The Impact of Fundraising

You help create an inclusive community for people with Down syndrome

Public Awareness: Your participation in MDSC’s Buddy Walk Program promotes acceptance and inclusion for people with Down syndrome. It breaks down barriers and dispels negative stereotypes, fostering an inclusive environment for people with Down syndrome and enhancing their lives.

You create hope and a support system for new and expectant families

Parents First Call: This volunteer group of trained parent mentors is a comforting support system to hundreds of new and expectant parents in Massachusetts each year. They are available 24/7 to listen, share, answer questions, and provide valuable information to others who are beginning their journey through parenthood.

You provide opportunities for young adults with Down syndrome

Advocates in Motion: The AIM program hosts fun, inclusive, interactive events each month for teens and young adults ages 13 to 22, which enables them to build self-confidence, form meaningful relationships, and set and achieve goals.

You give adults with Down syndrome the opportunity to be leaders

Self-Advocate Advisory Council: SAAC empowers adults with Down syndrome ages 22+ and gives them an important voice within the MDSC and the Commonwealth on topics that are important to them.

You help ensure that medical professionals are sensitive and that their information is accurate

Medical Outreach and Support: The MDSC works with obstetricians and pediatricians to improve the way they deliver a prenatal or postnatal diagnosis to expectant parents and to ensure that medical providers have up-to-date accurate information about Down syndrome to share with their patients.

You bring our services to people in need across the nation

Program Replication Trainings: The MDSC travels across the country to share our First Call Program with other Down syndrome organizations to provide them with the information and tools to start their own program to support new and expectant parents.
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You help change legislation to enhance the lives of people with Down syndrome

Legislative Advocacy: The MDSC is a statewide leader in the disability policy arena and an increasingly influential player nationally. Through partnerships with legislators, their constituents and other disability organizations, the MDSC is able to advance legislation and other policies that benefit people with Down syndrome and their families on a local and national level.

Three of the Bills that MDSC championed for over the course of several years were passed by the legislature in 2014. These include the National Background Check Bill, the Real Lives Bill, and the ABLE Act.

You give a variety of communities the opportunity to come together to celebrate the Down syndrome community and obtain new resources

Annual Conference: Each spring, more than 600 people with Down syndrome, parents and siblings, health care professionals, and educators from across New England attend our Annual Conference on Down syndrome. Participants gather to hear the latest research findings and timely information from national and local experts on a range of topics related to Down syndrome and other disabilities. They also share stories, celebrate victories, advocate for acceptance and inclusion, and reunite with other MDSC families.

You equip our region’s educators with best practices

Educational Conferences: Each November, the MDSC hosts the Educators Forum, which is designed for educators across New England to learn about best practices for educating students with Down syndrome in an inclusive classroom. The MDSC is proud to have published Meaningful Inclusion for Students with Down syndrome, a Resource Guide for Elementary Educators that provides a comprehensive look at the complex learning profile of students with Down syndrome. It also contains information around best practices and educational considerations that are based upon research-proven best practices.

You make everything possible

Your dedication and support helps MDSC accomplish our goals and fulfill our mission: to ensure individuals with Down syndrome in Massachusetts are valued, included, and given the opportunities to pursue fulfilling lives by providing information, networking opportunities, and advocacy for people with Down syndrome and their families, educators, health care professionals, and the community-at-large.
1) Personalize your ask. People like helping their friends and family when they know how important the cause is to you. Let people know what MDSC means to you and share a story about your personal connection to Down syndrome, such as your child, friend, relative, or friend’s child.

2) Make it simple for people to donate. Share your personal fundraising link in e-mails and Facebook posts (or Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media pages) so people can go directly to your page and make a donation.

3) Give thanks. This is a big one! It’s important to acknowledge people for their contribution to your goal - this includes family, friends, co-workers, and anyone else who is helping you achieve your goal. No matter how much they donate, always give thanks. People appreciate being thanked at the time they make their donation as well as after the event is over, so you can share with them how much you accomplished and what a great time you had at the Buddy Walk!

**Bonus Fundraising Tip!**
The age-old saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” is still relevant today. Include inspiring photos of your loved one with Down syndrome in your posts, e-mails, and thank you letters to help people really connect to you and your cause.

