



EMPOWER WALK + 5K RUN

fueled by **autism speaks**[®]

TEAM CAPTAIN AND PARTICIPANT GUIDE





welcome

TO THE EMPOWER WALK + 5K RUN

We are so happy you are here! The Autism Speaks Empower Walk + 5K Run combines our signature Walk with an exciting new 5K run. While we've updated the name and logo, our mission remains unchanged: to create a more inclusive world. Join with friends, colleagues and the autism community to raise critical funds and demonstrate how together, we can make a lifetime of difference for people with autism.

EMPOWER
WALK + 5K RUN

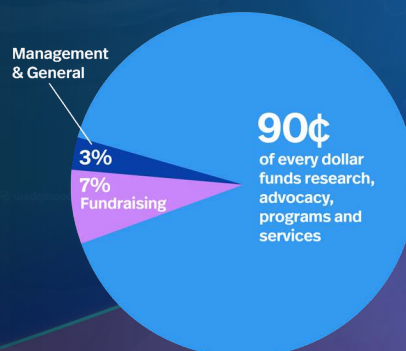
autismspeaks.org/empower



our mission & vision

Autism Speaks is dedicated to creating an inclusive world for all individuals with autism throughout their lifespan. We do this through advocacy, services, supports, research and innovation and advances in care for autistic individuals and their families. We envision a world where all people with autism can reach their full potential.

Designated a "give with confidence" charity



4-STAR RATING
highest nonprofit designation



HIGHEST LEVEL
of transparency



MEETS OR EXCEEDS
all 20 BBB standards



autismspeaks.org/empower



community

Through collaboration and partnerships we:

- Ensure access to reliable information and services across the lifespan
- Support research and innovation that drives towards improved quality of life and well-being for individuals with autism throughout their lives
- Leverage our assets through advocacy, partnerships and collaboration to support, extend and convene the work of service providers
- Accelerate delivery of solutions for adult quality of life needs, including transition, employment, housing and health and wellness
- Live and promote principles of diversity, equity, access and inclusion both in and outside of the organization

Together, we can continue our work to improve wellbeing, lifelong outcomes, amplify autistic voices and their needs and accelerate the delivery of impactful, scalable solutions.

We're here to help

(888) AUTISM2

help@autismspeaks.org

En Español (888) 772-9050

ayuda@autismspeaks.org

To find resources or make a donation go to autismspeaks.org or connect with us on social @autismspeaks

EMPOWER
WALK+5K RUN

autismspeaks.org/empower

get started

1. REGISTER:

Register as an individual, join a team or create your own team and choose to walk or run.

2. SET YOUR FUNDRAISING GOAL:

We encourage each participant to raise \$75 or more to earn their Empower T-shirt.

3. MAKE IT PERSONAL:

Make your fundraising page stand out and inspire others to donate! Add a personal touch by including photos and a story that shows why Autism Speaks is important to you.

4. BUILD YOUR TEAM:

Invite friends, family, or co-workers to take on the Empower Walk + 5K Run with you by joining your team or by making a donation.

5. LEAD BY EXAMPLE:

Show your commitment by making the first donation. This encourages others to follow your lead. Gifts of any size make a difference and will get you one step closer to reaching your goal.

Our team is here to support you every step of the way. Reach out to your [local staff partner](#) with any questions!

EMPOWER 5K RUN >>>

\$35 registration fee, increases to \$45 one month prior to the event

All registered 5K Runners will receive a finisher medal and bib as a part of the registration fee and can earn a T-shirt by raising \$75 (including their registration fee).

OPEN TO ALL AGES

Participants under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

EMPOWER WALK ////

No registration fee

Participants who raise \$75 or more will receive a T-shirt.

Fundraising is highly recommended as it fuels the mission that drives change.

OPEN TO ALL AGES



set yourself up for success

SET MINI GOALS

Break down your fundraising goal into smaller monthly or weekly goals. This will help you stay on track and can create a sense of urgency when asking for donations.

Example: I have a goal of raising \$70 in the next 7 days and would love your support. Can you help me reach my goal?

CAST A WIDE NET

You never know who might be inspired by your story – friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, community members, local businesses, social circles – the list is endless. Go beyond your immediate connections and engage a broader audience. Remember, every dollar counts, and you never know who might become your next major donor.



MATCHING GIFTS

Many companies provide matching gifts to organizations of their employees' choosing. Check with your company and those of your donors to see if your team is eligible to receive matching funds.

TEAM SPONSORSHIP

Sponsorships play a very important role in the Autism Speaks Empower Walk + 5K Run. It's a great way for businesses to get involved in the community **AND** can help you reach your fundraising goal! Connect with your local Autism Speaks staff team to receive a copy of our sponsorship request letter and form to help with your outreach efforts.

BECOME A VIP:

Grand Club: Become a Grand Club member when you raise \$1,000 and receive a special T-shirt to wear on event day and access to our Champions Village.

