

Virtual Parkinson's Unity Walk Guide



2023 Parkinson's Unity Walk in Central Park, NYC



Host your own Parkinson's Unity Walk

Join the Parkinson's Unity Walk from anywhere!

Thank you for joining the Parkinson's Unity Walk in its 30th year of walking together towards a cure for Parkinson's disease.

Since its inception in 1994, the Parkinson's Unity Walk has been a staple in the PD community gathering together thousands of people in NYC's Central Park to raise awareness and money for critical Parkinson's programs and research.

Last year, thanks to the incredible fundraising efforts of this community and the generosity of Connie and Steve Balmer, the Unity Walk raised nearly \$2 million, the highest ever amount fundraised for the event in a single year. 100% of funds raised for the Unity Walk go directly to high-impact Parkinson's research programs and public policy initiatives to speed a cure.




We can't thank you enough for showing the world that a future without Parkinson's is possible.

HOW TO USE THE VIRTUAL PARKINSON'S UNITY WALK GUIDE

We recognize that not everyone in our community may be able to join us in Central Park on Saturday, April 27th. This guide is meant to provide directions on how you can organize your own Parkinson's Unity Walk within your own community.

We share tips on how to set up your fundraising page, step-by-step instructions on how to organize your own walk in your area, resources to spread the news about your event,, and so much more.

Make sure to follow and tag us on social media so you can share any updates or photos from your event:

 [@unitywalk](#)
 [@michaeljfoxorg](#)
 [@michaeljfoxfoundation](#)

If you have questions or need more information, email unitywalk@michaeljfox.org to connect with a member of our team.

Let's get started!

Welcome to Classy!

We are thrilled to use our fundraising platform, Classy, to help raise money for the Parkinson's Unity Walk. Everyone who registers for the Parkinson's Unity Walk will receive a link to their own fundraising page via email and will have the opportunity to create a fundraising goal and collect donations that will be applied towards that goal.

NAVIGATING YOUR ACCOUNT WITH CLASSY

We have created a guide to creating your individual Unity Walk fundraising page with Classy. This document serves as a step-by-step guide for:

- + Setting up your account
- + Creating an individual or team page for fundraising
- + Joining a fundraising team
- + Communicating with donors
- + Creating a Facebook fundraising page

To view the guide, click [here](#). You can also find it on the **Event Resources tab** of the Parkinson's Unity Walk website.

If you have questions or need more information about Classy, email us at unitywalk@michaeljfox.org.



Making the Most of Your Fundraising Page

Now that your plan is set in motion, it's time to use your Unity Walk fundraising page to share your story and boost donations for Parkinson's research! Customizing your Classy page is essential for success. Check out the following key features that will take your fundraising page to new heights!

CREATE A TEAM PAGE

Create a team when you register for the event, and create a team fundraising goal for your event. Include important Event Details for your own local Walk on your team page, including date, location and time. Share the team page URL to your community, and encourage others to register for your team and fundraise collectively for the event.

STORY SHARING

Add your story to your welcome message and upload meaningful photos. The "why" behind your campaign is vital to the success of your fundraising. Let your network know what is driving your support of the Parkinson's Unity Walk. Making it personal will only gain you more support!

EMAIL

Spread the word to your friends and family by using email. Browse email templates that you can use to launch your campaign, ask for donations, share status updates and thank your donors. These templates can be customized with a personal message to supporters. Download a variety of email templates on our **Event Resources tab** or directly [here](#).

CUSTOM URL

Make your page easily accessible and easy to remember. By creating a custom URL, your campaign will stand out and will tie everything together.

DONATION TRACKING

Use the "donations" tab in your account to find information about your donations — donor names and email addresses, and donation dates and amounts. Make sure to send all your donors a Thank You!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Expand your reach through social media! You'd be surprised how far social media posts travel. Use the widgets provided on your page to share to Facebook, Twitter, and/or create a custom URL. Create a Facebook Fundraiser directly from your Classy page to reach a larger audience for support. See our Facebook Fundraiser instructions [here](#) or under the **Event Resources tab** on our website.

If you are looking for some pre-designed graphics, check out our social media resources for the event which you can find on our **Event Resources tab** or directly [here](#).

Organize your own local Parkinson's Unity Walk

Looking to host a Unity Walk in your community? Check out the steps below to get started on your journey of walking towards a cure.

REGISTER

Go to [www.parkinsonsunitywalk.org](#) and select the *Create a Team* and then *Virtual Registration* option during the registration process. A fundraising page will be created for you where you can set your fundraising goal. Share your fundraising goal with family and friends to help you reach your goal.

