

Development CoP

**What are Day Schools Doing About
Alumni Relations?
What Should Day Schools be Doing About
Alumni Relations?**

Facilitator: *Sheila Alexander*
CoP Administrator: *Kirk Tallman*
A Virtual Roundtable Discussion
Date: *January 27, 2009*

Goals of the Call

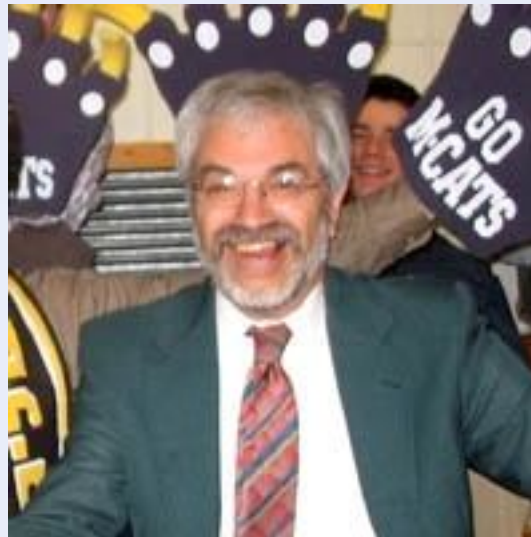
- To share information about what is currently going on in alumni relation programs in the day school field
- To identify new areas to explore
- To share ideas to take back to your school
- To generate topics to pursue in future calls

Agenda

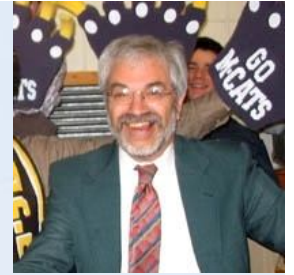
- Finding Alumni
- Web-based Networking: School Website and Facebook
- Alumni Events: What Works and What Doesn't
- Alumni Fundraising
- Alumni Parents
- Planning Future Calls

Finding Alumni

Mike Rosenberg
Director of Alumni Relations
Maimonides School, Brookline, MA



Finding Alumni



- We use school records for parent and sibling information, especially for older classes.
- Facebook allows you to see who is connected with their classmates
- We use both mail and email.
- We survey all alumni that included a question about involvement – those who responded were invited to a steering committee.
 - Alumni should be in charge and the committee is driven by them.
 - The professional does the work behind the scenes.
 - The group meets every month.
- We used a range of free search engines – Google.com, whitepages.com, zabasearch.com.
 - Alumni finder hosts a number of search engines. You are only charged if you get the address, otherwise the cost is about 70 cents per search.
- We have been able to locate 90% of living alumni.
 - Women are more difficult to locate once they change their names. Try to use www.usa-people-search.com.



Web-based Networking: School Website and Facebook

Janet Rosenblum

Development Director

Sinai Akiba Academy, Los Angeles



Web-based Networking: School Website and Facebook



- We have a part – time (20 hours) person for alumni relations who has been employed by the school.
 - She works with alumni, alumni parents, and grandparents.
- The school website, www.sinaiakiba.org, has an alumni section for up-to-date news from the alumni. Although it is password protected, Janet is willing to share the password with you.
- An alum had created a Sinai Akiba group on FaceBook. We are now the co-administrator.
 - There is a much higher response rate/time
 - It is inexpensive and green
- Evite, www.evite.com, is also an effective way to invite alum to the events.
- When you send an invitation through Facebook, the event is sent to the alum directly.

Web-based Networking: School Website and Facebook

- We do not charge for alumni events.
- Another school does charge to cover the cost, not as a fundraiser.
- FaceBook does not allow you to open an account with a school name.
 - You will need to open an account with your name and create a page for the school and a group.
 - Janet is happy to direct people to the school's page

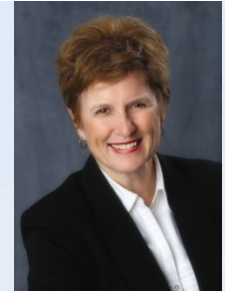
Alumni Events: What Works and What Doesn't?

