



## ORGANIZE A WALK OR RACE FUNDRAISER

A walk or race offers a great opportunity to raise awareness and funds for a project related to reconciliation: clean water for children in Iraq, an art exhibition, support for an orphanage in Iraq, or a Sister City project. The steps in this brief guide are designed to keep the planning process on track.

If you have any questions or want to brainstorm ideas, please contact us at [info@reconciliationproject.org](mailto:info@reconciliationproject.org) or 952-545-9981.

Good luck getting your event going, and remember, big results are entirely possible with careful planning and execution!

### ASSEMBLE A LEADERSHIP TEAM

Successful events hinge on the recruitment and action of a strong leadership team. Ideally your team should be comprised of individuals with diverse skills and talents that share a common interest in the organization's success. In addition, working smart at this stage of the game requires delegation. Consider assigning a person (or team of people) to the following project areas (not all areas will be relevant for every event):

- Legal/Logistics: this person should be someone responsible for obtaining permits and handling logistics, such as traffic control and insurance.
- Corporate Sponsorship and Donations: someone with experience in sales and building partnerships to solicit sponsorship and manage a sponsor expo area for local businesses and donors.
- Marketing & Public Relations: someone with a communications background to write press releases, pitch story ideas to media, create print and promotional materials and recruit celebrity event participation
- Hospitality & Communications: this is the event cheerleader! He or she sends periodic coaching cards to participants, organizes pre- and post-event meals and activities, and coordinates entertainment.

### CHOOSE AN EVENT

There are so many races and walks to choose from: 5K, 10K, team relays, mud runs, trail runs, or theme-based races. The list goes on. For your first race, you want to start small.

Even if you have your heart set on organizing a marathon, you may want to first have a go with a shorter distance to feel your way. The more complicated the course, the more planning required.

## **CHOOSE AN EVENT NAME AND FUNDRAISING CAUSE**

Working with your leadership team, decide on a name for your event and where funds raised from the event will go: clean water for children in Iraq, an art exhibition, etc. Feel free to contact IARP

staff to brainstorm ideas. It is important that the leadership team is excited about the event theme and cause.

## **CHOOSE A LOCATION**

Picking a good venue can make or break your event's success. It needs to be accessible and easy to get to as well as an attractive area in which

to walk or run. No matter how unique you think your event may be, if it's tough to reach, people won't register.

## **CHOOSE A DATE**

Choose a date that makes sense for the location you've selected. You want to take into account the season of when participants will want to be racing, holiday schedules and competition from

other races and events happening at the same time—especially for your first race. You also want to give yourself enough time to plan a good event.

## **SET GOALS**

Your first race or walk may not have 10,000 participants, but maybe only 25 of your friends. Both types of races have their advantages, as long as expectations have been set appropriately.

How do you determine which expectations are reasonable? You need to determine what resources you have to make the event happen. If you have a whole committee of people, a

major company or major cause behind you, then significant expectations might be reasonable. If you're doing it by yourself, your expectations need to match that. It's always better to be conservative with your goals so you can exceed expectations and maybe make them higher in the future.

## **GET PERMISSION**

Once you decide where you want to conduct the event, make sure you go to the permitting authorities and get permission. You don't want to

commit to an event, advertise and promote it, until permission is in place.

## **SAFETY FIRST**

Here are a few pointers to make sure you're prepared to keep everyone at your event safe and sound:

- Make sure there is plenty of water on the course
- Make sure traffic control is present so no one gets hit by a vehicle
- Use volunteers and make signs to make sure people stay on the correct course
- Make sure you have medical presence

Depending on the size of your event you want to have an ambulance or EMT present, but it could also be as simple as educating your volunteers to not hesitate to call 911 immediately in the event of an emergency. The point is to be prepared for everything.

