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Lexington Resident Leads all Fundraisers Counting Down to Walk for Adoption **Verizon Colleagues Pitch In to Help Local Children Find Permanent Families**

Lexington resident Pat Kush is taking steps to help children in state foster care find loving adoptive families. The adoptive mom has signed up for the Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange's Walk for Adoption on Sunday, May 22, and committed to raise funds to help. Her Kush-Quartararo Team is currently the top fundraising team, and Kush herself is the leading individual fundraiser.

Kush is passionate about the value of adoption. "When I asked my college-age daughter what we should say for our team's website page for MARE's Walk-for-Adoption, she enthusiastically stated 'Please Give a Child a Chance in Life: Adopt an Older Child.'"

"Why do those words ring so loudly?" Kush asks. "They come from the heart of a loving child who, along with her two siblings, adopted my husband and me as parents over a decade ago."

The Kush-Quartararo Team's passion is contagious. Kush, an engineer with Verizon, has enlisted the support of her Verizon colleagues. Not only have they donated nearly \$2000 to the Walk for Adoption, but the Verizon employees have requested matching gifts, doubling their support for the cause.

Jordan's Furniture, a long-time champion for children in state foster care, hosts ***A Walk Home: the Walk for Adoption*** on Sunday morning, May 22nd at Jordan's Furniture's Taunton facility.

The Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) organizes the Walk for Adoption to raise funds and friends for its work to recruit adoptive parents for children and teens in state foster care. Over 2,000 local children are currently growing up in temporary foster care while waiting for permanent, safe, loving homes. MARE's programs to find potential adoptive families include Wednesday's Child on WBZ TV, children's profiles in newspapers statewide, and the Heart Gallery portrait exhibit displayed in libraries, stores, and shopping malls. Through these public programs and behind the scenes work, MARE has helped more than 5,600 children leave foster care for permanent families over the past 53 years.

WCVB's Anchor Bob Halloran, NECN's Eileen Curran, and their adopted daughter will be walking. Adopting Grace was "the best thing I've done in my entire life," Curran says. "When you adopt a child, some people will say that you "rescued" that child. Truth is the child rescues you."

The Walk for Adoption is a fun-filled celebration of adoption, featuring a family-friendly 5K walk (indoor/outdoor) as well as arts and crafts activities, entertainment, prizes and refreshments. Adam Pertman, author of the newly released *Adoption Nation*, will be on hand for book signings. Walk participants can register online at www.firstgiving.com/MARE or contact MARE for registration forms. Prizes will be awarded for top fundraising individuals and teams. Adoption agencies, families, and businesses are all fielding teams for the Walk.

MARE's Walk for Adoption is sponsored by Jordan's Furniture, StoneTurn Group, LLP, Rodman & Rodman, P.C., Webster One Source, Hannaford Supermarkets, Charles River Apparel, and New England Sealcoating Co., Inc.

For more information on *A Walk Home*, MARE's Walk for Adoption, or to learn about adoption from foster care, contact MARE at 800-882-1176, 617-54-ADOPT, or visit www.MAREinc.org.

MARE is a private, non-profit organization, working since 1957 to find a "permanent place to call HOME" for CHILDREN in foster care, including sibling groups and children who are traditionally harder to place. We do this by recruiting, educating, supporting and advocating for FAMILIES throughout the adoption process.

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