



**BATTEN
DISEASE**
SUPPORT & RESEARCH
ASSOCIATION
A LIGHT IN A WORLD OF DARKNESS



BDSRA's Walk-A-Thon Planning Guide

Walk-A-Thon's are a fun and easy activity to plan and raise funds for BDSRA. Friends, family, schools and co-workers can spend time together in a healthy activity while making a valuable contribution to the community.

Walk-A-Thon's raise money when walkers are recruited to participate in the day's activities and solicit donations prior to the event. Participants are asked to bring collected donations to registration on walk day. You will be amazed at the amount of support and generosity that your friends, family members and business contacts give you, simply because you ask for their support.

Introduction

This kit is one of seven signature event guides designed to take you through the process of planning and holding a special event. (Other kits provide materials on planning a golf outing, dog walk, trivia night, poker run, black tie event and wine tasting. Whether you are new to the world of special events, or you have hosted dozens of events over the years, take the time to examine this planning guide. In this guide, we have included an event timeline and a planning guide to assist you in planning your event.

This guide is available for download at <http://www.bdsra.org/fundraising.html>. Feel free to print and distribute multiple copies to your committee. In addition, you will find support materials at the above link to accompany this guide, including templates to help you develop a budget, sponsor request letter and press release. If you have any questions or comments about this planning guide, please contact Adina Ryan in the Development Office at 866-287-7233 or by email at aryan@bdsra.org.

We wish you every success as you work to raise money and awareness that will give children and families living with Batten disease an opportunity to see a potential treatment and cure for this horrible disease.

Timeline for planning event: Nine Months (Six Months)

This timeline lists the ideal planning time first, followed by the minimum planning time required in parentheses. Keep in mind that the more time you give yourself, the greater your prospects of success and the less crisis management you'll have to do.

Brainstorm Event Ideas

- There are all kinds of fun types of walk-a-thons that include a variety of activities. Search the internet and your local community for creative ideas.
- Form an event planning committee.
- Determine an Event Chair and appropriate committees such as Corporate Relations & Sponsorships, Logistics and Promotions Chair.

Plan the specifics

- Answer who, what, where, when, why. The goal is to determine your walk site, route, event start times and date.
- How many people will you need for each activity both to plan and to participate in the walk.
- What facilities are necessary?
- What promotional and sponsorship materials are needed?
- Determine entry fee.
- Determine if you will be providing t-shirts and what vendor you will use. Try to get this donated or at cost. Include sponsors on t-shirts for added recognition.

Location Confirmation

- Contact required facilities to book location for event date.
- You may be required to sign a contract with facilities.
- Some municipalities require deposits for walk permits in advance of the date.

Set A Fundraising Goal

Establish the anticipated donation commitment to BDSRA. A sample goal of \$5,000 and is a terrific goal to aim for in planning a fundraising event in its first year. Be sure to share with your participants. The more information they have, the better the chance to meet your goals!

Check out the **Silent Auction Supplement** to learn how to plan an accompanying fundraiser to your gala.

Working the Budget

- Research costs and expected revenue for the event as well as target market.
- Determine entry fees for walkers and expected number of participants
- Estimate all expenses (see *BDSRA Fundraising Resource Guide*)
- Plan on raising funds in advance of expense deadlines. Sponsorships are the easiest way to do this.

Sponsorship (Four to Six Months)

Develop sponsorship proposal and secure sponsorships. Doing this early in your planning stages will ensure your financial success. Sponsorship is the KEY to earning great proceeds. Remember when soliciting businesses for sponsorship revenue; do not undersell the value of sponsorship for the event. You can always negotiate the final donation amount if the company can not donate the suggested amount. Or you can create a special sponsorship that meets their financial needs. Solicitation letter templates can be found in the BDSRA Fundraising Resource Guide.

- Target who you will solicit and what you have to offer them.
- Each solicitation should include some form of recognition and perhaps event participation.
- Ask Committee members to contact certain companies to ask for sponsorship (*use their personal contacts in the community in order to leverage the most sponsorships*)
- Be sure to follow-up if they ask you to call or stop by at a later date!

Sample Sponsorship Levels

• **Walk-a-thon Sponsorship** **\$1,000-\$5,000**

Title sponsorships may be sold for your walk-a-thon for a premium fee. Their organization signage should be highly visible in all promotion materials as well as displayed throughout the walk-a-thon day.

• **"Kids Fun Corner" Sponsor** **\$500-\$999**

Company is promoted as the official "Kids Fun Corner" sponsor. You can promote the business with banners, decorations, give-a-ways and goodie bags.

• **"Start/Finish" Sponsor** **\$500 - \$999**

Company will receive exposure at the registration sit and the start/finish line. Sponsor also hosts a hospitality tent at the post-walk festivities. You may promote the business with banners, give-a-ways, literature, etc.

• **"Halfway" Sponsor** **\$500 - \$999**

Business is promoted as the "Halfway" sponsor at the midpoint of the walk, where walkers stop for a rest and/or snack. You may promote the company with banners, give-a-ways, decorations, etc.

• **"Directional Arrow" Sponsor** **\$500 - \$999**

Company's name is printed on all route markers or directional arrows that will be marking the walk route.