Change Makers: The top five fundraising teams will be recognized as Change Makers – a distinction reserved for those leading the way in impact and inspiration. These teams will receive their own tent within Champions Village for their team to gather and celebrate their success!

OUTREACH
TRACKER



MATCHING GIFTS



FUNDRAISING
TOOLS



tips to go the distance

Not sure how to kickstart your fundraising? No problem! Here are some fundraising ideas to help you reach your goal.

1. Connect with Your Local Autism Speaks Staff:

Our team is here to help you reach your goals! From brainstorming ideas, creating personalized messaging or making an ask on your behalf, we are here to be a resource.

2. Share your story: Nobody knows your story better than yourself! By sharing why Autism Speaks is important to you, you will encourage support and participation through your personal connection to the cause.

3. Be persistent and confident: Did you know, most people need you to ask them three times before they donate? Don't be afraid to follow up with those who have not yet donated. People will donate to your page because of your passion for our mission, be confident in your outreach.

4. Get your employer involved: Take advantage of your company's corporate match program or connect with your HR department to collaborate on ways you can meet common organizational goals.

5. Music for miles: Encourage people to help keep you motivated by adding their favorite song (or least favorite) to your event day play list in exchange for a donation to your fundraising page.

6. Dine to donate: Check in with your favorite restaurants to see if they would host a dine to donate evening and contribute a portion of their proceeds.

7. Collective change: Ask your friends and family to put aside their spare change from now until event day and show how much a little at a time adds up.

8. Hone in on your hobbies: Turn your passion or hobby into a fundraiser! Host a yoga class, karaoke night, guitar lessons or trivia night and ask for a donation to your page.

9. Hold a neighborhood event: Host a garage sale, bake sale, car wash, or cook-off as a way to engage your community to help raise awareness and funds.

10. Share updates on social media: Keep your Facebook friends up to date on your fundraising and/or 5K training progress and celebrate those who have donated to your page.

11. Encourage sharing to expand your network: Ask your friends and family to share your fundraiser with their networks. The more people share your fundraiser, the larger your audience becomes.

12. Calendar day fundraising: Find a photo of a calendar online to share on social media and ask your friends to pick a day (or two!) that will represent the amount they will donate to your page.

13. Start a letter-writing or email campaign: Send a personalized message to family, friends, coworkers and everyone you know to ask them to support your team.

SOCIAL MEDIA



MATCHING GIFTS




FUNDRAISING
TOOLS



email & social media campaigns

Emails and social media posts are a quick and easy way to share your story and encourage others to support you and your team. Create your own message, use the sample below or check additional email/social media messages linked below to help you succeed!



To

Cc

SUBJECT: **Run or Walk for a Cause – Let’s Make the Miles Count!**

Dear _____,

I am excited to share that I will be participating in the **[CITY]** Autism Speaks Empower Walk + 5K Run on **[EVENT DATE]** at **[LOCATION]**.

Participants can choose to run or walk to make a lifetime of difference for people with autism and I have taken on the **[INSERT PARTICIPATION TYPE (i.e. 5K Run)]**.

The mission of Autism Speaks is close to my heart, as they have been committed to creating an inclusive world for all individuals with autism throughout their lifespan through advocacy, services, supports, research and innovation, and advances in care for millions of autistic individuals and their families for the past twenty years.

[INSERT PERSONAL STORY ABOUT WHY YOU ARE PARTICIPATING]

I am looking forward to bringing my team together at the **[CITY]** Empower Walk + 5K Run and I hope you will support my efforts in making a difference! There are many ways that you can help:

- Register to join my team **[INSERT TEAM LINK]** and encourage your friends and family to join you.
- Make a donation to my fundraising page **[INSERT LINK TO FUNDRAISING PAGE]** to help me reach my goal.
- Join me at the event to help raise awareness and show your support for the autism community.

Thank you for your consideration! Together, we are creating a world where all people with autism can reach their full potential.

Sincerely,
[NAME]

EMAIL
MESSAGES



SOCIAL MEDIA
MESSAGES



fundraising tools & resources

to help you crush your fundraising goals!

FACEBOOK FUNDRAISING

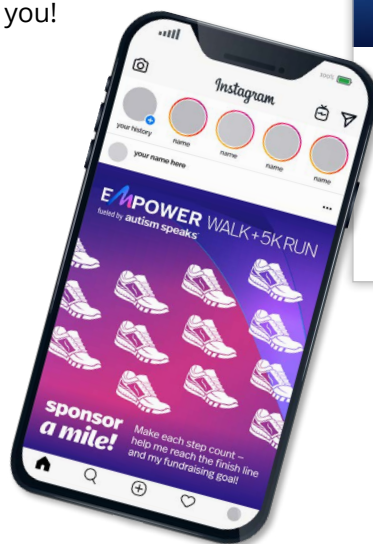
Facebook Fundraisers make raising money easier than ever. You can create a Facebook Fundraiser directly from your Fundraising Center! Share your fundraiser often so your friends and family can help you reach your fundraising goal even faster. Click the button below to learn more.

