



AMERICAN  
PARKINSON DISEASE  
ASSOCIATION

# Optimism Walk Fundraising Guide

A helpful guide and simple tips  
to make fundraising easy!

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Thank you for fundraising for the APDA Optimism Walk! **The more funds raised by Optimism Walk participants, the more people with Parkinson's we can help** through support services and programs and **the more research we can fund** in hopes of ultimately finding a cure – **so fundraising is our primary goal!**

**Whether you're a seasoned fundraiser or a first-timer, the tools and tips in this guide can help you achieve (and exceed!) your fundraising goals.**

### [★ Overview/General Tips](#)

#### General Tips:

- Start early! It is never too early to start your fundraising efforts.
- Ask, and ask often. The average person *needs to be reminded several times* before actually making a donation.
- Don't feel bad! Some people feel awkward about asking for donations. Remember, you are not asking them to give **YOU** money, you are asking them to support a very important cause (that you care about a lot) and you're giving them an opportunity to easily get involved. And remember, the more funds we raise, the more people we can help.
- Raise funds online – it's the easiest and fastest way to ask for and receive donations.
- Know your facts. Have a few key facts about Parkinson's disease handy and know where the funds will go so you can answer any questions from donors (see page 10).



#### Key Steps to Fundraising Success:

1. Set up your personal fundraising page
2. Create a fundraising goal (aim high!)
3. Identify your prospects
4. Write your fundraising messages (tailored to each audience)
5. Suggest a level of giving
6. Track your donations and follow-up
7. Thank your donors
8. Have fun!

#### Set up your personal fundraising page:

Getting online donations is the easiest and most popular way to fundraise. Creating your personal fundraising page enables you to reach out to your network of potential donors quickly, and easily and gives them a convenient way to show their support with just a few clicks!

Be sure to *personalize* your fundraising page. Tell your story with passion and enthusiasm so your potential donors know *why* you are participating in the Optimism Walk – who are you walking and fundraising for, how many times have you walked, why is this important to you, etc. Include a photo of the person you are walking for, or you and your teammates. Your personal reasons for participating will motivate people to donate.

### Personalizing your fundraising page:

Once you register online, you can immediately make changes to your fundraising page.

- In the top right corner of the page, click on “Welcome, (Name)” and select “Profile” from the dropdown menu.
- Click on “Edit Your Page”
- From here you can customize the URL link (if you want to add your name to the end instead of your participant number)
- You can add a photo of the person you are walking for, or a fun picture from last year’s walk
- You can revise or replace the copy that is provided to share your personal story of why you are walking and fundraising.
- Be sure to click “Save Changes” at the bottom of the page!
- For more detailed instructions, or assistance with your online fundraising, please see the *Donor Drive Fundraising How-To Guide* in the “Event Resources” section of the site, or contact your local APDA chapter.



*Be sure to tell your story – it will inspire others to donate!*

### Identify your prospects

**Who should you ask?** *Ask everyone!* Take a few minutes and make a list of everyone you can think of. Here are just a few ideas to get you started:

- Family
- Friends
- Anyone on your holiday card list
- Current coworkers and business associates
- Former coworkers and business associates
- Neighbors
- School acquaintances (alumni groups, Facebook, etc)
- Clubs and organizations
- Place of worship
- Community businesses (you support them, now they can support you!)
- Anyone who owes you a favor (a great way to be paid back!)

### Tailor your messages:

While email is the most popular and convenient method of fundraising for your Optimism Walk, you know your audience best and there might be people who will prefer a letter in the mail, or an in-person ask. Tailor your message and method of outreach based on your audience -- if grandma isn't very computer savvy, send her a nice personal letter asking for support; however, your dry cleaner might respond best to an in-person ask. Use

good judgement. A letter to your boss should not be the same as a letter to your sister. If you're asking for a donation from someone who works for a large company, be sure to remind them to inquire about a possible matching gift from their corporation.

### **Suggest a level of giving:**

Help your donors by suggesting a donation amount that you would like them to consider. Of course ANY amount is appreciated (and let them know that), but never underestimate a donor's ability or willingness to give.

You can also suggest (for those who cannot donate at this time) they show their support by forwarding your donation appeal to their network of friends and family.

