

A MOTHER OF A MOVEMENT

VOLUNTEER GUIDEBOOK COMMUNITY WALK



MARCH OF DIMES LEADS THE FIGHT FOR THE HEALTH OF ALL MOMS AND BABIES.

Every family deserves the best possible start. But that's just not the case. Each year, one woman dies every 12 hours from pregnancy-related causes, and 1 in 10 babies is born too soon.

March of Dimes leads the fight for the health of all moms and babies. Together with supporters like you, we're protecting the health of families by funding research, providing resources and programs and advocating for policies to help parents throughout their pregnancies. Building on a successful 80-year legacy, we create lasting change to make America more equitable for all and help every family get the best possible start.

From advocacy to education to research, March of Dimes is working to level the playing field so that all parents, babies and their families are healthy and strong.

When we come together as a community, even the toughest problems can be solved. And by fighting to improve maternal and infant health, we're ensuring that families have the support and care they need today and for generations to come.

March of Dimes does this by:

- supporting research to find solutions so every family gets the best possible start
- advocating for policies that prioritize the health of moms and babies
- providing resources and programs to help moms throughout their pregnancies
- educating health professionals to improve mom and baby care
- uniting local communities across the nation through events and collaboratives
- partnering with organizations and companies committed to helping moms and their families



4 MILLION
BABIES

born each year received lifesaving newborn screening.



19 MILLION
WOMEN

were reached through our programs, education and resources.



150+
STATE LEGISLATIVE BILLS

were passed to advocate for the health of moms and babies.



2,000
MOMS-TO-BE

were served through mobile health units to give health care access to uninsured families.

MARCH FOR BABIES: A MOTHER OF A MOVEMENT

March for Babies: A Mother of a Movement™ energizes people nationwide to unite, connect and fight for the health of every mom and baby. The U.S. remains among the most dangerous developed nations for childbirth, especially for women and babies of color. We can change that. No matter who you are or where you live, you can choose how you want to join the movement by fundraising and making a huge difference for families. You can also take action with do-it-yourself activities, community walks, virtual experiences and in-person events.

March for Babies is a time to honor babies born preterm or with birth defects, pay tribute to those we've lost and connect with others committed to the March of Dimes' mission. This is your movement and moment to march for something big!

COMMUNITY WALK

The March of Dimes Community Walk provides you an opportunity to bring the community together for a volunteer-led walk. A Community Walk is created, managed and executed by a volunteer with the intention of raising awareness and funds to support March of Dimes in the fight for healthy moms and babies. As a Community Walk leader, you'll receive resources and tools to implement a fun and unique event experience in your community.

Community Walks are intended to be:

- Community based
- Volunteer driven
- Mission focused
- Individualized to meet the needs of your community

GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR COMMUNITY WALK

REGISTER EVENT WITH MARCH OF DIMES

Determine the date and location of your walk and register it so we can provide you with your custom website.

REGISTER SELF & TEAM

Once your walk site is live, register your self and your team!

CUSTOMIZE YOUR PAGE & SHARE

Share your story about why you are marching with us and invite others to register for your walk!

RECRUIT HELP & SET GOALS

Recruit volunteers to help with your event. Set an event fundraising goal and ask participants to set one as well.

EXECUTE YOUR EVENT

Your Community Walk makes a statement that you want to live in a world in which healthy moms and strong babies are a priority for us all.



COMMUNITY WALK LEADER ROLE

As a leader, you will serve as the face and voice of March of Dimes within your community. Your primary responsibilities are to create, manage and execute the event with the purpose to raise awareness and funds to improve the health of moms and babies.

Tasks include:

- Selecting event site location
- Setting a goal
- Managing budget and finances, including any/all costs associated with planning the event
- Finding fellow volunteers (friends, family, neighbors, colleagues) to join in your fundraising
- Executing logistics for a fun-filled event experience



TIMELINE FOR SUCCESS

6 - 8 MONTHS BEFORE EVENT

- Sign up for your Community Walk
- Set fundraising goals and map out logistics for day of event
- Identify an appropriate venue

4 - 6 MONTHS BEFORE EVENT

- Create a list of potential in-kind sponsors and community leaders to contact for support (e.g. local businesses—coffee shops, restaurants, salons, etc.)
- Share your fundraising link and encourage participation by recruiting and engaging family, friends, community members and businesses to form teams
- Start fundraising

