



# Team Captain and Participant Guide

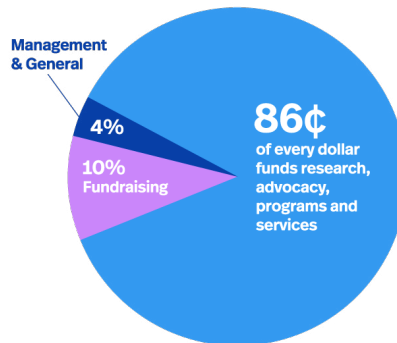


# why we walk

## We're excited you are joining the Autism Speaks Walk community!

Autism Speaks Walk is the world's largest autism fundraising event dedicated to supporting the needs of autistic people and their families throughout life. The Autism Speaks Walk brings together people with autism, parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, relatives, caregivers and providers in a network of friendship and support.

*Designated a "give with confidence" charity, Autism Speaks is dedicated to creating an inclusive world for all individuals with autism throughout their lifespan. Funds raised help support advocacy, services, supports, research and advances in care for autistic individuals and their families.*



**4-STAR RATING**  
highest nonprofit designation



**HIGHEST LEVEL**  
of transparency



**MEETS OR EXCEEDS**  
all 20 BBB standards

[autismspeakswalk.org](http://autismspeakswalk.org)



# first steps

## 1. Register

As a participant, join a team or create your own team!

## 2. Set fundraising goals

We encourage each participant to raise \$150 or more to earn their Walk t-shirt.

## 3. Keep it going!

- Create a Facebook Fundraiser through your participant center
- Multiply your donations through a corporate matching gift program
- Ask your employer to sponsor the Walk
- Download the Autism Speaks Walk App

*Remember, we're here to help! Reach out to your [local staff partner](#) with any questions. When your team is successful, we all win!*



# 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 are creating communities where all autistic people are fully included – beyond awareness – without discrimination, and have the opportunities they need to live their best lives.

Through your support and those of your team, we can continue our work to improve wellbeing, equity and lifelong outcomes, amplify autistic voices and their needs and accelerate the delivery of impactful, scalable solutions to enhance the quality of life of all people on the spectrum.

## We're here to help.

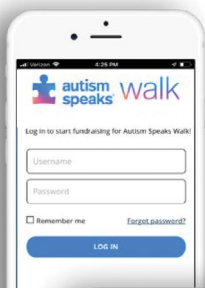
(888) AUTISM2 | [help@autismspeaks.org](mailto:help@autismspeaks.org) | En Español (888) 772-9050 | [ayuda@autismspeaks.org](mailto:ayuda@autismspeaks.org)  
To find resources or make a donation go to [autismspeaks.org](https://autismspeaks.org) or connect with us on social [@autismspeaks](https://twitter.com/autismspeaks)

[autismspeakswalk.org](https://autismspeakswalk.org)

# fundraising tools

## Download our mobile app

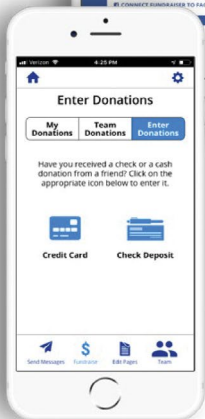
Manage and share your Autism Speaks Walk experience on the go with our mobile app. This FREE app\* lets you fundraise and connect with others through social media and email, update your web pages and check your fundraising progress.



**Once you've registered** for your Autism Speaks Walk you will be able to log in to the app!



**Track your progress,** send quick text messages, emails, post social media, and update your personal page all from your phone!



**Collect donations in real time!** Collect credit card and check donations and see them update on your page in real time!

## Facebook fundraising

Create a Facebook Fundraiser directly from your Fundraising Center! Your friends can donate to you through Facebook and those donations will show up on your personal fundraising page and go towards your fundraising goal! For the "how to" on creating your Facebook Fundraiser, click [here](#).

## 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!

\* Search Autism Speaks Walk on the App store



This shirt is changing lives.



