

# **AUTISM SPEAKS®** **WALK**

SPONSORED BY ALPHA XI DELTA

## PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Thank you for taking the time to support our mission to change the future for all who struggle with autism spectrum disorders by participating in the Walk. This guide was designed to support your fundraising efforts with tools and resources to help you reach, and even exceed, your fundraising goal and have fun doing it!



Photo credit Lauren Gallery Photography



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# Three Easy Steps to Successful Fundraising

Below is an outline of the three steps that will lead you to a successful fundraising campaign. The pages that follow offer step by step instructions on each step.

## STEP 1: Register for the Walk

- Log on to **AutismSpeaksWalk.org**.  
Search for your event by state OR click on the map. If your state has more than one Walk, all Walks will be listed. You will be able to select the nearest Walk to your community.
- Click on **“Register For This Walk”**.
- Read and click on **“I Agree”** to the waiver.
- Choose **Join a Team** or Join as an Individual. Set your personal fundraising goal – aim high!  
*Don't forget each participant who raises a minimum of \$150 will receive a Walk t-shirt.*

### Returning Team Walker

Don't forget to register with your username and password from last year to access your donors and address book.

### New Walker

Create a Username, Password and a Security Question.

- Fill in all required information. Don't forget to create a personal URL. Include this friendly link when asking for donations from your personal email account.

The screenshot shows the Autism Speaks Walk Tampa Bay registration page. At the top, it says "AUTISM SPEAKS WALK" and "SPONSORED BY ALPHA XI DELTA TAMPA BAY". A progress bar shows "RAISED \$16,120" and "GOAL \$330,000" with a "GIVE NOW" button. The event is "Tropicana Field Saturday, April 23, 2016". There are buttons for "REGISTER HERE", "EVENT INFO", and "DONATE TO A WALKER". A sidebar on the left lists "FUNDRAISING TOOLS FOR REGISTERED WALKERS" including Main Login, Email Friends, Enter my HQ, Edit my Site, Check Reports, and Use Tools. The main content area has a video player and a "RECENT NEWS FROM AUTISM SPEAKS" section. On the right, there are "TOP FUNDRAISERS" and "TOP TEAMS" lists.

The screenshot shows the registration form for the Autism Speaks Walk. It starts with a note: "If you have participated in any Autism Speaks Walk events in the past, click here to autofill this form." Below this is a section for "Create an event login, enter your social media login credentials, or complete both sections. You can use either to access your account." There are two main sections: "Create Username and Password" and "Use Sphere login". The "Create Username and Password" section has fields for Username, Password (between 5 and 20 characters), Re-Type password, Security Question (a dropdown menu), and Security Answer. There is a "Remember me" checkbox. The "Use Sphere login" section has buttons for Google, Yahoo!, Facebook, and Twitter. There is a "Continue" button at the bottom.

The screenshot shows the "Please choose below:" section of the registration form. It has a "Click here for help" link. There are three radio button options: "Start a Team", "Join a Team", and "Join as an Individual". Each option has a description: "I want to start a Team, become a Team Captain and help collect donations from friends and family.", "I want to join an existing Team and help collect donations from friends and family.", and "I want to join as an individual participant, not linked to a Team, and help collect donations from friends and family."



# Features of Your Personal Page

Once you've registered, you can set up your own personal page! Your "HQ" is a one-stop shop. From here you can send emails, tweets and track donations.

## My HQ

### Social Sharing

Send a tweet, a Facebook message or update your Facebook status with a couple of clicks.

### Go Mobile!

Use our new custom iPhone and Android application. Just follow a couple of easy steps and you can start fundraising through your Smartphone.

### Fundraising Statistics

Add a badge to your email signatures and let your friends know the status of your fundraising goal every time you send them an email!

The screenshot shows a user's personal fundraising page. At the top, it says 'Welcome, Christie Godowski!' and 'Your Participant ID: [redacted]'. Below this, it says 'New to your Headquarters? [Start here!](#)' and 'Your Personal Page link: <http://www.autismspeakswalk.org/tampabay/godowski>'. It also mentions 'We can all use a little help fundraising. These tools will make fundraising easy and help you reach your goal! [Fundraising Tools >](#)'.

On the right, there's a 'My To Do List' with links: 'Build/Edit my Webpage', 'Send Emails to Friends and Family', 'Check Donation Report', 'Edit my Profile', and 'Edit my Login/Password'.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Social Sharing:** Includes icons for 'Fundraise with e-mails', 'Tweet Page', and 'Update LinkedIn'.
- Go Mobile!:** Promotes downloading the free app for iPhone and Android to connect with friends.
- Fundraising Statistics:** Shows the 'AUTISM SPEAKS WALK' logo, a goal of '\$150', and a raised amount of '\$0'. It includes a progress bar at 0% and a 'View My Reports' link. Below this, it says 'Total for Range: \$0' and 'No Donations Available'.
- Email Statistics:** Shows 'Emails Sent: 0', 'Visits to My Pages: 0', 'Number of Donations: 0', and 'Number of Registrations: 0'. It includes a 'Send More Emails' link.
- Social Fundraising:** Includes buttons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

## Time Saving Tools

### My Webpage

Set up your personal and team page with photos and text, and share your story of why you're walking.