0 - 4 MONTHS BEFORE EVENT

- Closely monitor progress towards overall goals
- Finalize day of event logistics
- Be sure to send reminder emails to all that joined your team:
- Recommendation - 10 days prior to event and 1 day before the event
- *NOTE: Sample email content is provided in the communication section of this guide*

1 MONTH AFTER EVENT

- Within 10 days after your event, mail in any collected fundraising dollars from the event
- *NOTE: See instructions found in the offline donation form later in this guide*
- Send thank you notes or emails to all key individuals and donors



DEVELOPING YOUR EVENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES



SETTING A GOAL

Setting an overall event fundraising goal is an important step when organizing a Community Walk event. Aim high to show supporters that you are serious about fighting for the health of moms and babies. Sharing your personal connection to March of Dimes will inspire others to tell their own stories and help them reach their fundraising goals.

RECRUITING AND MANAGING A COMMITTEE

Creating a committee is optional, but can make the volunteer leader's responsibility more manageable. Depending on the size of your event and the number of participants, the following positions are recommended:

COMMUNITY WALK LEADER (this is you!)

- Lead the committee
- Encourage fundraising and send event progress updates to participants and committee if applicable

LOGISTICS VOLUNTEER LEAD

- Secure event site and develop route plan
- Create activities on site (e.g. bounce house, crafts for kids, music)
- Request permits/proof of insurance if your location requires it

SPONSORSHIP VOLUNTEER LEAD

- Secure local sponsors for financial or in-kind donations
 - Water/juice/soda
 - Food (e.g. breakfast bars, donuts, sandwiches, popcorn, fruit snacks)
 - Secure table and tent donations (if needed)
 - Prizes for top fundraisers, kids and teams (surprise and delight)

DEVELOPING YOUR EVENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES



RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS AND TEAMS

Participants and teams can be recruited in a variety of ways. Start by creating a list of everyone you want to invite. Share the excitement with your family, friends and co-workers. Ask them to reach out within their own networks, too. Invite participants to join you through social media, phone calls, texting or emails. Be sure to share event information on social media, local online and business bulletin boards and school and faith communities.

NOTE: Utilize the “Know Your Network” document found in this guide.

HAVE FUN!

A Community Walk event can be as small or large as you like. Remember to have fun! Keep it simple the first year—you can always adjust your event by adding or deleting components in the following years.



KNOW YOUR NETWORKS

Write down your ideas of who to contact and how (reach out by phone, email, social media, letter writing, etc...)

PERSONAL		
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go beyond your immediate family. 	
Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include friends from other periods of your life. Grade school, high school, college or graduate programs Informal groups or club. Book club, exercise groups, poker night or sports groups 	
Distant Contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review wedding or shower guest lists. Review your holiday card list. Were you in a sorority or fraternity? Ask your March of Dimes staff contact for a list of donors and team members. Anyone in your circle that you recently supported in a charity event of their own? 	
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How are you involved in your community? Volunteer activities/organizations, your children's activities, civic or religious organizations, Facebook group or connections on social media 	
Daily Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does your average day or weekend look like? What businesses do you frequent? Grocery stores, dry cleaners, gyms, salons or doctors 	

PROFESSIONAL		
Co-Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask outside your department or direct contacts. Outlook contacts, office directory Former co-workers from previous jobs or positions. 	
Business Contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who do you regularly interact with? Clients, partners and vendors Where does your business regularly spend money? 	
Professional Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your LinkedIn network. Think of different organizations whose meetings you attend regularly. Chamber of Commerce, Municipal Meetings Networking groups. Industry groups, professional development 	



ONLINE FUNDRAISING FOR EVENT SUCCESS



Make sure to fully setup your fundraising team page by sharing your story and adding photos. After your page is setup, use the social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter to promote your Community Walk event. You can send out customized emails to your network as well and include the link to your team page asking for financial support.

Monitor your team page regularly in order to gauge your event's progress. Keep in mind our most successful fundraisers are those who raise money online. It's just that easy!

