
How to Run a Successful Walk for the Animals

By Bonney Brown



Best Friends
ANIMAL SOCIETY

About Best Friends*

Best Friends is working with you – and with humane groups all across the country – to bring about a time when there are no more homeless pets.

The sanctuary at Angel Canyon, in the Golden Circle of southern Utah, is home, on any given day, to about 1,500 dogs, cats, and other animals from all over the country. Many of them need just a few weeks of special care before they're ready to go to good new homes. Others, who are older and sicker, or who have suffered extra trauma, find a home and a haven here, and are given loving care for the rest of their lives.

Best Friends manages a model No More Homeless Pets campaign, with shelters and humane groups statewide, to ensure that every healthy companion animal that's ever born can be guaranteed a loving, caring home.

And Best Friends reaches across the nation, helping humane groups, individual people, and entire communities to set up spay/neuter, shelter, foster, and adoption programs in their own neighborhoods, cities, and states.

The work of Best Friends is supported entirely through the donations of our members. Through the generous hearts and hands of people like you, we can ensure that animals who come into the care of Best Friends will never again be alone, hungry, sick, afraid, or in pain.

Thank you for being part of this work of love.

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Note: Parts of this publication were compiled by Bonney Brown and Frances Hecht for Neponset Valley Humane Society in Canton, Massachusetts.

Awalk for the animals is a great way to raise visibility for your cause and money for your organization. This publication provides tips for a successful event; an overview of planning and carrying out a walk; job descriptions of the key staff people you'll need; and a timeline for the tasks involved in conducting a successful walk.

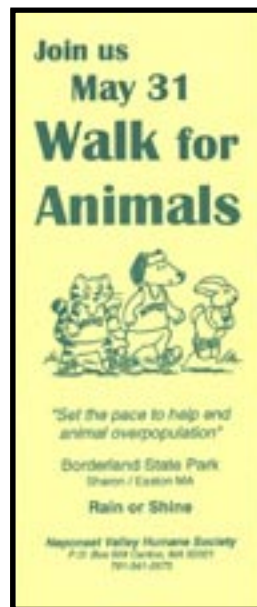
Tips for a Successful Walk

Here are a dozen tips to help make your walk event the best it can be:

1 Set an inspiring goal and purpose for the event. Establish a financial goal as well as a mission and theme for the event. Be sure to share this with the volunteers, your members, the media, and the public.

2 Take care in selecting a date and place. Make sure that the event date does not conflict with any other community events. Select a location that is easy to get to and has plenty of parking.

3 Prepare attractive printed materials. Your walk brochure does not need to be expensive or elaborate, but it must be well designed and easy to read. When you look at the cover of the brochure (or any of the other promotional materials, such as posters), it should be obvious that this is a benefit for animals and that it will be fun. The illustration at right is an example of the cover of a walk brochure.



On the next page, you'll see the inside of the brochure. As you can see, your brochure should answer these questions about your walk: what, why, when, where, how. By the way, this brochure was printed on standard legal-size paper, which can cut down on your printing costs.

4 Don't set (or imply) a donation limit in the brochure. Be careful how you word the brochure. You don't want to inadvertently discourage high donors! A premium, such as a T-shirt, offered for a minimum donation can be a great motivator, but avoid wording that implies a set participation fee. If your brochure reads, "\$15 entry fee," that is likely to be the most that you'll get. Also, folks who can only raise \$10 will stay away. In addition to being a fundraiser, the event has educational value, so you may want to welcome anyone who wants to attend. (After all, they may become supporters.)

5 Encourage larger donations. You may want to offer prizes to those individuals bringing in the highest dollar amounts on walk day. (The prizes can be donated.) Offering additional premiums to folks who raise larger amounts can significantly increase the average donation. For example, if you offer a T-shirt for raising \$30, offer a sweatshirt, too, for raising over \$100.

