

BUDDYWALK®

national down syndrome society®

EDUCATE | ADVOCATE | CELEBRATE



GRADSA'S
26th Annual
Buddy Walk
All Are Welcome

Sat. Oct 21, 2023
10AM-1PM
Owensboro, KY
Riverfront



GRADSA
GREEN RIVER AREA
DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION



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TEAM
CAPTAIN
TOOLKIT

We're thrilled to have you as part of GRADSA's 26th Annual Buddy Walk[®]!

On behalf of NDSS, thank you for registering as a Team Captain for the 2023 Buddy Walk[®] on Saturday OCTOBER 21, 2023. We are excited that you and your team will be participating in this year's event which raises funds to support the mission of the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), the leading human rights organization for all individuals with Down syndrome.

Team Captains such as yourself play a powerful and necessary role in the success of the walk year after year. We are grateful for all you do and want to help you be successful in meeting your team goals and having a lot of fun along the way!

The Team Captain Playbook should serve as a roadmap and toolkit over the coming weeks as you rally your team and invite your loved ones to support your efforts. Inside, you'll find all sorts of helpful information such as...

- **Team Captain Checklist**
- **A Library of fundraising ideas**
- **Sample fundraising emails, social media posts, and letters**
- **FAQ and more!**

We hope that you'll find helpful tools and resources within the Team Captain Playbook that help support you in your role as Team Captain. We are here to help coach and cheer your Buddy Walk[®] team on to success each step of the way, so please do not hesitate to reach out directly if we can support your efforts in any way. We are here to help and always happy to do so!

Thank you for ALL that you do and happy fundraising!

Britt Cobb

GRADSA Executive Director

britt@gradsa.org

270-993-2192



Congratulations! As a Buddy Walk® Team Captain, you've already taken the first step by registering your team online! Wondering what comes next? Read on for surefire ways to lead your team to success and have a lot of fun along the way!



PERSONALIZE YOUR TEAM'S HOMEPAGE

Customizing your team's fundraising page with photos and text is a simple way to share your team's story and encourage others to join you! Not sure where to start? Share more about your **WHO** (who you walk in honor of), your **WHY** (why supporting NDSS is important to you) and your **HOW** (how others can support you by joining your team, donating or both!). **Tell a powerful story of your self-advocate here to engage others!**



SET A FUNDRAISING GOAL FOR YOUR TEAM

Once you've personalized your team's page, we encourage you to set a fundraising goal that your team can rally behind. Goals are personal to each team, but one way to formulate your goal is to encourage each member on your team to raise at least \$150. Feeling more ambitious? Encourage each member on your team to raise \$321 or shoot for the stars and aim for VIP Team Status by raising \$3,210. **Do what feels right for your family, but remember we have a loving and generous community.**



RECRUIT FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO JOIN YOUR TEAM

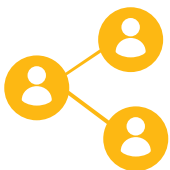
When it comes to growing your team, the more the merrier! One of the best ways your loved ones can support you is by joining your team and creating their own personalized fundraising page. It's a great way for them to spread the word to their personal network and ask even more people to support your team's fundraising goal!

Think of all those in daily life who support your self-advocate and you...they want to help. We want them to be "With Us, Not For Us"



SPREAD THE WORD AND SHARE YOUR STORY

Email and snail mail are great tools to help share your story with your personal and professional network and ask for their support. We've included a sample email and letter in this toolkit as examples to help you get started. Not sure who to send it to? Many team captains use their holiday card mailing list as a starting point.



GET SOCIAL

Top Team Captains know that social media is one of the best tools when it comes to engaging your network! Telling your team's story, sharing progress updates towards your goal and giving social shout-outs to donors and teammates along the way are great ways to create momentum. Make sure to connect your fundraising page to Facebook - we've included a guide and think it's one of the most important (and easiest!) steps you can take as a Team Captain!



SHOW SOME LOVE

Be it an email, handwritten thank-you note, social media shout-out or personal phone call, make sure to celebrate and thank your donors and teammates for their support!