EMAIL COMMUNICATION AND SUGGESTED CONTENT

Participants will receive transactional (notification of registration and donations) as well as coaching (fundraising best practices and encouragement) emails from March of Dimes. **We recommend you reach out to participants with important event information using the following templates.**

EMAIL TEMPLATES



SAVE THE DATE TEMPLATE

Subject line: Join us at your Community Walk Event!

We're excited to announce [event] will take place at [location] on [date] !

This extraordinary volunteer event will bring together people here in [community] who share in your commitment to help March of Dimes support every mom and every baby for generations to come.

We hope that you'll join us on [date] for [time]. Learn more and join our team today at [fundraising page URL]. If you have questions, contact [lead/volunteer name] at [phone] or [email].

We're grateful for your support and look forward to seeing you at [event]!

Sincerely,
[Name]

SIGN UP, RECRUITMENT EMAIL, SHARING THE LEAD'S PERSONAL STORY

Subject line: We're building this movement together.

Hi Friend!

I'm excited to share that I'm leading a Community Walk event here in [City]. I can't wait for you to sign up and join me.

Raising funds for March of Dimes is personal for me, as it is for so many families—maybe even to you and your family.

[Insert maximum 40 word line about why the lead is hosting an event]

We need you to make this event a success. Visit [add fundraising page URL] to sign up and donate.

In the weeks leading up to the event, I'll be fundraising and spreading the word with you, friends, family and colleagues. Our success here in [City] depends on your participation and fundraising, so please join us and support March of Dimes.

Looking forward to celebrating with you soon,
[Name]

EMAIL TEMPLATES



LOGISTICS EMAIL 1—SHARING EVENT DETAILS

DATE: 2 WEEKS BEFORE EVENT DATE

Subject line: Upcoming Community Walk Event — what you need to know!

With just two weeks until our event, I hope you're excited as I am! It's truly going to be a day for celebration.

I've pulled together the crucial details for you right here. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at [phone number] or [email].

When and where is the event?

The [event] will take place at [Event location] on [date] at [time]. To find the event, use [event address].

What time should I arrive?

We recommend arriving at least [XX] minutes early to allow yourself time to get parked.

Is parking available?

[If YES] Yes! You can find parking [directions for finding and using the parking lot, no more than 50 words].

[If NO] Parking is not available at the event site. As an alternative, we recommend [public transit directions and options, no more than 50 words].

Will there be food and drinks?

[If YES] Yes! [A few details about the food/drinks for purchase, no more than 40 words.]

[If NO] There is no food or drink for purchase at the event site, so we recommend bringing your own water and any snacks you'll need!

Are there activities for kids?

[include information on activities]

See you at the big event!

[Name]

EMAIL TEMPLATES



LOGISTICS EMAIL 2—ONE DAY BEFORE EVENT DATE

Subject line: Joining us tomorrow? Here's what you need to know.

Tomorrow is the big day and it's going to be a lot of fun. We will gather to celebrate for a brighter future for us all; one where every mom is healthy and every baby is strong.

Here are a few important reminders to make sure you are prepared upon arrival.

When and where: The [event] will take place at [Event location] on [date]. To find the event on your GPS or phone, enter [address].

Time: The event begins at [event time]. Be sure to arrive early so you can find your friends and celebrate together!

Parking: [If available] You can find parking [directions for finding and using the parking lot, no more than 50 words]

[If not available] Parking is not available at the event site. As an alternative, we recommend [public transit directions and options, no more than 50 words].

Turn in donations: If you've collected cash or checks donations, you can turn them in to [event lead] at the event.

I can't wait to see you all tomorrow!

[Name]

VOLUNTEERS

Regardless of the size of your event, volunteers will be key to your success. Recruit friends, family and coworkers, to help make everything run smoothly leading up to the event and during the event itself.

SUGGESTED AREAS TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS:

- Event set up/breakdown
- Water station (If walk is longer than 3 miles)
- Food station (if applicable)
- Emcee

ACTIVITIES

Make the event fun for your attendees! Consider having music, family games, local mascots or cheer squads to entertain your guests. It's also important to have a mission activity incorporated into your event to remind participants of the vital work of March of Dimes. Remember that most of these activities can be implemented by in-kind donations secured by fellow volunteers.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- Entertainment/music
- Food
- Kid Zone
- Start/finish line celebration

LOGISTICS

Plan to implement key elements into your event to ensure it runs smoothly.