Once you reach your fundraising goal, don't stop! Increase your goal and keep going! The more money we raise, the more people we can help.

### **Track your donations and follow up:**

Keep a log of everyone you send a donation appeal to and if/when you heard back. Keep copies of all offline donations received and submitted, your fundraising webpage will keep track of all online donations.

*Follow-up is possibly the most important step in fundraising.* People may not donate because they are busy and forget and often need a reminder (or two, or three) of how hard you are working to reach your fundraising goal.

### **Thank your donors:**

Thank each and every individual and company that has made a donation on your behalf. Thank them quickly and make sure they know their donation was important to you. It is a nice touch to send a post-event thank you to your supporters with a photo from the day and a few highlights.

### **Fundraising Activities:**

Love to bake? Can you knit? Turn something you love to do into a fundraising activity for your Optimism Walk. Host a bake sale at your office or place of worship. Knit scarves (or mittens, or hats, etc.) and sell them to raise funds for your Walk. Or simply put a candy dish at your desk with a collection jar and ask people to make a small donation in exchange for a piece of candy. Be creative – the possibilities are endless!

There are lots of fundraising activities that become even more fun when you do them with others. Consider the following, especially if you're fundraising with a team:

- Car wash
- Garage sale
- Bar night
- Karaoke night
- Game night
- Raffle or auction
- Dress down day at office



*Fundraising as a team can be fun!*

**Wondering how you'll meet your goal?** It's easy when you break it down. Let's say your fundraising goal is \$500. Here's just one way you can easily get there:

Ask your boss and closest relatives for donations of \$50-100		
	1 donation of \$100	\$100
	2 donations of \$50	\$100
Get 10 good friends to donate \$20 each	10 donations of \$20	\$200
Get 5 Facebook friends to donate \$10 each	5 donations of \$10	\$50
Put a change jar and bowl of candy at your desk		\$25
Make a self-donation		\$25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$500</b>

**Or try it this way:**

***Raise \$500 in 10 Days***

Day 1	Make a self-donation of \$25	\$25
Day 2	Ask 5 coworkers for \$5 each	\$25
Day 3	Ask 4 neighbors for \$20 each	\$80
Day 4	Ask your boss/company for a \$50 donation	\$50
Day 5	Hold a little bake sale (at your office, or church, or school)	\$60
Day 6	Ask 4 businesses you frequent (dry cleaner, coffee shop, pet groomer, etc) for \$25 donation each	\$100
Day 7	Ask 4 family members to donate \$25 each	\$100
Day 8	Ask 5 Facebook friends to donate \$10 each	\$50
Day 9	Put a candy dish at your desk and a collection jar and ask people to make a small donation in exchange for a piece of candy.	\$10
Day 10	Go ahead and raise your fundraising goal because you've already hit \$500! Congratulations!	😊
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$500</b>

There are lots of other ways to break it down, the above examples are just two fun and easy ways to tackle your fundraising goal. Have questions? Let us know! We are here to help you become a fantastic fundraiser.

**Keep reading for more great fundraising help!**



## ★ Sample Emails/Letter

### Sample email requesting donation:

Hi (name),

Most of you know that my mother was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease three years ago. It's been a challenging journey, but one filled with a lot of love and more laughs than I expected. I am so thankful for the support she has received from so many of you, and also the important support groups and programs that are made for people like her who living with PD every day. These programs, along with the medications available to her, have improved her quality of life significantly. As a tribute to my mom, I've decided to do participate in the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) Optimism Walk on (date). *(personalize first paragraph with your own story)*

I have committed to fundraising \$(insert amount) for the American Parkinson Disease Association, an organization working tirelessly to help people impacted by PD live life to the fullest and to find a cure for this disease. The more funds I raise, the more people they can help. I hope you will show your support by making a donation today.

You can make an easy online donation here: (insert link to your fundraising page) Any amount is appreciated!

Thank you for your support.