### Email

Send emails to recruit teammates, send updates and request donations.

You will be able to keep track of who you've reached out to in your email history log.

### Reports

Run a donation report to show who donated, the amount and when the donation was made for current or past years.

### Tools

Print donation forms, edit profile/log-in information or edit your fundraising goal from the tools tab. If you want to start your own team, you can do that from here too!

## STEP 2: Send Emails

Letter writing and email campaigns are the easiest and most effective ways to fundraise! Telling your story helps people relate to the cause and motivates them to give. Remember the first rule of fundraising: people give only when they are asked.

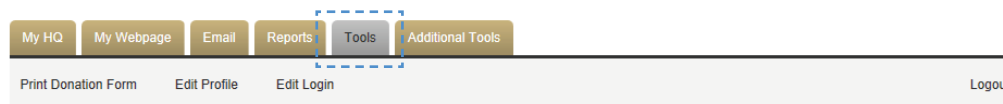
Your email should include:

**Why you are walking** – If you have a connection with autism, discuss how this has affected your life and the lives of your family and friends

**Your personal goal** – aim high

**Facts** about autism and Autism Speaks

Use the Email tools in your Participant Headquarters to raise more money (with less effort and no stamps!) Log into your Headquarters and click on Email.



Don't know how to get started? Here are some Sample Emails:

I'm walking for our (son/daughter, name). You can help Autism Speaks build a better future for families like mine that live with the challenges of autism every day. Every 11 minutes, another child is diagnosed with autism – your donations can make a difference. Please click here (personal page URL) to read my reason for walking. Thank you so much!

Please help me make a difference! I'm walking to celebrate our (son/daughter) who has made incredible strides this year. We know that all families aren't as fortunate as we are; they need our help as they continue to search for answers and hope. Autism Speaks is investing millions of dollars to fund research into the causes, prevention, treatments and cure. Please visit my personal page (personal page URL) to make a donation today!

Each email sent from your Headquarters will include a link to your personal fundraising page making it easy to receive online donations!

Other Email Tab Features:

**Address Book Import** – Download your email address book to your personal Headquarters. This will make it make it easy to send emails.

**Email History Log** – Track emails and donations.

**Facebook** – Update your status with a link to your Fundraising Page.

## Does a written letter work better for you?

### Here are some samples...

Dear Friends and Family:

It's hard to believe that another year has passed. In just a few short weeks, on October 16th, my family and I will once again be walking to raise money for Autism Speaks. We have participated in this walk for nine years, ever since Daniel was diagnosed with autism at the age of 3½. And speaking of Daniel, what a year it's been for him. He finished his first year of middle school on a high note. He did so well that this year, for the first time ever; Daniel is in all regular classes. The most amazing part of this story is that Daniel advocated for himself. He went to his case manager and said "I don't want to be in Special Ed anymore. I want to be in the regular classes with the regular kids". No matter what our fears or anxieties about his academic performance, how could we deny him? How could we hold him back and not give him this chance to spread his wings and fly?

Daniel became a Bar Mitzvah this past June. After years of planning and hard work (both his and mine) the day finally came. And what a day it was. With no exaggeration I will tell you that it was spectacular. Daniel was magnificent. This child, who for every school performance would stand on stage looking lost and silent, recited prayers in Hebrew and read a speech he wrote to an audience of over 200 people. That audience included every elementary school teacher he ever had, his neurologist, his tutor and every friend and family member that has touched our lives. You've all heard the expression "not a dry eye in the house". Never was a saying more accurate. After the service Daniel partied like a rock star for hours. You may not know this, but my little man is a dancing machine. It was truly one of the best days of our lives.



Now I'm asking for your help. Help me reach my goal. I can't do the research to find a cure. And believe me when I say there is nothing on this earth I want more than a cure. What I can do is help fund that research.

**To donate online, click on this link: [AutismSpeaksWalk.org/ncnj/dansfans](https://AutismSpeaksWalk.org/ncnj/dansfans)**

With much love and gratitude,

***Sharon and Charlie Cohen***



## Sample Letter



The pure joy of my children's birth was unlike anything I have experienced before. Like all parents, I initially felt unprecedented bliss at their arrival followed by a natural curiosity of just what this little person will be like. Above all else, I instantly need to know, are they ok? Once I had that confirmation, I couldn't help but dream of how I could build a safe and happy world for my babies to flourish in.

