP/IB testing, performing arts, athletics and more. If your class agrees upon a certain program of interest, we can work to direct the money there as well.
- **Scholarships:** The most prestigious scholarship we offer is the Alumni Merit Scholarship, awarded to two top graduating students, in the amount of \$5,000 each. We want to see the award grow, both in amount of money and students. It's your way, as alumni, to help a future alumnus. The Steven Drybread Memorial Scholarship is awarded to an outstanding graduating senior in the performing or fine arts in the amount of \$3,000.

What Else to Plan During Your Reunion Weekend

Many reunion committees plan an entire weekend of events for people coming back to Indianapolis. If your reunion falls on NCHS Homecoming weekend, the Friday night football tailgate is often offered as a Friday night event, WTSF puts on the Homecoming Tailgate Party before the game for North Central families, friends and alumni. This is the perfect place to kick off your reunion. Friday night events can also be small gatherings at the home of a classmate living in town or simply asking everyone to meet up at a local restaurant or bar.

Note: Some reunion classes have found that having a free Friday Night Event takes away from the main event. Some reunions have even found themselves in a financial bind after offering a free Friday night event and a paid Saturday night event. Since you most likely will have a fixed rental cost for Saturday night or have minimum food and drink commitments, this can be a problem, so be sure to promote the event as casual and not mandatory, so alumni will attend for fun, but not take away from the true reunion event.

Some classes have organized family picnics at a park where classmates can bring their kids. Saturday golf outings have also been held as a reunion weekend event. A popular weekend event is a tour of North Central. Other reunions have coordinated tours of Indianapolis for alumni visiting from out of town. If you are interested in organizing a school tour for your class reunion weekend, please contact WTSF.

Below are other ideas you can use to plan your reunion weekend or ideas that people can do on their own.

- Walk and Talk Beer Tours of Downtown Indy
- Through2Eyes Tour (Indiana Ave, Irvington, Foundation Square or Butler Tarkington)
- The Escape Room
- Urban Air Adventure Park
- Bad Axe Throwing
- Top Golf
- Climb Time Indy
- Great Times Fun Park
- The Garage at Bottleworks
- Newfields
- Indianapolis Zoo
- Traders Point Creamery
- Defy Indianapolis
- Canal Walk
- Canal Gondala ride
- Duck Pin Bowling
- Indiana State Museum
- Eiteljorg Museum
- Children's Museum

And Finally...

Remember, you are not alone in this. You have a support network of staff and alumni willing to help. Sometimes it is best to be in touch with the class who just planned the reunion, so let us know and we are happy to connect you with those who just completed a reunion. Plus, your feedback on your experience is vital to making this process better for others. Let us know your successes and failures so we can pass it along to future planners.

Wishing you all the success in your upcoming reunion. Please reach out to me at at (317) 205-7262 or bwayman@msdwt.k12.in.us if I can be of any assistance!

GOOD LUCK!



WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION
Students • Alumni • Community

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CLASS REUNION CHECKLIST

- Form your committee (assigning specific roles) and choose a Reunion Chairperson
- Set a committee meeting schedule and deadlines for accomplished work
- Survey committee or classmates for reunion ideas
- Select your dates(s). Consider hosting during the NCHS Homecoming Weekend
- Notify WTSF so they can add it to the website and Facebook pages
- Determine event venue and format (i.e. cocktail reception, dinner dance, etc.)
- Decide on event programming (presentation, awards, appearances, memorials, etc.)
- Establish funding (seed money) for upfront expenses
- Establish budget
- Establish ticket price(s) and pricing tiers
- Get class spreadsheet from WTSF & coordinate update protocol
- Begin contacting classmates and searching for those “lost” alumni
- Develop reunion website and/or Facebook page
- Coordinate some sort of save-the-date correspondence
- Work with WTSF to send out an email & postcard
- Decide on decorations, venue layout, etc.
- Select entertainment, program elements
- Select a photographer (if applicable)
- Order, purchase or create event mementos, awards, programs, Spirit Wear, etc.
- Create deceased classmate list, memoriam, tribute or gift
- Arrange for school tour and/or Spirit Shop hours
- Create non-main events (Friday night, picnic, service project)
- Create nametags using yearbook photos
- Decide on “Pay it Forward” gift from your reunion
- Create a work schedule for people at reunion (registration desk, etc.) so all can enjoy
- Enjoy the fruits of your labor

After your reunion:

- Send thank you notes to committee, volunteers, vendors and donors or sponsors
- Email or drop off all contact information to WTSF
- Make a class gift donation to the WTSF
- Forward any photos, updates, etc so they can be posted on website
- Solicit those in attendance to be considered as volunteers in the future or contribute
- Save money for future reunions
- Celebrate your hard work and success of your event!**