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**Kick-start Your Campaign in 7 Days!**
*Use this plan to raise $500 in just one week!*

**Day 1:** Sponsor yourself for $25

**Day 2:** Ask 4 family members to sponsor you for $25

**Day 3:** Ask 5 friends to contribute $20

**Day 4:** Ask 5 coworkers to give $20

**Day 5:** Ask 5 neighbors to sponsor you for $20

**Day 6:** Ask your employer for a company gift of $50. Your company may also be able to match the amount you give in Day 1 through their matching gift program.

**Day 7:** Ask 1 local business you patronize (your hairdresser, dry cleaner, favorite restaurant/take out place, etc.) to support you for $25

**Bonus Fundraising Tip!**
You can customize this plan based on your personal network, employer, and your fundraising goal. Aim high and you’ll be amazed by how quickly you can achieve your goals!
Events will be an important element to your portfolio of fundraising initiatives. You can be as simple or as creative as you want to with your events.

Below is also a list of event suggestions and some ideas that other fundraisers have had success with in the past.

- **Percent of Funds:** Many restaurants or other stores are willing to donate a percentage of funds to your cause. Ask a chain or a local restaurant in your community if they would be willing to participate in this type of fundraiser. They will often give you a time period on a certain date, such as “on Friday, July 24th, 10% of proceeds made from 3-6pm will be donated.”

- **Raffles:** You can also ask local businesses to donate items, such as a restaurant gift card, golf course certificate, or certificate at a salon, and raffle the items off by selling tickets.

- **50/50 raffles** are also great way to get people to donate... who wouldn’t love to win some extra cash?! 50/50 raffles work best as an additional option at another event, rather than suggesting to people that purchasing a 50/50 raffle ticket substitutes a general donation.

- **Casual Dress Days:** Employees can donate a specified amount to dress casually on a certain day. If you already have a casual dress policy at work, an alternative to this is to select a theme (USA, Hawaiian luau, superheroes, etc.). Make sure you check with your HR department about your work-place policies first.

- **Host a Bowling night!** Bowling venues may donate lanes for a certain number of people and include free shoe rentals. Charge per person to attend and increase the price if you are going to purchase additional appetizers or drinks.

- **Collect your refundable cans & bottles and cash them in.** Ask your close friends and neighbors to save theirs for you each week too. Saving all summer long can add up!

- **Coordinate a bake sale or car wash** — this is a fun way to involve your children too!

- Host a game night, dinner party, ladies spa day, pancake breakfast, holiday party (whether it’s the 4th of July, National Doughnut Day, or the First Day of Summer) or other themed party with set or suggested attendance donation.

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**Bonus Fundraising Tip!**

Always put a donation jar out at your events so people can make an additional contribution if they choose to.
Below are some big and small ideas that other team captains have used to raise awareness and funds for their Buddy Walk team.

**Workplace**
*Make sure you check with your HR department about company policies regarding fundraising.*

- Host a disability awareness day and invite an MDSC Self-Advocate to come and speak
- Post information about the walk or your team in the office lunch room or lobby
- Write an article for your company’s newsletter about Down syndrome or submit a Buddy Walk ad encouraging people to join or donate to your team
- Sign the MDSC up to be a part of your company’s matching gift program (your donations and that of your colleagues can be doubled in some cases)
- Form a Corporate Buddy Walk Team
- Hold a Casual Dress Day, where people can pay a set or flexible amount to dress casually (all proceeds benefit your Buddy Walk team).

**School/Classroom**
*Make sure you check with your school’s policies regarding fundraising.*

- Invite your child’s classmates to join your Buddy Walk team *(Example: Over 100 students from Winthrop High School joined Team Love for the 2013 Buddy Walk)*
- Sell snacks or 50/50 raffles at your child’s athletic games or afterschool program
- Organize a Buddy Bake Sale, Classroom Coin Drive, or other fun event that would go over well at your school
- Work with the Parent Teacher Association to hold a disability awareness day/social action project *(Example: Sudbury’s Loring Elementary School holds an Annual Accept the Challenge event to increase awareness about Down syndrome and the Buddy Walk)*

**Bonus Fundraising Tip!**

Let us know about your fundraising or awareness events ahead of time! If they are open to the public we can promote them on our Facebook page and Upside Weekly Newsletter. We can also provide you with MDSC materials to use at your event. E-mail buddywalk@mdsc.org for more information.