As a parent, it is so difficult to fully comprehend when your baby does not flourish in the world you worked so hard to create for him. This moment became painfully real to me the day before Thanksgiving 2007. David was just two years old when I heard the words, "your child has autism". In a split second, life - as I knew it - changed. I feared for the future of my family. How would I make

the world a safe place again for David to thrive in? How would I be able to make Elise's world not revolve around David's diagnosis? How would we, as a family, be able to afford this...survive this?

### The statistics are staggering:

- 1 in 68 children is diagnosed with autism; making it more common than childhood cancer, juvenile diabetes and pediatric AIDS combined.
- In New Jersey, it is believed 1 in 28 boys are on the Autism Spectrum.
- Autism is the fastest-growing serious developmental disability in the U.S.
- Autism receives less than 5% of the research funding of many less prevalent childhood diseases yet Autism costs the nation over \$35 billion per year
- There is no medical detection or cure for autism

David has made amazing strides since he was diagnosed almost four years ago. He has overcome so many hurdles already; he truly is an inspiration to me. I will work as hard as David does to ensure that his world is safe and his future is secure. That is why I support Autism Speaks.

I am walking on October 16th for Autism Speaks because I have confidence that Autism Speaks will help me create that world I dream of for David and Elise. I created the team, David's Daredevils in 2009, because I have hope. I walk because I believe in HOPE...I need hope.

Autism Speaks Walks are our chance to make a difference in the fight against autism by raising money for autism research and heightening public awareness. Please join me and my team, David's Daredevils, in our fight as I raise money to help fund essential research. **You can support me and/or David's Daredevils by using the following link: [AutismSpeaksWalk.org/ncnj/eileenruggiero](http://AutismSpeaksWalk.org/ncnj/eileenruggiero).**

I would greatly appreciate any support you can give to a cause so close to my heart. Thank you for taking an important step in the fight against Autism. Together, we will find the missing pieces.

Sincerely Yours,

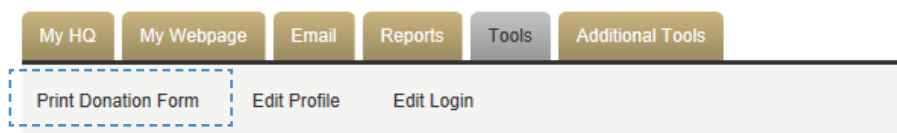
**Eileen Ruggiero**



## STEP 3: Turn in Your Donations

If your donors make an online contribution, you will be credited through the automatic system and receive an email alerting you of the gift. Donations made online are typically 40% higher than those made by other means. If your donor gives you cash or checks, please fill out the donation form for each donation.

A donation form can be downloaded from your Event Headquarters under Tools. This will ensure that your Walk and/or team are credited for their contribution.



Mail donations to:

**Autism Speaks (Your Walk Name Here)**  
**1060 State Road, 2nd Floor**  
**Princeton, NJ 08540**

Once again, thank you for your support.

## The Grand Club

### What is the Grand Club?

Autism Speaks recognizes those individuals who go above and beyond by raising \$1,000 or more for Autism Speaks by acknowledging them as a special member of the Grand Club.

Each year a new commemorative pin will be issued. Add this year's to your collection!





# Goal Setting

Setting a fundraising goal is a key element for success and is an important part of the fundraising process. Your whole team will be energized to achieve the goal and have fun celebrating when it is met or exceeded! Remember, your fundraising efforts are what make change possible for people living with autism.

It's helpful to set goals that reflect special meaning for you and your family or company.

## Walker Goals

***Do you have a loved one who is transitioning into adult services?*** The 18th and 21st birthdays bring extra special meaning – set a dollar goal for \$1800 or \$2100 (\$100 for each year that has led to this new venture)

***Set a goal to represent your child's birthday*** – and recapture the joy and hope that was part of that day (\$1125 dollars for November 25th)

***Set your goal to raise at least \$168 to symbolize hope*** for the day when all children will be free of an autism diagnosis (currently 1 in 68 children is diagnosed with autism).

Use the chart below to help create your fundraising plan:

	2015 Results (if applicable)	2016 Goal
Online Donations		
Offline Donations		
Wrap around fundraising		
Point of Purchase (puzzle piece) fundraising		
Grand Club Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
# of family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc., asked to donate and/or participate		

# Fundraising Ideas

## Puzzle Piece Promotion

The Puzzle Piece promotion is a point of purchase program that can be a great fundraiser for your team. This highly visible fundraising campaign can be implemented in your community.

### How do puzzle pieces work?

Employees/staff ask customers at the point of purchase to buy a paper puzzle piece for a minimum of \$1.00 (they can donate more) to help the store support Autism Speaks. The customer signs his/her name or the name of a loved one on the puzzle pieces. Store employees post the puzzle pieces throughout the store.

