



Celebrating Lives Together

GATHER YOUR COMMUNITY WITH A PERSONALIZED EVENT.



**EVENT PLANNING & FACILITATION
MEMORIAL PAGES | TECH SUPPORT**

How do you want to be Remembered?

Honoring a life together is a meaningful and transformative experience. **GatheringUs** helps you create distinctive, personalized life events and memorials for you and the ones you love.

The attached planning guide can help walk you through the process of developing an interactive and meaningful event. Whether you manage it yourself or work with a professional team, there are many opportunities to modernize traditions or introduce personal touches.



Events to Honor a Loved One:

- Milestone event, such as birthday, retirement party, etc...
- Celebration of Life or Memorial
- Funeral, Shiva, Wake, Cremation
- Family or Class Reunion

We're here to help

Visit: [GatheringUs.com](https://www.GatheringUs.com)
Call or text 718-550-2363



VIRTUAL EVENT PLANNING GUIDE

GATHER YOUR COMMUNITY WITH A PERSONALIZED EVENT.



Planning Process

Create a Planning Team to Simplify Decision-Making

Working through everyone's ideas and suggestions, while managing your own grief, can become overwhelming. Though many people may want to offer support to your family, we suggest identifying two-three people to oversee the planning process. They can help coordinate speakers, organize program elements, or communicate with friends and family. To simplify your decision-making process, use your planning team as a guide.

Determine What Type of Event(s) you are Planning

An event to honor a loved one can take many forms. A virtual event solely involves virtual guests from around the country (or even the globe). A hybrid event combines an in-person gathering at a funeral home, church or other venue with virtual guests. Many people have a small funeral with close family and then later have a virtual memorial or Celebration of Life to include more of their loved ones friends, colleagues and wider community. Another option is to host a multi-night event such as a shiva or wake with some nights in-person and others online.

Decide on the Technology Platform

When organizing a digital event, which platform will you use? We like Zoom for small and large events due to the interactive abilities and widespread use. Some families opt for one-way streaming services or other proprietary software. Whatever you decide, you'll want to ensure that a technology expert can help guide less savvy guests onto the program. Let your kids or grandkids be tech support. Remember that it's difficult to be tech support and also be truly present during the event. Consider professionals to allow you to focus on being present,

Planning Your Event

Here are some elements to consider.



The Tone of the Event

Think about the tone you want to set for the gathering. You can use music and imagery to help carry out your vision. For instance, a playful photo on the Event Announcement will show guests that you would like them to celebrate the life of your loved one. From traditional prayers to more contemporary songs, select music that is meaningful to you.

Inviting Speakers or Performers

Think about incorporating the important people in the life of your loved one. If you have creative or musical members of your community, consider asking them to contribute to the event. In addition, a celebrant, host or master of ceremonies can ease transitions between the speakers and other program elements.

People to consider...

- Family
- Friends
- Clergy
- Workplace colleagues
- Neighbors



Encouraging Guest Participation

While together, participating in a communal activity can help your guests feel connected to other attendees. This could be a candle lighting, a toast with coffee, chocolate, or a signature cocktail. Other opportunities include: guests dress in a favorite color, bring specific objects or share stories and memories,

Incorporating Media

Consider gathering photos and other media that are representative of the honoree's life and legacy. Emotions can run high when sifting through memories. GatheringUs recommends relying on a trusted friend for support.

You could play:

- A music video
- A recorded message
- An interview

Announcing your event

Obituaries, Memorial Pages, Email, Social Media and more



Create and Share Event Materials

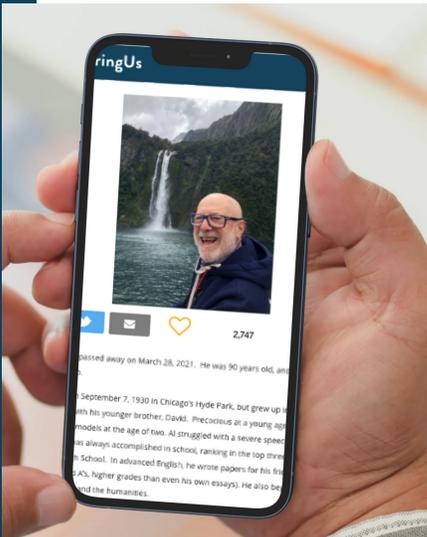
Once you finalize participants, consider how you'd like to communicate with your guests about the event. You can provide a physical and electronic program to share during the event to keep everyone on the same page. Choose a musical selection to play with the program while guests are joining in person and/or virtually.

Slideshows filled with photos, videos, and favorite music are often part of traditional events and can be meaningfully translated to screen, whether you have in-person and/or virtual guests. You may also consider sending an electronic thank you to your guests afterwards with your memorial page link and more information. Whichever elements you create, be sure to plan and practice the technical aspects of communicating with guests ahead of time for a seamless event.

Include Everyone: Gather All Your Community

Share an announcement or invitations via social media, email or text. You can create a free memorial page on [GatheringUs](#) and share that page, so everyone can share a story, memories, and photos.

Virtual memorial events can feel even more personal than a traditional funeral. In an online memorial service, you can see each other's faces up close and can feel "together." Family and friends can share stories and memories that other friends and family haven't heard, and you can record it so others can watch it later (and you can view it again).



Encourage Guest Participation

Unlike a one-way livestream, a virtual memorial is interactive, so guests can share stories to honor and celebrate your loved one. Set aside time for an open share, where guests can share stories about the honoree. Storytelling enables you to form new memories, even after someone is gone. Many people find this part the most helpful when moving through grief. Just remember to mute other guests so you can focus on one story at a time.

Preparing for Your Event

Finalizing the details and getting ready.

Keep Track of All the Files

Consider using a public folder to capture all your assets. If you work with a company, such as [GatheringUs](#), the company will provide you access to a private file and shared Google folder where you and your planning team can upload contact information, schedule of events, pictures, videos, and other files.

Rehearse the Technical Elements

As you get ready to host a memorial, make sure you or an assigned family or friend is comfortable running the necessary technical elements. While most events can be managed with personal devices such as computers, smart phones, and tablets, larger venues may require equipment rentals. If a group will gather in one location (i.e. funeral home, house of worship, reception hall), you'll need to set up the audiovisual connection between a large screen and the virtual gathering. Take special care for outdoor locations, to ensure that Internet speed is adequate for your event.



A couple of days before the event, schedule a rehearsal with all the speakers and performers for the event. Review the order of events, make sure everyone knows their role, and answer questions. During this walkthrough, make sure virtual speakers/performers can log into the event, check microphones, cameras, and lighting to ensure you can hear and see them. You should also test

The Day of the Event

As virtual guests arrive, you may want to put them in a waiting room. Alternatively, create a program slide with a custom music list while they're waiting. To begin the program, introduce yourself to both virtual and in-person guests and provide instructions on navigating the technology.

Remember to record the ceremony if you can. Many people find it difficult to be fully present and remember the event. Rewatching the service and hearing positive associations of a loved one can help people heal and provide support during grief.

What we do



GatheringUs helps communities gather at virtual and hybrid events

We're like a wedding planner for life and community events

We plan, facilitate and coordinate the logistics for your events.
Our hotline staff handles tech support so that you can be fully present.

We've facilitated 600 participatory events that include:

- Milestone Life Events (retirement, birthday & anniversary events)
- Celebrations of Life, Memorial Events & Funerals
- Religious and Community Celebrations
- Non-Profit and Corporate Events



Mention NMAAA for a 20% discount on all planning and event services through 2022



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