Elizabeth Kennell
Director of Advancement
Jewish People's Schools and Peretz Schools
and Bialik High School, Montreal

JPPS-Bialik is close to being 100 years old and currently has approximately 1,100 students – Pre-K to Grade 11



Alumni Events: What Works and What Doesn't?



- Milestone Reunion Events. Committee chairs have successfully planned their events by:
 - Encouraging alumni to register and pay online using our password-protected alumni net directory accessible through our website
 - Processing their credit card transactions
 - Providing the list of their classmates we have on our database
 - Paying for the teachers to attend
 - Paying for the event through donations received from attendees who receive receipts for income tax purposes and become donors in the process
 - Encouraging a minimum donation of \$18 be included in the ticket price for attendees

Alumni Events: What Works and What Doesn't?

- Encouraging a class gift to the school in honor of their milestone reunion, such as the purchase of a SMARTBoard (\$7,000) (We have had great success here.)
- Including information about gift options (ie SMARTboards) in the goodie bags distributed to attendees
- On average, 60 attend their reunion events and have loved it; and we added significantly to our database.

Alumni Events: What Works and What Doesn't?



- Annual All-Alumni Homecoming Events are scheduled to follow the milestone reunion events. They are held the night before, but have not met with success.
 - The cost was between \$5,000 - \$8,000 annually (Canadian) of which at least \$5,000 was defrayed through sponsorships.
 - We had good attendance (about 150-200) the first year (two years ago). We had about half that number the second year, in spite of improving the programming to include bands with alumni participants, great food, teachers. A shorter event (2 hours versus 5). We had also networked beautifully through FaceBook.
 - Yet ,few of those who had been in town for their milestone reunion event the night before even attended.

Alumni Events: What Works and What Doesn't?



- Suggestions from conference call participants
 - Annual events may be too frequent.
 - Network by class.
 - Survey the alumni for feedback.
 - Invite teachers, since they are a draw.
 - It takes time to build a culture.

Alumni Fundraising

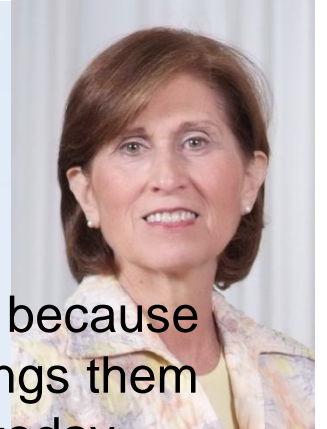
Bebe Levitt

Alumni Director

Yeshivah of Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY



Alumni Fundraising



- Bringing the alumni back to the school is an effective approach because of 3 components: nostalgia, appreciation, today's needs. It brings them back with their memories and shows them where the school is today.
- Reunions are a place for networking and to meet graduates. It provides an opportunity to ask, after the event, for a larger one time gift or to connect with someone as a regular donor.
- The alumni journal includes bios from which we learn about the graduates' professions, families, and community involvements. At the same time, it enables classmates to stay in touch.
- Meeting the alumni face-to-face is important for cultivation and solicitation.
- In addition to reunions, we run five basic campaigns per year, but not for all constituencies. It's important to pay attention to alumni interests and follow their lead.

Alumni Fundraising

- Alumni annual fund replaced alumni dues with opportunity to direct gift. How do alumni benefit from contributing to the alumni fund?
 - It allows the alumni to support the school and express appreciation.
 - New levels of giving were established, but nominal dues level remained an option.
 - Alumni giving increased immediately because alumni learned what was expected of them.
- We are starting a Legacy and Endowment Campaign.
- Young alumni need a different approach. You need to start an alumni relationship as soon as they graduate.
- There are multiple approaches with one goal. That is, to cultivate a major gift.
- The department grew from part-time to now full-time and a full time assistant. Bebe works closely with the Development Director and Executive Vice President.
- The alumni body is over 10,000.
- Always contact donors to say thank you.