### Where?

Banks, gas stations, grocery stores, fast food outlets, convenience stores, warehouse stores, large retail outlets, restaurants, schools, or wherever there is retail activity!

### What's in it for your company and your stores?

The Puzzle Piece promotion can be used to build a strong Walk team, enhance employee morale and contribute to how much the company can raise for autism research. Customers will feel good about patronizing a store that gives back to its community.

Once the puzzle pieces begin to “take over” your store’s walls, call the media. Puzzle piece sales are a great way to build your company’s visibility in the community. Best of all, you can raise a substantial amount of money for Autism Speaks at no financial cost to you!



## What is a Wrap-Around Event?

A Wrap-Around event is any fundraiser that your team organizes to raise funds for the Walk. Wrap-Arounds provide additional and fun ways to increase awareness and fundraising. All expenses for wrap-arounds are incurred by the organizer.

*Visit the “Fundraising Tools” tab on your Walk homepage for more great ideas!*

## Matching Gifts – Double Your Donations

Matching Gifts are a great way to increase your total fundraising dollars for Autism Speaks. Find out if your employer has a matching gifts program.

Some companies don’t just match gifts made by employees – but gifts made by spouses and/or retirees. Some companies provide donations to “match” the volunteer hours you have spent on your efforts for Autism Speaks Walk.

*Visit [DoubleTheDonation.com/AutismSpeaks](http://DoubleTheDonation.com/AutismSpeaks) to learn if your company has a matching gifts program.*

## Other Ways to Support

**Below are some other fun and creative ways to support Autism Speaks!**

**Charity Miles** is an iPhone/Android app that empowers you to earn donations for Autism Speaks by walking, running or biking. As you walk, run or bike, the app tracks your distance and you earn money for Autism Speaks. Bikers earn 10¢ per mile; walkers and runners earn 25¢ per mile. So please join the movement and please invite your friends.



If you are an endurance sport enthusiast and wish to participate in cycling races, running races, extreme sports, mountain climbing while fundraising for Autism Speaks, join us on

**TeamUp!** with Autism Speaks.

[www.autismspeaks.org/teamup](http://www.autismspeaks.org/teamup)



Are you a college or university student and want to host an event with your fellow students?

Register at **Autism Speaks U.**

[www.autismspeaks.org/u](http://www.autismspeaks.org/u)



# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Do I have to send in my donations? Can I bring them with me to the Walk?**

**A:** While you can always bring your donations to the Walk, it is preferable that you mail them regularly to:

Autism Speaks  
INSERT YOUR WALK CITY HERE  
Walk Donations Department  
1060 State Road, 2nd Floor  
Princeton, NJ 08540

Please submit the donation forms with corresponding checks to ensure proper credit.

**Q: What if people want to give me cash?**

**A:** It is safest and best for record-keeping that you convert all cash received to checks or money orders. If you're able, send a personal check covering the full amount, along with the corresponding donation forms, to Autism Speaks. We will credit your friends and family for their generosity. If this is not possible, you can always bring the cash donations and appropriate donation forms to the Walk.

**Q: What if my donors don't want to donate online?**

**A:** You can always have your donors mail their donations directly to our Princeton address above. Please have them submit the corresponding donation forms with their checks so you will be credited for your fundraising efforts.

**Q: Do I have to fill out one donation form for each check?**

**A:** Yes. This is the best way to ensure you receive credit for all your fundraising efforts.

**Q: Will the money turned in before the Walk, at the Walk and after the Walk, show up on my webpage and my donation report? How long will it take?**

**A:** Absolutely. If the corresponding donation forms were filled out and submitted along with your donations, then you should see your fundraising efforts reflected on your webpage and donation report within four weeks.

**Q: Where do I get donation forms?**

**A:** Donation forms can be printed from each participant's individual webpage. The link "make a donation offline" is just under your goals.

**Q: Who should checks be made payable to?**

**A:** Please ask your supporters to make checks payable to Autism Speaks.

**Q: Is there a fee to participate?**

**A:** No. There are no registration fees, but we encourage each person to reach out to their friends and family for support.

**Q: What happens if it rains on the day of the Walk?**

**A:** All Walks will be held on the date scheduled "rain or shine".

**Q: How do I find my supporter ID number?**

**A:** There are a few ways to find supporter ID numbers for yourself or for your registered family members. If the suggestions below do not help, please contact us at [walks@autismspeaks.org](mailto:walks@autismspeaks.org).

***You will receive an email confirmation after you register with your supporter ID number.***

***From your webpage - click to open the Offline Donation link. (This is listed just under goals.) The ID number is listed in the top corner under the participant's name.***

***On your personal webpage - your ID number is at the end of the URL.***