6 Think BIG. Print enough brochures to draw a crowd. You will probably need to print and distribute over 20,000 brochures to draw 1,000 participants. Colorful posters can increase public awareness of the event. Ask businesses to display them in their storefront windows, and to make the brochures available to customers.

7 Get the brochures out there. Send walk brochures to everyone on your mailing list and distribute them aggressively throughout all the local communities. Be sure

to include vet clinics, pet supply stores, pet groomers, markets, health clubs, and places of worship. Special mailings should be sent to last year's top fundraisers thanking them again and inviting them to bring friends along (send them extra copies of the walk brochure). Invite businesses and civic organizations to participate as teams. Plan walker recruitment days at local pet supply stores, markets and community events.

8 Get the brochures out there early. Eight to ten weeks before the event is the critical distribution time frame. That means having them out there – not just printed, but in the hands of the public – eight to ten weeks before the event. Also, periodically recheck the distribution sites, right up until the event, to make sure that there are brochures available.

9 Plan festivities. Make the event day FUN for the participants! The longer people hang around and the more fun they have, the more likely they are to make this an annual event and to tell their friends about it. Free samples, entertainment, exhibit booths, pet contests, and refreshments will make the experience more memorable for participants.

10 Publicize the event broadly. Try to cover all the various media outlets in your community. See if your local radio or cable TV station will broadcast a public service announcement (PSA). A poster campaign is an inexpensive, grassroots strategy that works. Post notices in community calendars and local newspapers.

11 Piggy-back fundraisers. You may want to consider selling advertising space in the event program. (You can offer free ads as a way of thanking businesses for major in-kind donations.) If your organization has merchandise to sell, be sure to make it available on event day. Offer to print business

logos on the walk T-shirt in exchange for sponsorship support. Put donation canisters out wherever free refreshments and services are available at the event. Plan a raffle of donated items.

12 Thank everyone. After it's over, don't forget the volunteers, participants, sponsors, donors, and other people who helped to make the event possible. Thank-you notes and a post-event news release which mentions the supporters can go a long way toward ensuring continued support for next year's event.

Planning Your Walk Event

Here's a brief overview of the steps involved in planning your walk:

- Appoint a walk chairperson to coordinate the event and oversee the volunteers.
- The chairperson appoints a coordinator or committee chairperson to oversee each of the major aspects of the event: logistics, publicity, corporate sponsorship, distribution (of walk materials), special events, refreshments.
- The date and location for the walk is selected and secured.
- The timeline for completion of key tasks is established (see the sample on page 12).
- The tasks are delegated and completed by the appointed deadlines.

General Duties and Guidelines

On the following pages, you'll find a list of the duties and responsibilities of the walk chairperson and the committee chairs.

The Walk Chairperson

The walk chairperson oversees the entire walk event.

Duties:

1. Appoint coordinators/committee chairs and delegate tasks.
2. Create an event timeline, setting deadlines for each task, and ensure that the tasks are completed on time.
3. Maintain accurate records of all aspects of the event (to make it easier to hold future events). Obtain the necessary information from each coordinator and pass it on to the executive director after the post-walk meeting. Ensure that the treasurer receives copies of names, addresses, amounts and the nature of all donations received.
4. Hold regular meetings with the committee chairs and a post-walk meeting for all walk-day volunteers.
5. Ensure that volunteers and donors are appropriately recognized in walk literature and receive written thank-you's.

Committee Chairs

All committee chairs report directly to the walk chairperson.

Duties and guidelines:

1. Recruit and manage committee members and volunteers who will assist you. Submit a list of committee members' phone numbers

and addresses to the walk chairperson. Review volunteer guidelines with all committee members.

2. Complete all deadlines on the walk timeline that have been assigned to your committee. If you are unable to meet a deadline or help is needed to do so, advise the walk chairperson in advance.