SCHEDULE, SEND AND POST MESSAGES

Sending emails and social media messages to family and friends is one of the most successful ways to fundraise. Pick from one of our templates (or create your own), select recipients, schedule and send. Selecting a template and messaging is fast and easy, so you'll be able to send more messages (and raise more money) than ever!

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Download shareable graphics and cover images to post on social media. Make sure you include a link to your fundraising page to allow friends and family to donate directly to you!

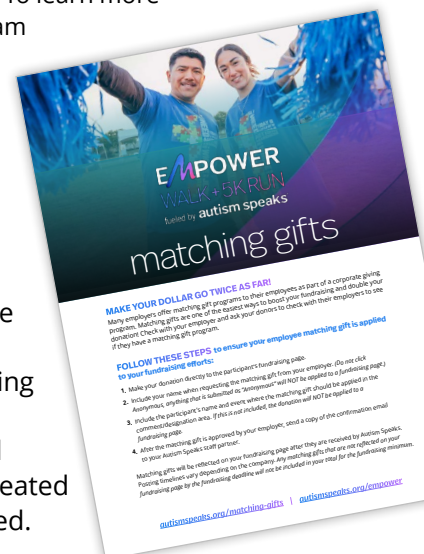


MATCHING GIFTS

Make your dollar go twice as far! Many employers offer matching gift programs to their employees as part of a corporate giving program. To learn more about our matching gift program and how you can double your impact, click on the button below.

READY TO USE RESOURCES

Check out our downloadable fundraising templates to help you with your fundraising outreach! From flyers to fundraising worksheets and social media posts, we've created materials to help you succeed.



MATCHING GIFTS



FACEBOOK FLYER



SOCIAL MEDIA



FUNDRAISING TOOLS



frequently asked questions

What is the Empower Walk + 5K Run?

The Autism Speaks Empower Walk + 5K Run is the world's largest fundraising event dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with autism today while driving innovative solutions for tomorrow. Participants can join their community to walk or run, raising vital funds, increasing awareness, and showing what true inclusion and belonging look like.

Is there a fee to participate?

The Empower Walk + 5K Run is a fundraising event and there are different requirements depending on how you participate.

- **Walk:** No registration fee, fundraising is highly encouraged. Individual participants who raise \$75 or more will receive a T-shirt.
- **5K Run:** \$35, increases to \$45 one month prior to event date. Registered runners will receive a finisher medal and bib as part of their registration fee and can earn a T-shirt by raising \$75 (*including their registration fee*).

What are the age requirements to participate in the Run?

All ages are welcome to participate in the 5K, however those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

I'm a previous Walk participant, what can I expect as a Walker at the Empower Walk + 5K Run?

We're incredibly excited for all our previous Walk participants to experience everything they love most about the Autism Speaks Walk – with the addition of a 5K run! By adding a run, we are offering more ways to participate and broadening the reach of Autism Speaks.

Just as with previous Walks, there is no registration fee or fundraising minimum. Walkers will have the opportunity to complete a 5K or a shortened 1-mile route. All Walkers can earn an exclusive Empower Walk + 5K Run T-shirt by raising \$75.

As a participant, will I have support with my fundraising?

From the moment you register until you cross the finish line, we will support you with expert tips and coaching to reach your fundraising goal. Every participant will receive their own personal fundraising webpage and donation app that makes on-the-go fundraising easy!

If I cancel my registration, what happens to my donations?

Donations and registration fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

How can my company participate?

Companies can participate in a variety of ways:

- Organize an employee team
- Sponsor an Empower Walk & 5K Run
- Volunteer on event day
- Enroll in our Matching Gift program

Are donations tax-deductible?

All donations are tax-deductible in the same calendar year your donation was processed to the extent allowed by law. Please work with your tax professional to determine what deductions you are eligible for.

How Do I Donate?

There are several ways to donate:

- **Donate online** to a specific team, individual participant or Empower Walk + 5K Run via their fundraising page.
- **Donate on Event Day:** cash, check and credit card donations are accepted.
- **Donate via Mail:** Please make checks payable to Autism Speaks and mail to:
Autism Speaks Walk
PO Box 199, Rocky Hill, NJ 08553
- **To credit a particular team or individual,** please be sure to include an offline donation form found on that individuals' fundraising page or a note that states:
[CITY] Empower Challenge, Individual or Team to Credit

PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH IN THE MAIL.

Donations can also be turned in on event day. Please make sure an offline donation form, found on the participant homepage, accompanies each donation to ensure proper credit. We strongly encourage all participants to mail their donations to the Rocky Hill, NJ address indicated above.