The #1 key to fundraising is simple - you just have to **ASK!** People want to support you, so make sure to tell your personal and professional network why their support is important to you and ask them to donate, join your team or both. Take on this Ten Day Challenge which will put you on the path to raising \$1,000 or more and kick your fundraising into gear.

DAY 1 CHALLENGE: LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Show your commitment to others who will be visiting your page to donate and make a self-donation of \$25, \$75 or more.

DAY 2 CHALLENGE: MAKE IT A FAMILY AFFAIR

Ask five or more family members to each donate \$21 or more.

DAY 3 CHALLENGE: FUNDRAISE LIKE A BOSS

Request a company contribution of \$100 or more from your boss or company's philanthropy department.

DAY 4 CHALLENGE: LET'S GET DOWN TO BUSINESS

Ask at least five local businesses you patron to donate \$25 or more. Many businesses frequently make charitable contributions, so think of places you frequent: your coffee shop, dry cleaner, hair salon, hardware store, local restaurants and more!

DAY 5 CHALLENGE: IT'S PAYBACK TIME

Reach out to people you've donated to in the past and ask them to return the favor by donating \$25 or more.

DAY 6 CHALLENGE: ASK YOUR WORK FAMILY

Ask five colleagues to make a donation of \$25 each. If your company has a matching gift program, make sure to take advantage of that to maximize your co-worker's gifts!

DAY 7 CHALLENGE: LET'S GET MATCHY-MATCHY

Ask your company or a family member's company to match your self-donation.

DAY 8 CHALLENGE: THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

Your friends will be honored to support your efforts. Reach out to five friends to each donate \$25 or more to your team.

DAY 9 CHALLENGE: THE SOCIAL NETWORK

Social media is a powerful tool. Invite people to donate by sharing your story via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and all other social media channels you use.

DAY 10 CHALLENGE: EXTRACURRICULAR CREDIT

Ask five people you know from extracurricular activities - schools, teams, places of worship, clubs and service organizations - to donate \$25 or more.

While there are some basics to successful Buddy Walk® fundraising, we know that there isn't a one size fits all approach when it comes to team fundraising. There are many different ways to successfully fundraise and your team's plan should feel personal and unique to you. Whether you are a first year team captain, a seasoned professional or somewhere in-between check out some of the ideas below!



WALK FUNDRAISING 101

- **ASK and ask OFTEN!** The #1 reason people don't give to charitable causes? They aren't asked! Don't be afraid to reach out to your friends, family and colleagues to ask for their support!
- **Personalize your team's fundraising page and share your fundraising link via email and social media.** We can't overstate it - sharing your story is the most powerful way to inspire others to donate!
- **Build your team!** Ask friends and family to join your team as fundraising team members. The more people you have on your team fundraising alongside you, the greater your impact!



EMAIL, EMAIL, EMAIL!

Email is an excellent tool to help solicit donations. As a best practice, successful fundraisers typically send three rounds of emails inviting their contacts to participate by joining their team, donating or both! You can easily send emails through your team's portal using the email template or create your own. We've included a sample email template in this book to help get you started.



DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF THE PEN

Send an old-fashioned letter in the mail to friends, family, business associates, vendors, doctor, dentist, insurance agents, hairdressers, co-workers, church/religious network, former classmates or colleagues asking for their support. Let them know you are raising money for the Buddy Walk® and share your story! As a rule of thumb, a great place to start building your outreach list is your holiday card address list.

HARNESS THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an extremely effective way to generate donations for your walk team. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter are excellent platforms to share your team's story through posts, images and even videos. Don't forget to include the link to your team's fundraising page. You never know who you may reach!



We also highly recommend that you **connect your Facebook to your team's fundraising page for a fun and easy way to get the word out!** Refer to the Facebook guide in this book to get started.