Alumni Parents

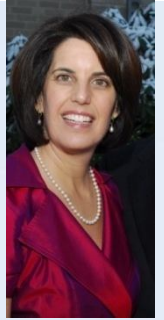
Sharon Nagin Mintz

Director of Alumni Relations

Solomon Schechter Day School of Greater Boston



Alumni Parents



For giving/tracking purposes, we identify alumni parents as those whose children (all of them) must be out of the school. We are a K-8 school.

- 227 alumni parents gave \$263,000 in 2008
- 232 current parents gave \$393,000 in 2008
- Of the 21 gifts that were \$10,000+, 9 of them came from alumni parents
- To keep the alumni parents giving at this level, we are actively meeting with them and listening to them. All school leadership, both staff and lay, are involved in reaching out and soliciting alumni parents.
- We have two giving societies: \$5,000+ and \$1,000+
 - 62 alumni parents gave \$1,000 and over gifts
 - An elegant, intimate dinner is held for donors giving at the \$5,000 level and a reception is for the \$1,000+ level.
- For 18+ years we had a costume Purim Ball which alumni parents enthusiastically attended. But the event ran its course and we no longer have it. Current parents at the school now organize a big party around that time of year thru the P.A. Development is not involved.

Alumni Parents

- For alumni parents we started a new social event in March once the Purim Ball was no longer happening. The first year was a reunion for parents whose children graduated in the 1990s. The second year was for parents whose children graduated in the 70's and 80's. The feedback was excellent. The alumni parents loved coming back to the school and seeing old friends and teachers and the head of school. We believe the good feelings generated by these events helped renew our alumni parent's connection to the school, helped them to still feel a part of the SSDS Newton family, and made them feel good about continuing to donate to the school.
- In 2009, our school is trying to cut down on event expenses and we are not going to have an alumni parent reunion. Perhaps we will wait until our big reunion weekend in 2011 when we are planning several 50th year celebrations.

Alumni Parents

- Some of the other ways we reach out to Alumni Parents:
 - We offer our alumni parents the ability to still receive electronically the weekly school newsletter, “The Shavuon”.
 - Our electronic alumni newsletter is sent to alumni parents whose emails we have.
 - Press releases 2 or 3 times per year are also sent to alumni parents.
 - We hold a very successful Alumni Reunion for the seniors and their parents in June. Both groups love the bbq and chance to see everyone before going off to college.
- The budget is \$3,000 for alumni/alumni parents to cover events, publications, travel, etc.
 - For some events, we charge a small fee to cover the cost.

Planning Follow-up Calls in Alumni Relations

Suggested Topics:

- Use of facebook and facebook groups
- Surveying alumni

Next Steps : Continuing the Discussion

What would you like to continue talking about in Google Groups?

How can we maximize the potential of this resource?

Title:

Message:

If you need a reminder about Google Groups, refer to your Quick Guide for Google Groups. For additional assistance, email Kirk@peje.org

Resources and Contact Information

A full version of today's presentation with additional detail and notes will be posted on Google Groups.



Upcoming Calls

Applying Storytelling to the Work of Admission and Development Directors

A Joint Call of the Admission and Development CoPs

Monday, February 23, 2009 at 1 pm Eastern

How to find stories

Where to use stories and storytelling in your work

Adapting stories for different purposes

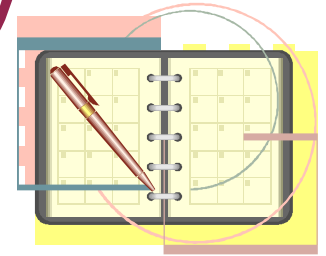
Practical tips and examples from your peers

Volunteers invited to contact me

If possible, please try to attend as a team with your admission and development director.



Day Schools in a Changing Economy Webinar #3



Value and Values: The Day School Proposition in the Midst of Economic Crisis



Jeff Swartz, President and CEO,
Timberland

February 5, 2009, 5:00-6:00 pm EST

To register, please contact Kirk Tallman, kirk@peje.org;
617-367-0001 x 133

Thank you to
Mike Rosenberg
Janet Rosenblum
Elizabeth Kennell
Bebe Levitt
Sharon Nagin Mintz