3. Hold scheduled meetings with your committee. Submit a copy of your meeting schedule to the walk chairperson. Explain and delegate tasks, set deadlines and follow up to ensure completion. Attend all scheduled walk meetings held by the walk chairperson. If unable to attend a meeting, send a representative from your committee and follow up with them after the meeting.

4. Communication is key! Keep in touch with your committee volunteers and the walk chairperson. As soon as concerns or potential problems come to your attention, confer with the walk chairperson. Work with other committee chairs as needed to avoid duplication of effort.

5. Handle all correspondence, follow-up and confirmation of donations and services. Write post-walk thank-you notes to the donors, sponsors, participants, entertainers, park or recreation director, and volunteers.

6. Complete a Walk Donor Sheet on each donor to keep as a permanent record. Maintain accurate records for next year's walk file (specifically, lists of all potential donors contacted and the results, all volunteers, sponsors, participants, etc.). Pass this information on to the walk chairperson at the post-walk meeting.

Logistics Chairperson

Function: To organize the management of the physical aspects of the walk – coordinating all committee efforts to see that the event runs smoothly with an organized, efficient setup and thorough cleanup.

Responsibilities:

1. Secure a location for the walk, with written confirmation of the requested date. Obtain any necessary permits. Establish a contact person at the walk location.
2. Recruit and manage a committee of key members and volunteers to accomplish committee goals.
3. Secure the services of a nurse, vet, and security personnel. Obtain trash receptacles, trash removal service, sanitary facilities, leashes for dogs, bug repellent, and other needed items.
4. Devise and arrange a plan for emergency coverage with an ambulance, fire and police in the walk area. Arrange for an emergency communication system – phones, walkie-talkies.
5. Complete a Walk Donor Log Sheet for each secured service or item to keep as a permanent record.
6. Handle all related correspondence and follow-up during the planning of the walk.
7. Coordinate and schedule storage and delivery of all items to the walk location. Review plans with your contact person. (You may want to consider renting a truck.) Plan for return of equipment and supplies after the walk.
8. Coordinate all walk-day setup plans. In advance, map out the location of all services, entertainment, tables, tents, water stations, etc. Determine assignments for all walk staff.



Appoint a “walk route captain” to oversee the setup of water/rest stations and staff along the route. Supply the premium team (see page 9) with a list of all volunteers who should receive “staff” T-shirts.

9. Ensure sufficient volunteer help for walk-day jobs. You may want to ask for assistance from Army, Navy, Marine, or Reserve groups in setting up on the day of the walk. Maintain a list of volunteer names, addresses, and phone numbers.
10. Schedule pre-walk training session for all walk-day staff one week to 10 days prior to the walk.
11. Appoint a registration captain and ensure that pre-walk training is arranged for the registration volunteers.
12. Create and place signs along the drive route directing people to the park. Use signs to indicate water stations and the walk route where necessary. Remove signs after the walk.
13. Arrange for security and ensure proper handling of pickup of donation canisters and money from the registration area.
14. Oversee cleanup and trash removal. (You may want to solicit the services of a trash removal company.)
15. Send post-walk thank-you notes to appropriate people.

Registration Captain

Function: To oversee the entire walk-day registration process.

Responsibilities:

1. Confer regularly with the logistics chair.
2. Recruit and manage a team of volunteer registrars for walk day.
3. Develop training materials and hold training sessions in advance for registrars.
4. Confer with the treasurer to set up a plan for the safe handling of funds at the walk and transport after the walk.
5. Assist with sending post-walk thank-you notes to volunteers.

Publicity Chairperson

Function: To create effective publicity for the walk event by planning and implementing a comprehensive publicity campaign for print media, radio and TV. To get the word out to the largest possible audience, in order to attract participants and donors.