PS: If you'd like to join me for the Optimism Walk, you can register here! (insert link to event registration page)

### Sample donation reminder email:

Hi (name),

As you know, I am participating in the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) Optimism Walk on (insert date) in honor of my awesome mom who was diagnosed with PD three years ago (replace with your personal reason for participating). I've committed to raising \$(insert amount) and am happy to report that I'm halfway there! (replace with your fundraising progress). *But I still need your help.* The funds I raise will help APDA provide support services and programs for people living with PD as well as fund important research into new treatments and finding a cure. The more we raise, the more people we can help.

Please consider showing your support with a donation today. It's quick and easy – just visit my fundraising page (insert link) and make a donation online, and then go ahead and spend the rest of the day feeling good that you are helping people with PD have a better quality of life, and hopefully putting an end to this disease once and for all.

Thanks so much for your generosity!

### Sample letter requesting donation:

Date

Name

Address

Address

Dear (name),

As you know, my mother was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease three years ago. It's been a challenging journey, but one filled with a lot of love and more laughs than I expected. I am so thankful for the support she has received from friends like you, and also the important support groups and programs that are made for people like her who living with PD every day. These programs, along with the medications available to her, have improved her quality of life significantly. As a tribute to my mom, I've decided to do participate in the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) Optimism Walk on (date). *(personalize first paragraph with your own story)*

I have committed to fundraising \$(insert amount) for the American Parkinson Disease Association, an organization working tirelessly to help those impacted by PD live life to the fullest and to find a cure for this disease. The more funds I raise, the more people they can help. I hope you will show your support by making a donation today.

You can make an easy online donation by going to my fundraising page: (insert URL for your fundraising page) Or if you'd prefer to send your donation via check, you can make it payable to the American Parkinson Disease Association and send it to me at (insert your mailing address). Any amount is appreciated!

I am excited about the Optimism Walk – I know it's going to be an inspiring experience and a great day.

Thank you for your support and generosity.

Sincerely,  
(your name)

**If Social Media how you prefer to connect with friends and family,  
keep reading for helpful tips and posts!**





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## ★ Sample Social Media Posts

### Helpful Hints:

- Post for yourself, *or on behalf of someone else!*\* Spread the word!
- Twitter messages must not exceed 140 characters.
- Posts that include photos/images get more attention.
- Encourage interaction. Ask questions in your posts. Don't always be talking *AT* your audience.
- Be sure to thank donors via social media as donations come in. It's a nice way to acknowledge the donor, but also remind others that they haven't donated yet.

Simply customize the **highlighted** sections with your event details/personal info and then cut and paste into your social media outlets!

### Pre-Event:

#### Facebook:

I'm excited! I just registered for the APDA Optimism Walk in (city) to help fight Parkinson's disease! Please join me for an exciting and inspiring day – register today and let's start fundraising! The more we raise, the more people with PD we can help! (insert link to registration page)

*\* Here's an example of how you can revise this to be on behalf of someone else:*

*I'm excited! My mom just registered for the APDA Optimism Walk in (city) to help fight Parkinson's disease! Please join her for an exciting and inspiring day – register today and start fundraising! Or make a donation to my mom's fundraising efforts! The more she raises, the more people with PD we can help! (insert link to mom's registration page)*

#### Twitter:

I just registered for (city's) APDA Optimism Walk on (event date). Help me raise funds to put an end to PD. (include link to your donation page) #PDoptimism #apdaparkinson

#### Facebook:

I'm walking in the APDA Optimism Walk on (event date) in honor of (name). Please show your support with a donation today (include link to your donation page). Any amount is appreciated and will help us put an end to PD once and for all. (include photo of the person you are walking for)

#### Twitter:

My Optimism Walk is in honor of (name). Please show your support with a donation today! (include link to your donation page) #PDoptimism #apdaparkinson

#### Facebook:

My Optimism Walk is only two weeks away and I have not reached my fundraising goal! Won't you help? If just 10 of my Facebook friends donate \$xx, I'll hit my goal in no time and you'll be helping more people with PD! (include link to donation page)

**Twitter:**

2 weeks to go! Help me reach my fundraising goal. If 5 friends donate just \$xx, I'll get there fast! Thanks! *(include link to your donation page)* #PDoptimism #apdaparkinson

**Day-Of Event:****Facebook:**

Today is the day! I will join hundreds of others who care about Parkinson's disease at the (city) Optimism Walk. It's not too late to show your support with a donation *(include link to your donation page)* Every dollar makes a difference!