Personalize your team page to share why you are participating in the Parkinson's Unity Walk and update the page with important event details, such as date, time and location. Your Team Page can act as your event website for people to reference when they need more information.

TEAM

Go to [www.parkinsonsunitywalk.org](#) to create your team page.

- + Will this be a small walk with family and close friends or will this event host a larger audience?
- + How many people are you expecting (to walk, volunteer and be there on event day)? More people mean more impressions.
- + What do you need from a specific sponsor — in-kind donations like food and water for the walkers, signage, services on event day— or is your ask for money?
- + What can you provide sponsors — this is important for them. Will they be the title sponsor? Can they have their logo on signage and t-shirts or on your team page?

Please note that if you are organizing a more intimate event with a small number of participants, some of the following steps may not apply.

DATE, LOCATION AND INSURANCE

Do you have access to a location that will allow you to host the Walk on a specific date? Do you need permits? Can you map out a Walk course?

- + Can you use a local park or school track/grounds? If your route uses town/city streets, can you get roads closed, and will it require permits from the town/city?
- + Check with local calendars to make sure your Walk isn't competing with other events.
- + Work with venue and your personal insurance company to get one-day liability insurance for your event.

SPONSORSHIP (OPTIONAL)

Once you have your event details secured, you can approach sponsors to help underwrite costs, provide products for the event and add to your fundraising.



- + Provide sponsors with details about the event. Let them know it is a fundraiser for The Michael J. Fox Foundation. (Unity Walk staff can provide a letter).
- + How many people you are expecting (to walk, volunteer and be there on event day)? More people mean more impressions.
- + What do you need from a specific sponsor — in-kind donations like food and water for the walkers, signage, services on event day— or is your ask for money?
- + What can you provide sponsors — this is important for them. Will they be the title sponsor? Can they have their logo on signage and t-shirts or on your team page?

EVENT PROMOTION

How are you going to make your event successful?

Quick tip: *If planning a large event, create a committee to help you with event planning, and details. Assign friends, family members and colleagues to tasks they are good at and excited about (marketing, volunteer coordination, registration captain)*

- + Think about promotion and how you are going to spread the word about your Walk.
 - Send emails to your family, friends, and co-workers and ask that they reach out to their networks. Update your team
 - Post on your social media and/or create a Facebook Event page for your Walk (see Social Media Fundraising on page 12 for instructions)
 - Edit our customizable Unity Walk flyer with your event details and hang them up in local businesses and around your neighborhood
 - Post lawn signs in the area with your event information
- + Do you have access to promote locally in other ways?
 - Schools
 - Church/community groups
 - On the radio
 - In your local newspaper

REGISTRATION AND FUNDRAISING

Think through how to track registration and encourage participant fundraising.

- + Make sure your Team Page has been updated with any important event details for your network to reference.
- + Encourage family, friends to register for the Parkinson's Unity Walk at unitywalk.org. Make sure they select the "Join a Team" option and search your team name at registration. They should also select the Virtual Registration Ticket at check-out.
 - If someone registered as an individual but should be added to your team, email unitywalk@michaeljfox.org with their name and the team to get added.
- + All registrants for your team will get an individual fundraising page that links to the team page. All money they raise will be applied to the Team Goal.
- + As team captain, you will be able to track team members and access their email addresses. All Unity Walk participants will receive frequent communications from our Unity Walk team, but you should email your team members regularly with any important information specific to your event.
- + Encourage participants to fundraise towards your team goal. Decide if you will have incentive items for those who reach a certain fundraising level. Perhaps you will do weekly shout-out for a top fundraiser on your team or present a Top Fundraiser award at your event. Get creative!
- + Design a team T-Shirt through our Bonfire Fundraiser, and encourage participants to purchase a shirt to wear on event day. A portion of all proceeds will be applied to your team fundraising page. Read more on page 10.

EVENT DAY PREPARATIONS

Make sure everything is prepared ahead of event day, so everyone (including yourself) can enjoy the experience!

+ Event Insignia:

- Offer some kind of token or item to distinguish participants in your event
 - Unity Walk Sticker or Pins
 - Event Bibs
 - Event Shirts (See Bonfire T-Shirt Fundraiser on page 10 for more information)
- Event Signs
 - Have participants make signs to carry on the walk to raise awareness during the event

+ Registration and Finish area:

- Make sure everything on race day is well marked:
 - Registration/check in area (if having)
 - Start/finish line and walk route
 - Water/snack station (if needed)

+ Comfort and Health:

- If your venue doesn't have access to restrooms, rent a portable bathroom for the day.
- Think about offering replenishments for your walkers. If it's warm in your region, secure enough water for everyone or remind participants to bring their own water bottles.

