

# 2023 Buddy Walk Information

*It's that time again! The 2023 GCDSS Buddy Walk!!*

*Below you will find some great information and possibly answers to some questions that you may have. Please ensure that you pass this information along to your teams.*

*We will have copies available on the day of the walk.*

- **LOCATION:** Gulfport Sportsplex located at 17200 16th Street, Gulfport, MS. If you are travelling I-10 you can exit at Canal Road or Highway 49. There will be signage leading you to the Sportsplex area. Area is located directly across from Gulf Islands Waterpark at the Soccer Fields.
- **No pets** allowed on the property. (Service animals, of course, excluded).
- **The festivities will begin** at 9:00 a.m. – DJ will start playing and getting us all pumped and ready!
- Thank you for registering online as this makes for the best and accurate team information.
- **Team Decoration/Signage** – Each team is more than welcome to come earlier in the day to pick out their spot(s). If you have a pop up tent you are welcome to set it up – anything that you want to do to your tent to make it stand out or for your teams to recognize you upon their arrival then please feel free to do so. You are welcome to create your own team signs and be creative or of course you can have them printed at a sign company of your choice.
- **Team Captains** – Advise your teams of how to find you upon their arrival. Have something that stands out at your tent making it easier for your team to locate you.
- **Fundraising** – Fundraising is allowed at your tent. If you have baked goods or other items that you would like to sell at your tent to raise money for your team and the GCDSS organization, please feel free to do so – we welcome that. This will also allow other teams to drop in and mingle.
- **Concession stand at the Sportsplex** will open and regular ball park/soccer field food will be available for purchase.
- **Chairs** - Please remember to bring your lawn chairs to hang out for the day.
- **Live entertainment** - DJ, games, face painting, and other activities will be provided for everyone to enjoy.
- **Medal Walk Recognition** – We are going to ask that you PLEASE don't leave until we have recognized ALL of our individuals with their medals. This will allow all of members to get a huge amount of support and recognition as each of us get to see all the wonderful personalities and their excitement to receive their medals.
- **General Parking** will be located in the parking lot of the waterpark. There will be other areas reserved for handi-capable.
- **Volunteers** – All of you are WONDERFUL and we thank you very much for volunteering your time to help us. Please report to the volunteer table upon your arrival for your instructions and directions. Our largest need is having enough muscles to set up and tear down post walk as well as be sure the grounds are picked up and we leave it just like we found it. If you have someone or a group of people that are willing to volunteer please visit our volunteer section on the website to sign up so we can know who all is coming to lend a helping hand this year.
- **Team Booths** – Use this time to visit and get to know other families. Everyone is here to have a great time!
- **T-Shirts** – If there are any t-shirts remaining after the t-shirt distribution, shirts will be available on a first come-first serve basis at the Volunteer/T-Shirt Distribution table.
- **Water** will be provided free of charge and served by a fantastic group of volunteers.
- **Tents** – If you are putting up a pop-up tent in the team tent area designated, please keep them off of the short grass/playing field area. We don't want to risk staking tents into water lines.
- **START WALK** - We will have a sign at the beginning of the walk and our Grand Marshalls will be staged with their banner. Please do not begin the walk until it has been announced and we ask that for the beginning of the walk you remain behind our "GRAND MARSHALLS" for the sake of photographs. Everyone smile you are on candid camera!
- **Photography** – If you see one of our photographers walking by your tent taking snapshots and your team would like a group shot, by all means let them know.
- **Garbage** - As much as possible, if you will please ensure to clean up your area post walk, that will be less we have to do after a long day. We will have volunteers on trash duty. As you will notice, Sportsplex is very proud of their area and keep it clean. We want to leave it the same way upon departure so they will welcome us back again next year!

• **Email and FB notifications** - If you would like to receive updates regarding our future GCDSS events, parties and support group meetings, please ensure you have registered on our website at [www.gcdss.org](http://www.gcdss.org), or go to our Facebook page: Gulf Coast Down Syndrome Society – GCDSS as we are always posting updates regularly.

***Part of our Mission - Education, Advocacy and support of ALL individuals with Down syndrome or any special need.***

*Thank you for all of your help in making this ANOTHER successful walk!*

*If you have any problems or questions, please send us an email at [info@gcdss.org](mailto:info@gcdss.org).*

*Thank you so very much for helping us CELEBRATE our Special STARS with Down Syndrome.*

*We hope you will spread the word, be inspired, and advocate for ALL individuals with special needs.*

*Please forward this message to your teams and to sponsors that you may have coordinated with that will be attending the walk.*

*Thank you again and have a wonderful day!*

Sincerely,  
GCDSS Buddy Walk Organizers  
Website: [www.gcdss.org](http://www.gcdss.org)  
Email: [info@gcdss.org](mailto:info@gcdss.org)  
PO Box 7859  
D'Iberville, MS 39540

**P.S. MOST IMPORTANTLY** - THIS WALK IS ABOUT OUR LOVED ONES WITH A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA, YOUR FAMILY, AND YOUR FRIENDS WHO SUPPORT OUR LOVED ONES. SO, ENJOY **YOUR** AFTERNOON!

**PLEASE NO GRILLING PERIOD!**

**WE WANT TO KEEP OUR FRIENDS AT THE SPORTSPLEX HAPPY!**