Responsibilities:

1. Create a detailed publicity plan and review it with the walk chairperson.
2. Recruit and manage committee members and volunteers to accomplish your committee goals.
3. Confer with the graphic artist regarding the look and color scheme for the walk publicity materials (brochures, posters, walker hand-outs, T-shirts).
4. Recruit a K-9 Team – dogs up for adoption who break the starting line ribbon and lead off the walk, walked by community leaders, local celebrities, or people you want to honor, such as last year's top fundraisers.

5. Solicit and secure an honorary chairperson (perhaps a local celebrity). Confer with the walk chairperson and special events chair before approaching anyone.

6. Develop a walk information packet to send to prospective donors, for use by the logistics, corporate sponsorship, special events and refreshments committees in their solicitation efforts.

7. Create walk brochures and posters (include walker registration/sponsor form and general information). Arrange for printing.

8. Produce walker handout (usually done the week before the event, for distribution at the registration desks). Include walk-route map, walk rules, scheduled events, and list of sponsors/ donors. Arrange for printing.

9. Write news releases on pre-event stories and distribute them to newspapers, magazines, TV and radio. Do phone follow-up on all releases to ensure coverage.

10. Send calendar listings to magazines and newspapers. Note: Most magazines will need at least three months advance notice prior to the event.

11. Work with local cable, radio and TV stations to devise PSAs (public service announcements).

12. Ask various TV, cable and radio stations to broadcast an interview with someone from your organization talking about the event.

13. Send invitations (media advisories) to secure coverage by reporters from TV, radio and the press for the day of the event. Call assignment editors to follow up on the requests.

14. Arrange to have several volunteer photographers on hand on walk day to take pictures for newspapers that do not send a photogra-

pher. (Provide your photographers with a specific photo assignment list to assure coverage of all aspects of the event.)

15. Designate one or two volunteers to function as liaisons with the media on the day of the walk.

16. Arrange post-walk publicity. Include post-walk spay/neuter program publicity, if appropriate. Remember to mention all corporate sponsors and volunteers.

17. Complete a Media Contact Log Sheet on all radio, TV, press, and cable contacts to keep as a permanent record.

18. Send post-walk thank-you notes to all media contacts and the honorary chairperson.

Premium Team

Function: To work with the publicity committee to create, produce and distribute premiums, such as T-shirts.

Responsibilities:

Graphic Artist

1. Guide the artistic decisions regarding the logo, design of printed materials, and color scheme.
2. Review recommendations with the walk chairperson; confer with the publicity chair and premium coordinator.
3. Do graphic production for printed materials and prepare files for the printer.

Premium Coordinator

1. Price and research T-shirts and other premiums and provide a list of vendors and prices to the walk chairperson. (Consider having two different colors for T-shirts – one for walkers and one for staff/volunteers.) Discuss quantities and budget with the walk chairperson.

2. Order T-shirts/premiums. Secure written agreement and follow up with the vendor to ensure T-shirts will be available when promised.

3. Arrange for delivery of T-shirts/premiums to the walk location. Arrange for distribution of shirts/premiums on walk day to volunteers and walkers (work with registration captain).

4. Obtain list of volunteer/staff names, assignments and T-shirt sizes for walk day from the logistic chair.

5. Maintain accurate records. Handle applicable correspondence and thank-you notes.

Corporate Sponsorship Chairperson

Function: To plan and implement a successful corporate fundraising campaign to ensure sufficient capital to cover all operating expenses in executing the walk for the animals and additional operational funding for other programs.

Responsibilities:

1. Recruit and manage key committee members and volunteers to solicit the following:
 - Sponsor(s) for the event, which may include their logo on the brochure and/or T-shirt
 - Corporate gifts
 - Local business donations
 - Prizes for walkers and a raffle
2. Research and compile a list of corporate donors/businesses. Review the list with the refreshment and special events chairs to avoid duplication of requests.
3. Develop a solicitation letter and information packet for potential donors. Review with the walk chair.
4. Assign a committee member for each town to personally solicit local business, preferably someone who is familiar with the town.