+ Music and entertainment:

- Do you have access to speakers to play music and a microphone to announce walkers as they finish?
- Do you know a local DJ that would volunteer their time?

+ Information:

- Create an information area for people to learn more about PD
- Reach out to local Parkinson's groups, movement groups, PTs, or doctors to see if they would volunteer to be at the event

+ Additional Fundraising Onsite:

- Secure items to have available for auction or raffle on event day to encourage additional fundraising.

+ Photos:

- Consider a photographer to take pictures during the event
 - Ask a friend or someone in the community to volunteer
- Find a nice backdrop or create a photo backdrop where people can take photos

+ Celebrate:

- Do you want to give participants the opportunity to celebrate after the race at a local restaurant, park, or bar?
- Plan with the venue or location so they know to expect a large crowd.

SAY THANK YOU

Recognize your sponsors, partners and volunteers during and after the event, send thank you notes to your supporters, and be sure everyone feels excited about next year!

SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

Held an awesome event? We want to hear all about it! Write a quick recap and send some photos to unitywalk@michaeljfox.org.

On social media? Like us on Facebook and share your updates on Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag: **#UnityWalk**

If you have a need for any resources or support for your event, please feel free to reach out to us at unitywalk@michaeljfox.org



Sample Event Budget

The items listed below are not comprehensive, and your event might not require all the suggested considerations. Use this as a starting point when planning for expected event costs and to identify potential for sponsor support for in-kind donations.

LOGISTICS

Item	Cost	Donated Y/N
Permits		
Signage (road signs, route signs, banners)		
Venue Costs		
Subtotal		

VENUE

Item	Cost	Donated Y/N
Table Rentals		
Chair Rentals		
EMT / Police		
Porta Potties		
Meals for Volunteers / Staff		
Water for Participants		
Meals for Participants		
Snacks for Participants		
Beverages for Participants		

MISCELLANEOUS

Item	Cost	Donated Y/N
Volunteer Thank-You Gift		
Volunteer T-shirts		
Participant T-shirts		
Participant Giveaways		
Raffle Items		

Create Your Own Event Shirt with our Bonfire Fundraiser

Team or event t-shirts are a great way to create a sense of unity, raise awareness for your cause, and generally get people excited about the event! The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF) and Bonfire have partnered together to provide t-shirt fundraising for all participants of the Parkinson's Unity Walk.

Bonfire allows Unity Walk participants the ability to design and sell customized t-shirts, hoodies, sweatshirts and more online by creating their own campaign page that friends, family, coworkers or anyone can check and purchase. Bonfire will ship products directly to your buyers, and you or your team will receive credit on your Classy fundraising page for the proceeds raised.

Visit the [Parkinson's Unity Walk Bonfire webpage](#) to get started.

Happy fundraising!

OPTION 1

Create your own design



Design from scratch or upload your own art.

OPTION 2

Start with our template



Add a custom twist to our pre-made design.

OPTION 3

Start with our template



Add a custom twist to our pre-made design.

You can create your own shirt design or customize one of our templates.



Have any questions about creating an event t-shirt? Check out our [Bonfire guide](#) or email us at unitywalk@michaeljfox.org

Social Media Fundraising

Getting Started

SPREAD THE WORD

Kick-start your fundraising with a story about *why* you're participating in the Parkinson's Unity Walk. Your why is what will inspire others to support the cause. Include important event details such as the date and location of your Walk in your post, so people can mark their calendars. Make sure to also share your fundraising page URL so people can easily register for your team or donate to the cause.

CREATE EYE-CATCHING CONTENT

Post high-quality pictures and videos, limit distracting filters and edits, and include a clear call to action in the caption. Remind your community that any amount donated helps to push you closer to your goal!

INFUSE STATS AND FACTS

Highlight the importance of your fundraiser by including data and talking points from our [Parkinson's Fact Sheet](#).

ENGAGE YOUR FOLLOWERS

After posting, be sure to thank supporters, like comments, and respond to questions. Go the extra mile and create dedicated posts recognizing donors, team members, and event volunteers!

ADD HELPFUL HASHTAGS

Tag the Unity Walk and MJFF in your posts and include our official hashtag: **#UnityWalk**. This allows other members of the community to find, follow, repost and reshare. Other relevant hashtags include **#Parkinsons** **#Research** and **#ParkinsonsAwarenessMonth** for April.