MORE FUNDRAISING IDEAS

- **Have an upcoming celebration? Ask your loved ones to donate to your team in honor of your birthday, anniversary, wedding or other big day**
- Host bake sales, garage sales, car washes or pancake breakfasts to benefit your team
- **Share your team's fundraising link on the social media or newsletter of your church, temple, gym or at school**
- Encourage all your teammates to contact their HR department to find out how their employer handles company matching gifts and charitable contributions
- Include your team's information on company newsletters, intranets and bulletin boards if allowed
- Work with a local company to design a team t-shirt and sell t-shirts to benefit your team
- Work with a local restaurant to host a happy hour or dine-in evening where a portion of the proceeds go towards your walk team
- Host a good old fashioned lemonade stand with your kids
- Change the recording on your voicemail to mention your Buddy Walk® team
- **Include your team link in the signature of your email line so people can easily donate**
- Thirty Dollar Thursday: On Thursday, ask your connections across all your social media accounts to donate \$30 to your walk team
- Host a consultant party with a portion of proceeds benefiting your team (i.e. Mary Kay, Pampered Chef) or ask a friend with a business to host one to benefit your team
- Ask your gym to host a benefit workout class where donations can go to your team
- Ask friends and family to donate items that can be auctioned or raffled off either online or at an in-person gathering
- **If your employer allows solicitation at work, have a "Dress Down for Down syndrome Day" where employees who donate to your team can wear jeans/comfy clothes if they make a donation of a certain amount**
- Host a dance party (either in-person or virtual) with a theme and ask guests to come in costume and make a donation to attend
- See if local merchants will let you set up a donation canister near the cash register. Provide a flyer that explains your efforts on behalf of your Buddy Walk Team.
- Mini-golf, tennis, bowl-a-thons and other sports can all be used as mini-tournaments with players making a donation to participate that benefits your walk team
- **Ask local businesses (crafting studio, skating rink, indoor children's play center, wine bar, etc) to designate a single day as a fundraiser for your team and donate all profits, a percentage of profits or a certain amount to your team**

Have a unique fundraising idea that's been successful for your team? We'd love to hear it! Please feel free to share with Britt Cobb at britt@gradsa.org 270-993-2192 so we can share it with other teams.

CAN PEOPLE OUTSIDE OF MY AREA PARTICIPATE IN THE WALK?

Yes, This event is designed to engage people across the country who will be able to participate in a memorable and meaningful way wherever they are. Make sure your friends and family join your team online so that they can experience all of the walk-day fun we have planned!

CAN I ACCEPT CHECK DONATIONS FOR MY TEAM?

Absolutely! You can send all checks or cash to the address below. Please make sure to include your name and team name so we can properly credit your team.

WHO SHOULD CHECKS BE MADE OUT TO?

FOR TAX PURPOSES, CHECKS MUST BE MADE PAYABLE TO **GREEN RIVER AREA DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OR GRADSA**. **PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR TEAM NAME IN THE MEMO LINE SO WE CAN PROPERLY CREDIT YOU.**

WHAT IF PEOPLE GIVE ME CASH?

You can gather your cash and send via mail to the address below, but it may be easier for you to accept the cash and then send a check for the total amount to GRADSA. Either way, please ensure that your name and team name are included so that we can properly credit your team.

HOW DO I CHECK IF MY COMPANY HAS A MATCHING GIFT PROGRAM?

Every company handles this differently. Please contact your company's Human Resources department to see if they offer **a matching gift program and for instructions on how to double your fundraising efforts**. Matching gift forms can be sent to the address below.

ARE DONATIONS TAX DEDUCTIBLE?

GRADSA is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization and your donation is tax-deductible within the guidelines of U.S. law. To claim a donation as a deduction on your U.S. taxes, please keep your email donation receipt as your official record.

Federal Tax ID # 61-1312541

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **9/14/2023**: Registration deadline for guaranteed t-shirt in your size
- **10/21/2023**: Last day for online registration
- **OCTOBER 22, 2023**: Buddy Walk[®]

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT OR HAVE QUESTIONS?

For further questions, assistance or to develop a personalized fundraising plan for your team, please reach out to **BRITT COBB** at **britt@gradsa.org** or **270-993-2192**.

PLEASE MAIL CASH DONATIONS, CHECKS, AND MATCHING GIFT FORMS TO:

GRADSA
PO Box 2031
Owensboro, KY 42302