5. Actively solicit donors by sending and following up on solicitation letters, making phone calls and presentations to business organizations, etc.
6. Complete a Walk Donor Log Sheet on each donor for your files. Maintain a complete file of donors. Provide the publicity chair with a list of donors to be included in the walker handout.
7. Handle all related correspondence and follow-up during the planning of the walk and send post-walk thank-you notes.

Distribution Chairperson

Function: To develop and implement a successful plan for distribution of all walk-related materials to the public.

Responsibilities:

1. Recruit and manage key committee members and volunteers to accomplish the following goals and distribute all walk materials.
2. Develop a distribution list divided by town, listing appropriate locations for disseminating walk-related materials: veterinarians, animal hospitals, groomers, trainers, pet cemeteries, pet supply stores, convenience stores, supermarkets, town halls, libraries, community/civic/recreation centers, sporting goods stores, sport/health clubs, restaurants, shelters, rescue groups, schools, scouts and campfire groups, employee bulletin boards, etc.
3. Schedule and process the mailing of walk brochures to the membership mailing list.
4. Devise and oversee a distribution plan for dissemination of walk brochures and posters using the distribution list.
5. Follow up on distribution locations, ensuring replacement of brochures and posters when necessary. It is essential that this effort

be carefully monitored and continued until walk day.

6. Schedule and carry out numerous walk recruitment days at area pet supply stores and other appropriate locations. (If your walk is to be held at a park, pass out brochures at the park on weekends prior to the walk.)
7. Send out brochures and posters to individuals who call or write to request them in response to walk publicity. This must be done in a timely manner!
8. Send out post-walk thank-you notes to appropriate people.

Special Events Chairperson

Function: To plan and organize special events for walk day, as entertainment for the participants.

Responsibilities:

1. Recruit and manage key committee members and volunteers to accomplish the committee goals.
2. Devise and write up a plan for soliciting services and entertainment (e.g., a guest speaker, musicians, clowns, entertainers, a face painter, training or grooming demonstrations, a rabies clinic, rescue groups).
3. Research equipment and electrical supply outlets. Find staging, tents, chairs, tables, cellular phones/walkie-talkies, a P.A. system and other related items needed for the special events.
4. Confer with the publicity chair regarding the selection of an honorary chairperson.
5. Confer with the publicity and corporate sponsorship chairs regarding the walk solicitation packet and literature.

6. Coordinate and confirm all the above services and entertainment.
7. Arrange and manage the raffle on walk day.
8. Coordinate awards and prizes for top fundraisers to be given on walk day. (Certificates work very well.) Confer with the corporate sponsorship chair.
9. Plan an outreach table that will include literature, brochures, volunteer recruitment information, assistance forms, organizational posters, etc.
10. Notify all service providers (entertainers, speakers, vendors, etc.) of when to set up, what to bring and who to contact when they arrive.
11. Complete a Walk Donor Log Sheet for each service provided for your files.
12. Provide a complete and accurate listing of service providers/donors to the publicity chair for inclusion in the walker's handout.
13. Confer with the logistics committee to coordinate walk day setup of services and entertainment.
14. Write follow-up thank-you notes to all entertainers, speakers and service providers.

Refreshment Acquisition Chairperson

Function: To secure food, water, beverages, pet food samples, and related products for walk participants.

Responsibilities:

1. Recruit and manage key committee members and volunteers to accomplish committee goals.

2. Compile a donor list, conferring with the corporate sponsorship and special events committee chairs to avoid duplication of requests.
3. Devise a plan for acquisition of the needed items (see the list below). This task usually involves sending a solicitation letter and doing follow-up phone calls. Some items may be more easily obtained by personal visits. Here's what you'll need:
 - An adequate supply of water for humans and animals
 - Food and beverages (doughnuts, bagels, cookies, snack foods, juice, fruit, soda, tea, coffee, cream and sugar)
 - Other supplies (hot/cold cups, napkins, plates, tablecloths or sheets, plastic wrap, straws, stirrers, heavy duty trash bags)
 - Pet food samples, toys, and related pet items, animal water bowls, small plastic bags and paper towels for animal cleanup
 - Insulated beverage dispensers, large containers, coolers, large coffee pots, and ice for beverages (clean large barrels lined with plastic bags can hold ice)
4. Complete a Walk Donor Log Sheet on each donor for your files. Maintain a complete and accurate file of donor names and addresses to provide to the publicity committee for inclusion in the walker's handout.
5. Confer with the logistics chair about the placement of refreshment tables and water stations.
6. Send a post-walk thank-you to all donors and volunteers.

Walk Timeline

To set deadlines for your walk timeline, start with the date of the walk and work backward. Here's an example of a walk timeline:

One Year to Eight Months Prior to the Walk

- Conduct the initial planning meeting
- Appoint the walk chairperson and coordinators
- Secure the location, and obtain a written confirmation and any permits that are needed
- Set exact dates for completion of each task on the timeline and delegate each task to the appropriate committee
- Seek an honorary chairperson (such as a local celebrity)
- Develop a solicitation letter and an information packet for potential sponsors
- Create a potential sponsorship list (solicit the support of local businesses)
- Create lists for potential sources of entertainment, activities, services, and refreshments (sources for all needed materials and services)
- Schedule regular meetings of the committee chairs and volunteers

Seven Months Prior

- Create a distribution list (containing locations to display walk brochures and posters)
- Develop a detailed publicity campaign
- Actively begin solicitation of sponsors and donors of needed goods and services by sending solicitation letters and information packets



Six Months Prior

- Create a logo for the event, and artwork for publicity and premiums
- Design the walk brochure and poster
- Follow up on all sponsorship requests

Four to Five Months Prior

- Research T-shirts and other premiums
- Review the sponsorship campaign, assess the response, and initiate subsequent requests when needed
- Send brochure and poster out to be printed
- Send a news release to TV and cable-access stations, radio stations, and newspapers to announce the event and request volunteers

Three Months Prior

- Send another news release to TV and cable-access stations, radio stations, and newspapers about the purpose of the event
- Initiate distribution of the walk brochures and posters
- Begin walker recruitment days at area pet supply stores, markets, etc.
- Confirm sponsor arrangements
- Order T-shirts and premiums

Two Months Prior

- Mail walk brochures to your members
- Send a news release to TV and cable-access stations, radio stations, and newspapers seeking participants
- Send a calendar release and PSAs to local newspapers, cable TV and radio stations to inform the public of the upcoming walk and seek participants
- Prepare a logistics plan
- Continue the walker recruitment days
- Continue the distribution of walk brochures and posters
- Confirm the provision of entertainment, services, activities, refreshments, etc.
- Secure the T-shirts and premiums

One Month to One Week Prior

- Review the logistics plan with all committee chairs
- Develop the walker handout; include sponsors/donors
- Send press release to newspapers and TV, radio, and cable stations

- Continue to have walker recruitment days
- Continue to distribute walk brochures and posters
- Organize materials for the education/out-reach booth
- Arrange deliveries to the walk location
- Review photography assignments
- Conduct a general training meeting for volunteers and staff
- Conduct a registration team training meeting
- Send a media advisory to request the attendance of reporters; do phone or in-person follow-up with local media to assure coverage of the event
- Finalize the walker handout to include all sponsors/donors; send to printer
- Review the final walk-day logistics plan and emergency coverage

Post-Walk

- Send a news release to report the success of the event and to thank sponsors
- Send thank-you notes to participants, sponsors, entertainers, the spokesperson for the event, and volunteers
- Have a meeting with committee chairs; the walk chairperson should collect all files to use for the next year's walk
- Have a post-walk meeting for key volunteers to review the success of the event and discuss ideas for next year
- Implement programs using walk funds