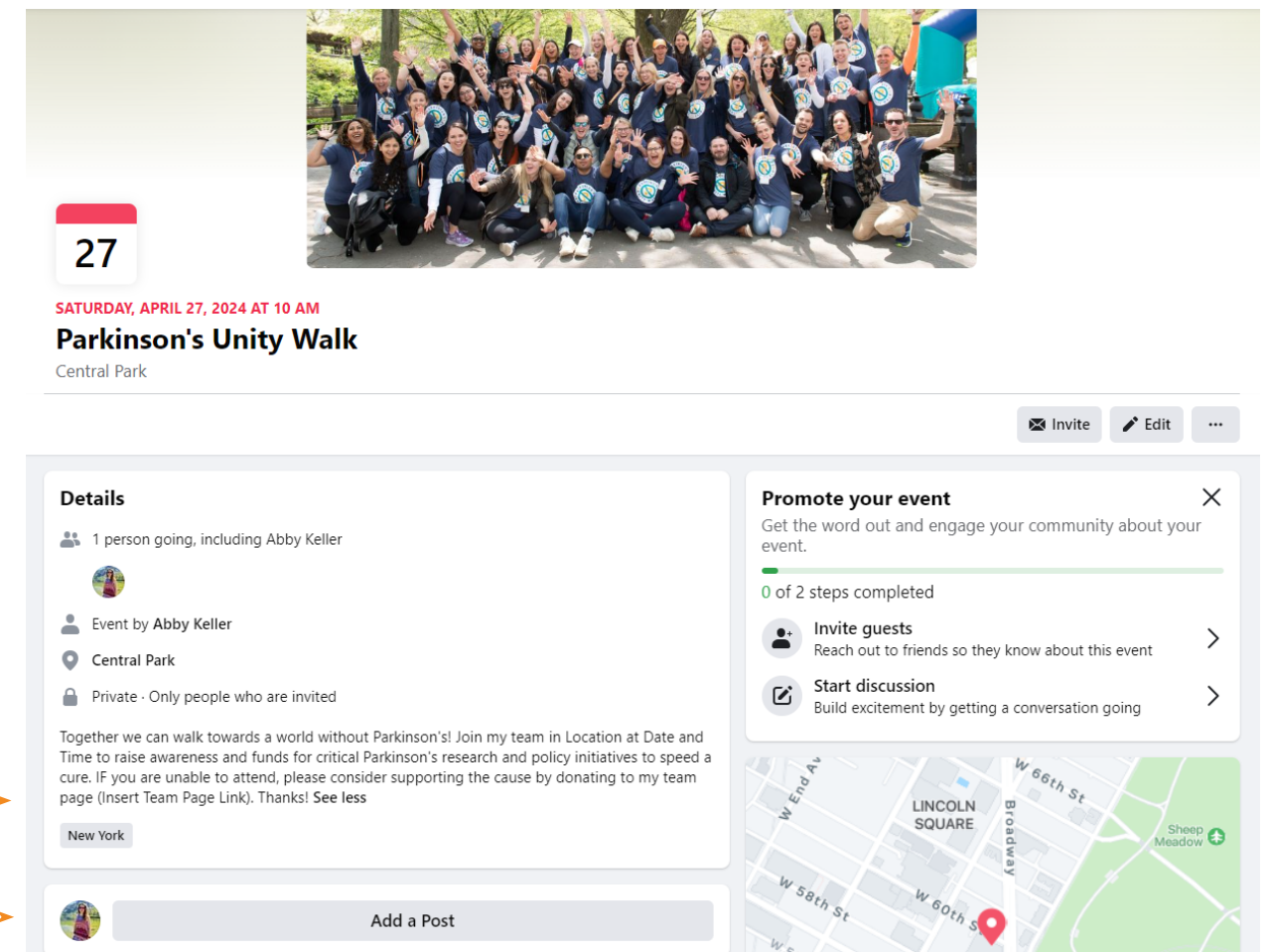
Create a Facebook Event for Your Walk

GETTING SET UP

- + Create a Facebook Event from your personal Facebook account or if you don't have or want to use a personal Facebook page, consider creating an account for your event.
- + Once logged in, choose the Menu icon on the right hand side of the page. Select Events and then and Create New Event on the left.
- + Add important event details, such as Event Name, Date, Start Time, Location and any co-hosts.
- + You will also need to determine the event privacy levels. Do you only want the event page visible to select people, your Facebook network, or anyone.