**Twitter:**

Today is my Optimism Walk! It's not too late to donate *(include link to your donation page)* Thanks for the support! #PDoptimism #apdaparkinson

**Post Event:****Facebook:**

What a fantastic day! I met so many inspiring people at the APDA Optimism Walk in (city) and was proud to walk in honor of (name). I've raised (insert amount) but I'm not quite done! If you haven't had a chance to donate yet, please consider making a donation today. *(inset link to your donation page)* Funds raised help people living with PD and fuels research to end this disease. Thank you! *(include photo of you/your team from the event)*

**Twitter:**

The Optimism Walk was fantastic! One last call for donations – if you haven't already, now is the time! *(insert link to your donation page)* #PDoptimism #apdaparkinson

***And remember, if you don't ASK, you won't GET!***

**Don't be afraid to ask friends and family to support the cause you care about.**

**The more funds we raise, the more people we can help!**



## ★ Parkinson Disease Statistics

You likely already know some of the facts about PD, but your potential donors might not. Be sure to use this compelling information when asking them to support your participation in the Optimism Walk. These stats make it clear that we need their help to make a difference.

### **Parkinson's disease facts in the United States:**

- Every nine minutes there is a new diagnosis of Parkinson's disease.
- 164 people on average are diagnosed per day.
- There are 60,000 new cases of Parkinson's disease diagnosed every year.
- Parkinson's disease is the 14th leading cause of death in the U.S. and is estimated to cost our country at least \$14.4 billion annually<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.6% of people over the age of 65 are living with Parkinson's disease.<sup>2</sup>
- Onset commonly occurs after age sixty<sup>3</sup>, however up to 10% will receive an earlier diagnosis and are considered Young Onset.
- There is currently no cure for Parkinson's.



### **About the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA)**

The American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA) is the largest grassroots network dedicated to fighting Parkinson's and supporting every person and every family impacted by Parkinson's across the country. We offer services, provide education, and fund the promising research that brings us closer to discovering the cause and finding the cure. To learn more about APDA and the services we provide, visit [www.apdaparkinson.org](http://www.apdaparkinson.org).

<sup>1</sup> Movement Disorders, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2013: The Current and Projected Economic Burden of Parkinson's Disease in the United States

<sup>2</sup> Neuroepidemiology, 2010 Apr; 34(3): 143-151 Geographic and Ethnic Variation in Parkinson Disease: A Population-based Study of US Medicare and Beneficiaries

<sup>3</sup> National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/parkinsons\\_disease/parkinsons\\_disease.htm](http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/parkinsons_disease/parkinsons_disease.htm)

## ★ Frequently Asked Questions

### **About Fundraising:**

**Q: Why should I fundraise? Isn't walking in an Optimism Walk enough? Awareness is important.**

A: You are correct, awareness IS important. But it is the funds raised at Optimism Walks that keeps the doors open for the support groups and service programs for Parkinson's patients and their families. Those funds help researchers continue their work. *These funds are critical.* The more funds we raise, the more people we can help and this is why it is important for all Optimism Walk participants to fundraise.

**Q: How can I ask my friends for donations? I've never fundraised before. It's awkward.**

A: Fundraising can seem daunting if you've never done it before, but it's a LOT easier than you think! And we give you some great tools to make it even easier for you to become a fantastic fundraiser – your own fundraising webpage, email templates, social media posts, and more! Remember, you are not asking them to give YOU money, you are asking them to support a very important cause (that you care about a lot) and you're giving them an opportunity to easily get involved. And remember, the more funds we raise, the more people we can help.

**Q: Where does the money raised go?**

A: Funds raised by Optimism Walks go towards APDA's mission help everyone impacted by Parkinson's disease live life to the fullest, especially those in your local communities. The money you raise will help fund local education, referrals, support and public awareness programs that can improve quality of life for families, caregivers, and all those impacted by the disease. The funds also allow us to invest in cutting-edge research that is searching for a cure.