• **"Special Message Banners" Sponsorship** **\$100 - \$499**

These banners are personalized in honor of children with Batten Disease and displayed at the walk start/finish line. This is something anyone can do, in addition to walking, by asking family and friends for donations to be “a champion” for BDSRA!

- **“1 Mile Countdown” Sponsorship**

\$100 - \$499

The question, “How much further do we have to walk?” prompted this idea. You can purchase all kilometer/mile markers or only buy one. Markers read “XX Kilometers to Go! Sponsored by ABC Company”.

- **“Gift Prize” Sponsorship**

Product Donation

Company can make an in-kind/product donation to be used as a raffle item or door prize for participants. These prizes can also be used as incentives for the most money raised, longest distance walked, etc.

Develop Promotional Plan (Two to Three Months)

BDSRA will provide brochures to tell more about our mission. BDSRA can also provide you with promotional items for sale the day of your event or to include in a registration bag (bracelets, lapel pins, magnets, etc.) Please contact the Development staff at 1-866-287-7233 to let them know how many you will need and allow us at least 4 weeks for any special orders. Other items which may be helpful to create and promote your event include posters, banners, press releases, flyers, etc.

1. Have a planned schedule of marketing and promotional activities that will create awareness and interest in the event.
2. Email your BDSRA staff aryan@bdsra.org or ann@bdsra.org to post your event on the website and include details of your event in the newsletter.
3. Contact media, distribute flyers, send out solicitation letters.
4. Display any signs, banners, flyers, posters accordingly.

Develop required event tracking sheets

Create logs for ticket sales, registration forms, pledges, donations, volunteers etc. This can be done on a simple Excel spreadsheet which is easy to update. (see attached samples)

Team Leader Recruitment

Each Event Committee Member should recruit 5 Team Leaders. These Team Leaders should then recruit at least 10 individuals to walk or donate. Each team should focus on raising at least \$1,000.

1. Create a list of potential walkers.
2. Personally invite them to participate.
3. Provide event details such as fundraising goal, date and time, event chair contact information, entry fees, entry deadline and prizes.
4. Report weekly to Event Committee Member

Recruiting Walkers (Two to Three Months)

Send out invitation packets 6-9 weeks prior to the walk. Packets should include the following:

1. Registration/Pledge Form
2. Event Schedule
3. Detailed description of sponsorship levels and prize donations
4. Map with Directions
5. Contact Information

One Month in Advance

1. Finalize food and refreshments
2. Confirm the event location/facility
3. Secure donated prizes for top three fundraising walkers
4. Confirm volunteers - send out a reminder notice to all those signed up to help
5. Develop detailed Day-of-Event logistics plan
6. Cross reference money received with participation registration & sponsorship confirmation.
7. Make any calls necessary to collect payments in advance.
8. Mail confirmation letters
9. Prepare printed materials provided to participants on the day of the event that recognizes sponsors, provides directions and thanks volunteers. Examples of printed event materials include route signs, banners, sponsor signs, posters, program booklet etc...
10. Team Leaders - Turn in walkers names, addresses and numbers to Event Committee Chair

One Week-in-Advance

1. Call volunteers and refreshment suppliers to ensure participation responsibilities and times
2. Visit walk site and remove debris or any other obstacle that might be a safety concern.
3. Finalize all details with guest speakers, special participants, as well as sponsors and items for the raffle and silent/or live auctions if applicable.
4. Have plan for last minute emergencies such as contact information for medical assistance.

Day-of-Event

1. Set up registration desk. Give plenty of room to accommodate many participants registering at one time. Staff area with plenty of volunteers to assist process. Have money & change box ready for volunteers.
2. Display sponsor signs.

3. Properly recognized sponsors are crucial and entice sponsors to donate the following year. Take photos to send sponsors with a thank you note post event.
4. Arrange prizes, raffle and auction items.
5. Organize food & water stations (make sure beverages are iced down)
6. Have fun and enjoy the event!!
7. Awards ceremony
8. Announce event winners and award them prizes. Take a picture of the winning person(s). Thank everyone for coming.
9. Distribute Goodie Bags (post event so they don't have to carry around during walk)

Post Tournament

- Clean-up Site (make sure you have enough volunteers!)
- Collect Funds and Send to BDSRA with the enclosed Fundraising Checklist
- Send thank you letters to sponsors and participants. Send photos taken during the event if you have them. Provide details of your success, how many participated, how much money was raised, etc.
- Plan a recognition event for committee planners and volunteers.
- Evaluate the success of the Walk-A-Thon. Survey participants and discuss their thoughts of the event including the type of event, location, and program of events.

BDSRA Resources

Our staff and other families are here to help you plan your event. If you would like to be connected with an experienced member who has planned this type of event, please contact aryan@bdsra.org or call 866-287-7233.

Additionally, the national office can provide you with a manual credit card machine, brochures, promotional items, speakers (Lance, Adina, researchers, other family members, etc.)

Donations from event should be made payable and mailed to:

**Batten Disease Support & Research Association (BDSRA)
166 Humphries Drive
Reynoldsburg, OH 43068**

For more information, or assistance in planning this event, please contact:

**Adina Ryan, Director of Development
866-287-7233**

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Or

ann@bdsra.org