PERSONALIZE YOUR EVENT PAGE

- + Upload a cover photo for your event page and add any other additional event details. Consider adding a brief version of your story or why this event is important to you. You should also add the link to your Team Fundraising Page so people can easily register or donate.
- + Once you create and publish your page, invite guests to the event. Spread the word.
- + Consider making an introduction post or start a discussion to engage your community. This page is another way for you to communicate with your supporters and get them excited for the event. Share milestone moments, give shout-outs, or post some fun pictures. This is your platform!



Team Recruitment

Subject: Together, we can walk towards a cure for Parkinson’s

Dear **[INSERT RECIPIENT NAME HERE]**,

Join my team as we walk towards a cure for Parkinson’s disease.

On Saturday, April 27th, I will be walking with Team **[Name]** in Central Park at the Parkinson’s Unity Walk hosted by The Michael J. Fox Foundation. Since its inception in 1994, the Parkinson’s Unity Walk has been a staple in the community bringing together thousands of people and raising \$29 million to support a shared goal: Eliminate Parkinson’s disease.

I urge you to join me and Team **[Name]** in Central Park on April 27th as we walk towards a cure for Parkinson’s. You can register for free at unitywalk.org. You can also show your support by making a donation to my fundraising page. **[Add link to your individual or team fundraising page].**

100% of the funds raised for the Unity Walk go directly to high-impact Parkinson’s research and public policy initiatives to alleviate the financial and health burdens of families impacted by Parkinson’s and speed a cure.

Thank you in advance for your support and generosity! Hope to see you there!

Best regards,

[YOUR NAME HERE]

General Donation Ask

Subject: I’m taking steps towards a world free of Parkinson’s

Dear **[INSERT RECIPIENT NAME HERE]**,

I’m participating in the Parkinson’s Unity Walk to raise money for The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research (MJFF)! Every dollar donated to the Parkinson’s Unity Walk goes straight to high-impact research programs to help speed a cure for Parkinson’s disease.

I need your support. On Saturday, April 27th, I will be walking 1.2 miles in Central Park in honor of all those affected by Parkinson’s disease. **[Include your story and any personal connections to Parkinson’s].**

You can help me meet my fundraising goal. **[If you would like to include the amount, include that here.]** Every donation, no matter the size, makes a difference for those impacted by this disease. Will you join me as I walk for a cure for Parkinson’s disease? **[Add a CTA button like “Donate Now” and link to your fundraising page. You can also invite your supporters to register for your team- it’s free].**

Thank you in advance for your support! See you at the finish line.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME HERE]

→ *P.S. You can make your donation go twice as far with a corporate matching gift. Use The Michael J. Fox Foundation’s online tool to find out if your company will match your donation.*

Email Templates

Donation Ask with Impact

Subject: Your Donation Counts

Dear **[RECIPIENT NAME HERE]**

I'm participating in the Parkinson's Unity Walk to raise money for The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF) - the largest nonprofit funder of Parkinson's research.

Today, I'm asking you to make a donation to support my fundraising efforts for the Parkinson's Unity Walk. Every dollar raised goes straight to groundbreaking research that gets us one step closer to a Parkinson's cure. Thanks to the efforts of community fundraisers like myself:

- The first ever Parkinson's bio-marker has been discovered - a tool that can detect Parkinson's pathology in living people even before symptoms show.
- MJFF-funded investigations have resulted in more than 20 early-stage therapeutic programs, which have attracted follow-on funding from venture capital, pharmaceutical and government funders for continuing development.
- The landmark MJFF sponsored Parkinson's Progression Markers Initiative has built the most robust dataset and biosample library in the history of Parkinson's research.

Please support my fundraising efforts for the Parkinson's Unity Walk to continue the real, tangible progress being made in Parkinson's research today.

Thank you for your generous support

Sincerely,
[YOUR NAME HERE]

→ *P.S. You can make your donation go twice as far with a corporate matching gift. Use The Michael J. Fox Foundation's online tool to find out if your company will match your donation.*

Email Templates

Donation Thank You

Subject: Thank you for donating!

Dear **[INSERT RECIPIENT NAME HERE]**,

Thank you so much for supporting my Parkinson's Unity Walk fundraiser! **Every dollar donated fuels groundbreaking Parkinson's research and supports public policy priorities to alleviate financial and health burdens on families impacted by Parkinson's and speed a cure.**

Your generosity, along with many other dedicated supporters like you, demonstrates the impact we can have when we come together as a community to work towards our single, urgent goal: Eliminate Parkinson's disease.

Feel free to follow my fundraising progress **[link to your personal fundraising page]** as I work toward my goal.

Thank you again for your generous gift!

Sincerely,
[YOUR NAME HERE]