HERE ARE A FEW KEY COMPONENTS OF EVENT DAY LOGISTICS:

- Event venue and route secured
- Restrooms
- First aid
- Water stations if walk exceeds 3 miles
- A person designated to accept on-site donations
- Permits (if applicable)
- Day of communication plan
- Remember—safety for all participants is important!

DAY OF DONATIONS PROCESS



We want to make sure your event gets credit for every dollar you raised. Although online fundraising is the best way to collect donations, here is the recommended methods for handling support received as cash, personal payment (PayPal, Venmo, etc), or check:

To reflect funds raised through your Community Walk on your March for Babies progress bar, add them as an offline donation:

- Go to your March for Babies participant page
- Scroll over 'All Donations'
- Select 'Cash/Check Donation Here'.
- Enter the total raised with first name 'Community' and last name 'Walk.'

Although online fundraising is the best way to collect donations, you may receive support via cash and/or check on event day. When receiving cash or check donations, please collect them and send to:

March of Dimes
Donation Processing Center
PO Box 18819
Atlanta, GA 31126

Please Note: Use the [DIY Offline Donation Form](#) and review it for additional instructions.

We believe that every baby deserves the best possible start. Your donation helps us provide services, programs and support for moms and babies in communities like yours across the country.

PLEASE SEND FORM AND YOUR DONATION TO:

March of Dimes
Donation Processing Center
PO Box 18819
Atlanta, GA 31126

Please complete this form so that we can appropriately allocate your donation to your local market. Thank you for your support of March of Dimes!

CONTACT INFO

Name: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: () _____

DONATION INFORMATION

Total amount enclosed: \$ _____

March of Dimes location to credit: City: _____ State: _____

(Please do not mail cash.)

If you would like to designate a recipient, please check the appropriate box.

March for Babies: Credit to team or walker? _____

Event: _____

Signature Chefs: Apply to sponsorship or auction purchase? _____

Nurse of the Year

Board gift: Credit to: _____

General donation

Other: _____

Please make check payable to "March of Dimes."

The March of Dimes is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization (tax identification number 13-1846366.)

SAVE

POST EVENT



THANK YOU LETTERS

Thanking donors and sponsors is a very important. You can consider sending an email to all volunteers, sponsors and participants the day after the event. You can also send a hand-written note to your top sponsors, donors and teams. These should ideally be mailed within 7 days of your event taking place. Have your volunteers help create and mail these notes. Below are some sample emails and letters as a resource.

DEBRIEF THE EVENT

After the event, you may want to consider scheduling a meeting and/or following up with sponsors, teams, volunteers and participants to get their thoughts about the event. You'll want to consider what did or did not go well. This feedback is helpful to improve the event experience and set up for future success.

SAMPLE POST EVENT EMAIL

[First name],

You just did something incredible. By joining the [event], you made a statement that you want to live in a world in which healthy moms and strong babies are a priority for us all.

Because of your participation, March of Dimes can:

- Advocate for policies that prioritize the health of moms and babies.
- Support radical improvements to the care they receive.
- Pioneer research at our March of Dimes Prematurity Research Centers to find solutions to the biggest health threats to families.

Let us take a moment to celebrate all that we accomplished together. We can't wait to see you next year!

Your [name]

POST EVENT



SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

DATE

[Name
[Address]
[City], [STATE] [ZIP]

Dear First name(s),

On behalf of the [NAME] and March of Dimes, we extend our most sincere thanks to you!

Due to your generosity, [name] raised more than \$XX,000 for the health of all moms and babies. Through your involvement with our [Event], you're helping March of Dimes empower families with information, programs and tools to have healthy pregnancies.

We're grateful for your participation at the [event] and your support of March of Dimes as we work together to ensure healthy moms and strong babies. Thank you for helping to improve lives and make the future brighter for us all.

Sincerely,
[NAME]



THANK YOU

MARCH OF DIMES
MARCH FOR BABIES
A MOTHER OF
A MOVEMENT

Thank you for taking the time and effort to help us spread our mission to your local community. We know taking on an event is no small feat and we are grateful. Because of you, we have been able to raise awareness about the work we still need to do to provide a healthy start for all moms and babies.