



America's Heritage

Tips For Planning A Fun And Successful Family Reunion

(NAPSA)—Planning a reunion can be a major undertaking, but with the help of a local convention and visitors bureau, it can be made easy. For example, the Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau in Southeastern Pennsylvania provides free assistance with booking hotels and banquet facilities, tour buses and even planning tours. Reunion planners can get competitive bids and work closely with a service representative to make the best choices for their group. This can save hours on the phone, and give planners ideas for adding special excitement to their reunion.

"We can help a group plan customized tours around its special interests," said Paul Decker, president of the Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Our area has an abundance of gardens, history and recreation, and we've developed itineraries for groups interested in spending a day or two of their reunion touring the area."

Newest among the itineraries are the "Quest for Freedom" African-American heritage tours that highlight dramatic stories of African-American soldiers, slaves and abolitionists from the Revolution through the Civil War.

"The history of African Americans is an integral part of our nation's history and the stories are present at many of our historic sites, from Valley Forge National Historical Park to Brandywine Battlefield and beyond. This initiative brings those stories to the foreground and affords them the attention they deserve."

Depending on their budget, groups may choose to have a cos-



Customized tours that celebrate history can add a joyous memory to a family reunion or a meeting.

tumed step-on guide; a special program at Washington's Headquarters in Valley Forge; or a craft or cooking demonstration at an historic site.

The bureau's membership of more than 500 hotels, restaurants, attractions, shopping venues and service providers makes it possible for event planners to enjoy the convenience of one-stop shopping when customizing a reunion. The free planning service includes access to picnic sites, florists, entertainers, photographers and more.

Decker said another key to success is to keep your family members informed, to maintain interest while the reunion is being planned. The Bureau can help here too, providing photographs, visitors guides and other publications so family members can become familiar with the area, in advance or on arrival.

Valley Forge is 18 miles from historic Philadelphia; midway between New York City and Washington, D.C. and easily accessible by Amtrak or Philadelphia International Airport. Learn more at www.valleyforge.org or call (800) 441-3549.