

FAMILY REUNION INSTITUTE'S

STICKY REUNION SITUATION

REUNION CANCELLED AGAIN

September 2021

The Situation:

Our family was really hoping to have a reunion this year. We scaled things back to a one-day picnic, but it was cancelled because family members were worried about too many people attending, (over 100 responded). We're hopeful for next year. In the meantime, how do we keep family members hopes up? How can we create excitement for 2022 when there's so much uncertainty about being safe?

The Fix:



Doug Harris

An FRI survey conducted in August 2021 revealed 92% of reunions are held in the summer. I assume your reunion takes place then, too. Nothing is guaranteed, but we can reasonably presume that COVID will be under control by next summer. Your concern was building excitement yet keeping everyone safe. I suggest you do that by creating a family Facebook page, newsletter, blog, GroupMe, etc. Establish it as the source for exciting news about the reunion and what's going on in the family, as well as a source of info about COVID. Caveat: When giving information about COVID always cite the source (e.g., ABC News, the CDC, etc.). Establish yourself as the reporter, not the source.

When it comes to building excitement there are several approaches. You can release info and teasers about the specifics of the reunion at least monthly. Keep it on their minds. Remember that you don't want to release all the details at once, even if you have them. You also might include interviews with family about their most vivid memories of past family reunions, stories by elders about their lives, recently discovered relatives from genealogy searches, why they plan to attend the reunion, why reunions are important, etc. Again, parse these out. A new interview every month is infinitely better than publishing the interviews all at once. Short bursts of interesting, relevant information will build momentum. The more contacts, the better.
