

MARE's Walk for Adoption Handbook



Thank you! As a participant in the **1st Annual MARE Walk for Adoption - A Walk HOME**, you have just become a member of an extremely dedicated and inspiring community of volunteers, staff, social workers, adoptive parents, adoptees, and friends who are all committed to the same mission as you: **making sure that every local child has a safe, loving, permanent family.**

As you begin preparing for the **Walk for Adoption**, you are sure to have some questions regarding fundraising - and all sorts of other things. You may not know where to start, what to ask or even who you should ask. Hopefully, this short handbook will help get you on the right track and meet--or even exceed--your fundraising goals.

And remember, you can always contact the MARE office at 617-542-3678 (617-54-ADOPT) or web@mareinc.org. We are happy to help!

Here's why some people plan to **Walk for Adoption**:

For yourself "I was adopted and know how lucky I've been. I walk to thank my parents – all of them – for giving me this life."

For someone you know "MARE helped my sister become the mother she always hoped to be. Now she's a terrific mom, I adore my nephew Mike, and I want to help more kids find parents like my sister."

For your community "I know that every child in foster care deserves a safe and loving permanent home – they're our children, supported by our taxes. I can't adopt right now, but I can still help by walking."

Why do YOU Walk for Adoption?

Start a Team:

Why walk alone? Start or join a **Walk for Adoption** team and let the fun begin!

How can you find team members?

- Send an email or letter to everyone in your address book
- Invite friends by posting the **Walk for Adoption** as an event on your Facebook page
- “Tweet” about it
- Mention it to friends, relatives, and colleague the next time you see them
- Ask others at your place of worship
- Ask members of your rec league, places you volunteer, gym buddies, or reading group
- Hang a **Walk for Adoption** poster at your office, gym, or school, and add a note: “Join your name’s team at www.firstgiving.com/yourname” (Call us and we’ll mail them to you)
- Carry the paper **Walk for Adoption** brochures with you, Print your Walk Page web address on them, and hand them out to everyone. (Call us and we’ll mail them to you).

Having a team helps people to stay focused and can even motivate a little “team rivalry” to see who can get the most donations, recruit more teammates or get the word out best.

→ **It’s easy for them to join your team.** Send them to your Walk page link, and have them click “Join this Team” (right under the thermometer).

→ **They say they’re busy that day?** They can join your Team as a “Virtual Walker” and help by raising funds before and after the Walk.

Everyone you meet is a potential supporter...

Did you know that 1/3 of the American public has a direct connection to adoption? either they, or a relative was adopted, have adopted, or have been involved in adoption. You can never be too sure exactly who has been affected by adoption or who will care about children who need homes. Keeping that in mind, it is important to include everyone possible in your fundraising efforts. Below is a list you can use to help you brainstorm. Don’t be shy - many people and businesses would be honored to help you (whether in a big or small way) to help raise money for a cause that you believe in. If by chance, someone is unable to help you, don’t get discouraged! You were still successful in spreading the word and raising awareness!

A list of people to help get you started:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| *Aerobics/Fitness Instructor | *Cousins |
| *Neighbors | *Hair Stylist |
| *Aunts & Uncles | *Friends |
| *Parent’s Friends | *PTA Members |
| *Book Club Members | *Teachers |
| *Teammates | *Grandparents |
| *Co-workers | *Gym Members |
| *Social Clubs/Groups | *Friends of Friends |
| *College Friends | *Parents, Kids, Siblings |
| *Dentist/Doctor | *Clients |

You have a fundraising page? Great! Now make it stand out! How?

Make it personal:

- **Name your page**-make it anything you want: “The Smiths are Walking for Adoption” or “Susan is Helping a Child Find a Home”
- **Put up a picture**-upload a picture of yourself, your child, your parents, a picture you find online - it can be anything. To do so, log into your page and:
 - Click on “change this image” then follow the step-by-step directions.