# maximize your fundraising

## Earn your Walk t-shirt

Your fundraising dollars ensure that we can continue to do our vital mission work in support of the autism community. At \$150 level, you will earn an official Autism Speaks Walk t-shirt!

## Grand Club

Become a Grand Club member when you reach \$1,000 in fundraising. Grand Club members earn a member pin, and access to a special area on Walk day.



## Team Village

Depending on the walk location, eligible teams receive reserved space in the Autism Speaks Walk Team Village. There are a variety of benefits that come with having a spot in the Team Village. Be sure to check your local Walk website for more updates and to see how to qualify.

## 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 Speak Walk and are a great way for businesses to get involved in the community AND can help you reach your fundraising goal! Connect with your local staff team to receive a copy of our sponsorship request letter and form to help with your outreach efforts.

## Cast a wide net

After setting up your page do you wonder where to start? You are not alone. Complete the worksheet on the next page to help identify your community network and get your fundraising started!



# your autism support community

These individuals and groups are the first people you should connect with to support your team. Try reaching out to them by making phone calls, meeting in person, or sending emails or letters to share why the Autism Speaks Walk is important to you!

- Bank
- Doctor/Dentist
- Employer
- Family
- Friends
- Gym
- Insurance Agent/Lawyer
- Mechanic
- Neighbors
- Salon
- School
- Vet

**Who will you reach out to this year?**




# tips for success

**Now that you know who you want to ask, below 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 verbiage or making an ask on your behalf, we are here to be a resource for you!
- 2. Share your story:** Nobody knows your story and why Autism Speaks is important to you better than yourself! Sharing why you walk encourages others to join you.
- 3. Lead by example:** Make the first donation to your fundraising page. Gifts of any size make a difference and will get you one step closer to reaching your goal.
- 4. Ask, ask and ask again:** People will donate to your page because of your passion for our mission – be confident in your outreach.
- 5. 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 get your colleagues involved.
- 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. Hold a fundraising event:** Host a garage sale, bake sale, car wash or cook-off to engage your community and help raise awareness and funds.
- 8. Get your kids involved:** Work with your child's school, club or athletic group to host a donation drive.
- 9. Pennys for change:** Ask your friends and family to put aside their spare change from now until Walk day and show how much a little at a time adds up.
- 10. Electronic cookbook:** Connect with your family, co-workers, friends and neighbors and ask them to submit their favorite recipes. Once you collect them all, turn them into a digital cookbook and ask people to donate to your page to receive a copy.
- 11. 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.
- 12. Provide fundraising updates on social media:** Keep your Facebook friends up to date on your fundraising progress and celebrate those who have donated to your team page.
- 13. Hone in on your hobbies:** Turn your passion or hobby into a fundraising initiative! Host a yoga class, karaoke night, guitar lessons or trivia night and instead of a registration fee ask for a donation to your page.



# tips for success

- 14. 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.

## Email and letter example

Letters and emails are great tools to use to encourage others to support you and provides a quick and easy way to share your story. You can create your own messaging or use the sample below.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I hope you and your family are doing well!

I am excited to share that I will be participating in the **CITY** Autism Speaks Walk this year on **WALK DATE** at **WALK LOCATION**.

The mission Autism Speaks is close to my heart, as they have been committed to creating an inclusive world for all people 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 WALK**

I am looking forward to bringing my team together at the **CITY** Walk this year for a day of community and celebration and I hope you will join me! There are many ways that you can help:

- Register to join my Autism Speak Walk team (insert team link) and invite your friends and family to join you.
- Make a donation to my fundraising page (insert fundraising link) and help me reach my goal!
- Join me on **WALK DATE** at **LOCATION** to show your support of our amazing community.

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

Sincerely,

**NAME**

# make your plan a reality

Now that you have some exciting fundraising ideas and have identified individuals and/or companies you want to ask to support your efforts, it's time to put a plan in place and get started! We encourage each walker to raise at least \$150. If you want to challenge yourself and your team, set the goal even higher and aim to be a member of our Grand Club by raising \$1,000 or more!

