

Spring Break, Family Reunions and Summer Vacation

By: Arnold Thiebaud

Do you ever wish your family gatherings were less stressful, more enjoyable and something to look forward to? Well, so do I and I am always looking for new ways to do it! For each family it is different for how, when and where they will get together and coordinating it all can sometimes make your head spin. So make the most of your extra time spent indoors this winter by planning ahead in small steps. Starting now will help your family maximize your budget, reserve the desired venues, find deals along the way, and coordinate everyone's schedules and needs to make it an event everyone can enjoy. Here are just a few tips and ideas that we have put together to help you succeed.

First, start by updating contact information for everyone (email addresses, phone numbers, mailing addresses and finding them on Facebook). Second, contact everyone and maybe discuss a new approach for staying in touch and coordinating the event. Using free tools online (ie. Facebook Fan Page, blog, Google Docs, etc.) makes it easier to keep everyone involved. Most of these have the option to be private and only open to people that you invite to view them. For example, you can create a Google Document that has itineraries, contacts, suggestions, attendance and you can even create surveys to email to your group. You can also use blogs or Facebook to keep your family up to date throughout the year on other news.

Third, get input on where and when the event should happen. The more everyone gets involved the more likely people will be able to attend and be excited about it since they were involved from the start. Fourth, find free resources in the community to help meet all your event needs (ie Convention & Visitors Bureau, city park and recreation offices, etc.). Fifth, make it a group effort by delegating responsibilities and if needed form small committees. Some families rotate who is in charge of the whole event. I would suggest you change that format to a group project with rotating assignments, especially with large extended families. That way everyone has a say and is invested in making it succeed.

Sixth, pull all the details of the event together and distribute it to those attending. For a more detailed list of these ideas visit UtahValley.com/familyreunion for our 8 page planning checklist, 18 page group and family reunion guide, and 5 pages of travel tips. Consider hosting your 2011 reunion in Utah Valley and let us help you for free with lodging accommodation recommendations, itineraries, activities and more at 801-851-2106 or UtahValley.com/familyreunion.