**Q: What is a matching gift and why does it make a difference?**

A: A matching gift is when an employer will match an employee's charitable contribution. For example, if your friend donates \$50 to your Optimism Walk, if her employer has a matching gift program, they will also donate \$50 to your Optimism Walk. In some cases, they might even double or triple the donation! (details vary by company) So remind your donors to check with their company's Finance or Human Resources departments to find out if they have a matching gifts program – it could significantly increase your fundraising!

### **About Registering:**

**Q: If I have registered for the walk in the past, do I have to register again?**

A: Yes, you must register for the walk every year you participate. This helps us keep an accurate record of who will be attending the walk. Walkers age 18 and over must also agree to the waiver in the registration process each year. If you've registered for a previous walk, you will have the opportunity to login to your existing account during Step 3 of the registration process. Enter your e-mail address and password and then you won't have to enter your address information again. Be sure to review your information to make sure it is current/correct. *Note:* All participants under the age of 18 must have a parent or guardian agree to the waiver on their behalf.

**Q: What if I can't remember my password?**

A: Just click the *Forgot Password* after you Login to your account and you will be sent an email with a link to reset your password.

### **About Donations:**

**Q: How do people receive receipts for their donations?**

A: Whenever an online donation is made, an email thank you/receipt will automatically be sent to the email address they provided. They should print this to use for their charitable tax deduction. Donations made by check of \$50 or more will receive a thank you letter/receipt after the Walk is over.

**Q: I mailed in my offline donations, but they are not appearing on my personal/team page.**

A: APDA works hard to make sure your offline donations are added to the website in a timely manner. If you are concerned that a gift you sent in is not appearing on your page, please email [apda@apdaparkinson.org](mailto:apda@apdaparkinson.org) with your name, the event you are participating in and your contact info, and we'll work to resolve any issue.

**Q: How can I send a thank you email to those who made a donation for me?**

A: Thanking your donors is an important part of fundraising! Log in and go to the *Dashboard* icon at the top of the page. Go to the menu on the right side of the page and under *Your Fundraising*, click on *View Donations Received*. Click the box next to each donation and then click on *Send Thank You* button just under *Total Received*.

### **General Questions:**

**Q: Can I form a team for the Optimism Walk?**

A: Absolutely! Forming a team is a great way to have fun and fundraise. When you register, you can start your own team or join an existing team.

**Q: What is a personal/team page?**

A: A personal/team page is an online tool for you to use when soliciting support for the APDA Optimism Walk from your friends and family. From here, you will be able to ask family, friends, and co-workers to join you or your team at the walk, or to support you by making a donation.

Once you sign up for the walk online, by default, a personal page will be created for you. If you are registered as a team captain, you will also have a team page created for you. You will then have the option of personalizing these pages (which we highly recommend) by going to the *Dashboard* icon at the top of the page. Go to the menu on the right side of the page and under *Your Fundraising*, click on *Edit Your Page*.

**Q: Do I have to change my personal/team page?**

A: Once you register for the event, you will automatically have a personal page created for you. This page will have suggested content and a photo that you are free to leave as is. However, we highly recommend personalizing your fundraising page to let people know why you're walking and why you are passionate about supporting APDA. Your personal story will inspire people to support you with a donation.

To personalize your page after you login go to *Dashboard* icon at the top of the page. Go to the menu on the right side of the page and under *Your Fundraising*, click on *Edit Your Page*. Be sure to click *Save Changes* at the bottom of the page.

**Q: What happens if the weather is bad on the event day?**

A: Optimism Walks take place rain or shine! The only reason the Walk would be postponed is if the weather is dangerous (i.e. lightning), in which case event organizers would notify you as soon as possible. If inclement weather is predicted, be sure to dress accordingly for the weather (i.e., baseball cap, rain jacket, dry socks and shoes for the ride home).

**Q: Is there someone I can talk to who can help me when I have a problem with my fundraising page or registration process?**

A: If you can't find your answers in the FAQ, contact your local APDA Optimism Walk representative or send an email to [apda@apdaparkinson.org](mailto:apda@apdaparkinson.org), with your name, the event you are registered for, an explanation of your issue/question, and the best way to contact you. Every effort will be made to help you as soon as possible!

**Thank you so very much for participating in the APDA Optimism Walk!**

**We're here for you if you have any questions!**