**Team name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Team member goal: \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Team fundraising goal: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

✓	Action	Goal	Actual amount raised
	Set up a Facebook fundraiser	\$250	
	Ask Six Friends to Donate \$25	\$150	
	Ask Your Employer to Donate	\$250	
	Host a Bake Sale or Coin Drive	\$150	
	Ask Four Family Members to Donate \$50	\$200	
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	\$1,000	

## How else can I support the Walk?

There are other ways that you and your team can support the Autism Speaks Walk that are just as impactful and will help move our mission forward!

- Introduce your Autism Speaks staff partner to potential supporters in your network
- Share information about the Autism Speaks Walk with local groups and ask them to volunteer with us on Walk day
- Join your city's Walk Planning Committee
- Encourage your community to register for the event and walk with you
- Join your local Autism Speaks Facebook Page and connect with others who share your passion

No matter how you choose to participate in the Autism Speaks Walk, you are making an incredible difference to enhance the lives of people with autism today and accelerate a spectrum of solutions for tomorrow, and we are so grateful. The Autism Speaks team is here to support you every step of the way and can't wait to work with you!

# earn great swag!



**\$150**

Walk T-Shirt

**\$250**

Crew Socks  
OR Dopp Kit

**\$500**

Elemental Pop Fidget Water  
Bottle OR Bella & Canvas  
Fleece Raglan Sweatshirt

**\$1,000**

Rupt Dipster Waterproof  
Speaker OR Tarana  
Backpack Cooler



**\$2,500**

The North Face Sweater Fleece  
Jacket OR Polaroid High-Print  
Pocket Photo Printer

**\$5,000**

Dagne Dover Landon Carryall Bag  
OR Hatch Restore 2 Sunrise  
Alarm Clock

**\$10,000**

Hyperice Hypervolt 2 Pro  
OR HEXA Puffy Down Jacket  
(zipper option customizable)

Choice of **one prize** per participant at or below highest fundraising level achieved.  
If the selected prize is not available, a substitute will be offered.

[autismspeakswalk.org](http://autismspeakswalk.org)

# frequently asked questions

## How much is registration?

Because the Autism Speaks Walk is a fundraising event, we do not charge a registration fee. Rather, we encourage you to set a fundraising goal and utilize the tools provided to share your story and ask your family and friends for their support. Everyone raising a minimum of \$150 receives our one-of-a-kind commemorative Walk T-shirt.

## Do I need to register my child/children for the walk?

All participants should register and complete the online waiver. Additional waivers will be available on Walk day at the Check-In tent.

## Where do the funds from the Walk go?

The money you raise helps fuel the Autism Speaks mission to enhance the lives of people with autism through research, advocacy, services and support. Learn more about our work at [autismspeaks.org/our-work](https://autismspeaks.org/our-work).

Autism Speaks is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

## What happens to the donations if I can no longer participate in the event?

We're so grateful for your fundraising efforts and sorry we will miss you at the Walk. If you were planning to turn in donations on Walk day and are unable to attend, please make sure to mail them in with an offline donation form. You can find the form on your specific homepage and this will ensure we properly associate your donations with your team. If you are unable to make the event itself, we encourage you to become a Walk Your Way participant and walk with us virtually.

## 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 easy ways to donate:

- **Donate online to a specific team, individual participant or Walk via their fundraising page**
- **Donate on Walk day:** cash, check and credit card donations are accepted
- **Donate via mail - make checks payable to Autism Speaks and mail to:**  
**Autism Speaks Walk**  
**PO Box 199, Rocky Hill, NJ 08553**
- **If you wish 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:  
*Walk Name, Individual or Team to Credit*

## PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH IN THE MAIL

Donations can also be turned in the day of the Walk.

*Please make sure an offline donation form, found on the walker 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 under the "How do I donate?" question prior to Walk day.*