Make it powerful:

- **Set a goal** (and don't be afraid to aim high), so that your donors can see how their contribution helps you to reach your goal.
- **Tell your story** - your donors want to know why this cause is important to you. Take a moment and think about it. Use these questions as a guide:
 - Why are you doing this Walk?
 - Why do you care about adoption from foster care?
 - What facts about the children in need of adoption make an impact on you?

Make it interesting:

- Add a video - you can upload one right from You-tube—find out how at firstgiving.com
- Give your donors some **interesting numbers** as ideas for donations. Here are some of ours:
 - \$10 because that's all it costs for an adult to register for the Walk for Adoption
 - \$24 because that's the number of hours every day that each child waits for a home
 - \$36.78 for the last four digits of MARE's phone number 617-542-3678/617-54-ADOPT)
 - Or other ones you come up with (birthdates, ages, favorite ball player's number?)!
- Tell people how their donation makes a difference
 - \$41 funds the outreach programs (Wednesday's Child, Sunday's Child, etc.) that draw one call from a potential adoptive parent.
 - \$60 pays the cost of printing one Heart Gallery portrait of a waiting child
 - \$98 pays the cost for one person, adult or child, to attend an Adoption Party
 - \$209 funds one month of family-finding services for one waiting child.

Get the word out:

- Now that you have a fabulous page, it's time to **let people know!**
 - Send out emails to friends, family, colleagues, team-mates—any one!
 - Link your Walk page to Facebook, tweet about the Walk, include a link to your page
 - Add a signature with a link to your page to all your emails and messages
 - Follow up, people get busy! Or perhaps they don't like email - you can call, write a letter or ask in person-and yes people can donate off line.
- Collect donations online or by check or cash. Just mail checks, payable to MARE, to MARE, 45 Franklin St., 5th Floor, Boston, MA 02110

Say “THANK YOU!”:

It's really easy with Firstgiving - just personalize the “thank you” email when you first set up your page and as each person donates they will get an **automatic thank you email** from you.

If you have any questions or would like more information as you are putting up your Firstgiving page-or anytime before the Walk - don't hesitate to contact us at web@MAREinc.org or 617-542-3678.

Other Ways to Fundraise for Adoption to HELP A CHILD FIND A HOME

- Collect all that loose change – put a jar on your desk at work. You can even ask local shops if you can put jars at their registers – just remember to collect them!
- Encourage your supporters to find out if their work participates in matching gifts. It's a great way to double a donation!
- Ask a local business to donate a gift certificate or prize and have your team sell raffle tickets.
- See if a local restaurant or store will donate a percentage of a night/day's profits to MARE– don't forget to advertise it!
- Recycle - ask friends and neighbors to collect cans and bottles and donate the proceeds
- Host a “stay in” night-filled with 80's movies and popcorn- have everyone donate the \$10 they would have spent if you'd headed out to your goal
- Change your voicemail to let people know you are Walking for Adoption! It's a great way to spread the word.
- Have a party and get the food & drinks donated, charge party-goers a “door fee” that will go towards your Walk goal. (You can even have raffles or a silent auction at the event too!) - this one is great for the Superbowl!
- Sell candy, chips, bagels, donuts or coffee at your office, at your next group meeting, or from your dorm room. You may be able to get the items donated or at a low cost so that even more goes towards your fundraising.
- Ask your boss if they can donate a free day off and raffle off chances to win.
- Have a car wash! After all this salt from the winter, people will be looking to get a clean car, and happy to know their money is going to a good cause.
- See if your local VFW or other town venue will let you host a spaghetti dinner there—ask local supermarkets to donate the food. Keep it simple and charge a cover.
- Know someone who does in-home product parties (think Lia Sophia, Tupperware, or Tastefully Simple) see if you can host a party and have them donate part of the proceeds to the Walk.
- Ask a local pub to host a happy hour or trivia night and donate part of the proceeds or the cover charge to the Walk - don't forget to invite everyone out that night!

Firstgiving is GREAT but it's not the only way to raise money to reach your goal!

Do you have your own unique idea?

Email us at web@mareinc.org so that we can share it with others!

MARE thanks the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center (BARCC.org) for their invaluable assistance in sharing their Walk for Change information and materials, on which this handbook is based.