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TOP TIPS FOR PLANNING A FAMILY REUNION

- 1. USE YOUR LOCAL CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU (CVB)** to help you plan your reunion. CVBs assist reunion planners by checking hotel rates and availability, suggesting activities and providing visitor guides, maps, bargain books, etc. It is a one-stop shop to start your reunion planning. And? These services are FREE.
- 2. BRUSH UP ON YOUR NEGOTIATING SKILLS.** Know that most things are negotiable, so if you're interested in a free hospitality room, late check-out, upgrade for planner/grandparent or complimentary breakfast – ask for it and you might get it.
- 3. IF YOU PLAN IT, THEY WILL COME.** Getting everyone in your family to agree on all details of your reunion can be a challenge. Keep cool and remember that the best you can do is make the majority happy. Reunions strengthen our roots and ensure a lasting legacy; we need to make the effort. And if you do, people will come and have a great time.
- 4. BE PROMPT IN RESERVING YOUR HOTEL** to ensure everything else falls into place. Most hotels have a deadline on how long they can hold rooms and meeting space. So, the sooner you decide, the quicker you can get the ball rolling on the rest of the reunion.
- 5. DECIDE ON A THEME.** This can help you make decisions on food, decorations and entertainment. Think about how you want to make this reunion unique from past gatherings. Incorporate a theme that will help your group revisit and celebrate the past. For example, you could celebrate your heritage, 25th anniversary, "Minneapolis, City of Lakes," a 100th wedding anniversary of your grandparents, awards ceremony, back to the '50s, etc.
- 6. EMPOWER TEENAGERS.** Although this might sound crazy, a good way to keep all the children happy is to put the older kids in charge of planning the activities for the younger ones. Teens can plan activities like a scavenger hunt, games (Survivor, Amazing Race or quiz questions relating to family), crafts, or working on the entertainment.
- 7. USE YOUR FAMILY AS THE ENTERTAINMENT.** We all enjoy a concert of children more when they are your own relatives. The best resource for free and fun entertainment may be within your own family, so show it off. Consider a family talent show, put on a skit, play, concert with musical instruments and singing, or an easy sing-along with grandma's favorites.
- 8. THINK ABOUT GROUP ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR FAMILY.** What about a riverboat cruise, Mall of America, Game-Works, Valleyfair, picnic, ballgame, tug of war, water balloon toss, sack races, book club discussions, family fitness workouts, card games or church? Each family is different and you may want to choose a few different activities to help bond family members together.
- 9. FUNDRAISING CAN BE FUN.** If you want to start a family fund, a fundraiser is an easy sale to your family members. Create a cookbook of family favorites with a story about the recipe, raffle off a homemade quilt, have a silent auction, family T-shirts, directories, photo books, DVDs and more. This fund can be used for postage, website fees and family fun activities.
- 10. GET YOUR FAMILY INVOLVED.** All of the above tips take work and if you create committees and delegate, it will be fun for everyone. Consider committees for: accounting, creating a reunion book, researching family history/genealogy, making souvenirs, taking photographs/videos, maintaining a website, decorating, stuffing welcome bags, coordinating travel/flights, entertainment and children's activities.