

A graduate in a blue cap and gown is blowing confetti. The background is a blurred image of a building with a dome, possibly a university building. The entire image has a light blue overlay.

CLASS OF 2020

CELEBRATE OUR SENIOR EVENT

**Plan a special, fun and
meaningful event**

THE CATHERMANS

Planning a special **Celebrate Our Senior Event** is a fun and meaningful way to applaud your son or daughter's well-earned graduation from high school as part of the Class of 2020. Doing so in these difficult times can be challenging as we practice physical distancing while doing our best to remain socially connected. Few aspects of life remain "normal," which is disappointing for many students who see themselves missing out on highly anticipated parties and family gatherings that usually mark graduation from high school.

That's why we have put together a guide to help families creatively honor their grad while also maintaining safe practices. Planning a Celebrate Our Senior event that includes family, friends, teachers, coaches, and mentors digitally and through notes will make losing out on prom, graduation, and senior parties a bit easier while offering a unique experience for your grad.



WHAT MAKES A GREAT CELEBRATE OUR SENIOR EVENT?

MAKE YOUR SENIOR THE MAIN FOCUS.

Keep conversation about how COVID-19 has spoiled so many end-of-school-year plans to a minimum. Instead, focus on what makes your senior wonderful and someone to celebrate. This event is all about the grad and his or her accomplishments leading up to graduating, such as:

- academics
- clubs
- athletics
- arts
- volunteerism
- travels



FAMILY AND FRIENDS GET TO ATTEND VIRTUALLY.

Without opening your home, you can still invite family and friends to attend your Celebrate Our Senior event.

Schedule a video gathering on Zoom, Google Hangouts, or other digital meeting platforms. Consider planning unique gatherings with the different groups of people involved in your student's life. Host one meeting for family, another for friends, and still another for teachers, coaches, and mentors.

Have people send your student written graduation messages. Personalized emails and handwritten notes or cards delivered to your mailbox show your senior the celebration is bigger than immediate family. Collecting these messages in an album allows your student to reread the encouraging words from friends and family in the days, weeks, and years to come.

Make a public announcement. Let others know this is a momentous time for your senior and your family.

- Mail printed graduate announcements to your friends and family. Online printers offer a large selection of card types and layout designs to fit every budget.
- Update your social media profile picture with an image of your graduate, your spouse, and you. You can even have your student wear a cap and gown, if available.
- Write a post about how proud you are of your grad. Ask friends to respond with encouraging comments you can share with your Class of 2020 student.

- Create a large collage of your student’s most memorable high school experiences and accomplishments that can be displayed on your home’s front door or in a street-facing window. Let the neighbors know your senior is graduating and you are proud of all that was accomplished in the past four years.
- Announce your graduate’s what’s-next plans. Will your student attend college, join the military, work, or travel? Share this info by creating a yard sign, a window shout-out, or online post. Here are a couple of suggestions:
 - ◊ Our grad is attending State College
 - ◊ Proud Navy Parent

Include their favorite things. Any good graduation celebration includes important people, great food, fun drinks, and plenty of party favors.

- Gather the family in your home together for a special meal that you know your senior will love. Consider dressing up or picking a theme that represents your grad best.
- Take pictures of the table setting, your family eating together, and of your senior enjoying his or her favorite dessert.
- If your grad receives any gifts, snap a photo of them with each present and send a copy of the picture to the gift-giver.

Look ahead. A The odds are good that your senior holds mixed emotions about what is to come. For sure every grad is excited to be done with high school and looking forward to moving on with “real” life. What their new normal will look like has yet to be determined, so offer words of encouragement by giving them some well-timed assurances.

- Invite Celebrating Our Senior event attenders, both live and virtual, to complete the sentence, “Looking ahead I see you...” Ask them to encourage your senior with uplifting statements about who they will become and what they will accomplish in the future.
- Ask all who attend the Celebrating Our Senior event to buy your graduate a copy of a book that will help to guide your student during the next chapter of life. Have those who give books write a personal message inside the book’s cover. If anyone is at a loss as to what book to buy, you might suggest *Becoming the Next Great Generation*.
- Consider inviting everyone involved in your Celebrating Our Senior event to gather in person at a future date, still to be determined.



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