## **PLAN LOGISTICS**

There are lots of odds and ends associated with a race or walk besides the actual event. Here's a list of things first-time race directors might forget to have on their to-do lists (many of these are optional depending on your event):

- Accurately marked course
- Accurately measured course
- Timing
- Visible clocks along the course
- Well-run registration to ensure all participants registered properly
- Awards / Ceremony
- Results
- Medical presence
- Water stops
- Permits
- Information about the cause you're supporting (such as clean water for children in Iraq)
- Post-race music and food
- Goodie bags / T-shirts

## **BUILD A BUDGET**

A rule of thumb for many races or walks is that the event will cost the amount of money you are charging participants to register (unless you already have a corporation or sponsors backing your event). So if you're only charging entry fee without sponsors, you will likely break even.

It's important to build a budget for your event. If you're going to need things like Porto Johns, police, and T-shirts, you need to put amounts next

to each of these. Other (optional) costs include race timing equipment, scoring equipment, tents, cones, signage, website design, and labor.

After you figure out your costs, determine how you're going to pay for these costs – sponsorships, registration fees, pledges, requests for donations at the event?

## **RECRUIT WALKERS / RACERS**

Start with your network: When it comes time to recruit participants and volunteers, nothing will be more important than your network and your leadership branch. These people are often well

established in the community, and will not only participate, but will ask associates, friends and family members to participate as well. Encourage this!

## **FIND SPONSORS**

Often, companies value opportunities to engage their workforce in community activities. Therefore, it is important to ask companies not only for sponsorship to help offset the event costs, but also for their participation. Team registrations offer a fun and easy way for companies to participate.

For your first race, you may not get anyone to fork

over a big sum of money, but they may be happy to donate cool stuff for participants.

To seek sponsorships, you might send out a bunch of emails asking people to donate things—like sports drinks and power bars—so you can have cool stuff at the event to give away. Here are a few other tips for getting sponsors:

- Talk to people you already know. You never know who may want to advertise their product or service or donate money to your cause.
- Go to networking events to meet people. Find out what they do—it might be relevant to your race, such as chiropractors, personal trainers, nutritionists, etc.
- Hand out flyers when you're out and about. Promote your event to potential participants and sponsors at the same time.
- Visit local businesses and see if they want to donate money, have presence at your event to promote their company, or donate stuff for the race/goodie bag.
- If you advertise your race well enough, sometimes sponsors will seek you out.
- Offer free or discounted booth (or ground) space to sponsors that supply samples at the race or

for the goody bags.

- Send an email asking people and businesses to bring stuff to the event.
- If you notice teams signing up for the event, approach them and see if they have a company that would like to participate in being a sponsor.
- Post a sponsorship packet on your website (IARP can help with development of this if you wish).

## **PROMOTE YOUR EVENT**

If this is a public event, online advertising (your website, email blasts, social media) will likely be your most successful medium to promote your race. You could also consider advertising in local publications and newspapers, and going to other local races a month or two before your event and asking permission to hand out materials about your event.

Many groups organizing a race or walk will also brand the event and create print and promotional materials to help spread the word (i.e. flyers, signage, brochures, stickers). IARP can send you logos and other design files for your use if you wish.

## **MANAGE REGISTRATIONS, DONATIONS AND PLEDGES**

One of the most important considerations when planning a walk or race is how to successfully manage registrations, donations and pledges. Organizers will need a secure and easy way to track and manage pledges and/or registration fees collected from your event participants. Often a simple Excel spreadsheet will work. IARP can manage your registration database for you if you would prefer. In this case walk or race participants would submit registration information either to you or directly to IARP. We provide a sample registration form that you may use if you would like. We can work with you to tailor this form for your event.

Prior to the event, you may choose to set up a fundraising page through Razoo, IARP's donation

processor. This allows for easy online donations or pledges, as well as the potential for walk or race teams, to support your event's fundraising efforts. To learn more about this option, visit <http://givemn.razoo.com/p/teams>.

You may also accept cash or checks for pledges or registration fees prior to and at the event. Checks should be made out to "IARP" with the designated project (such as Water for Peace) in the memo line. IARP also has a Square account if you would like to accept credit card registrations and payments at the event with iPhones and/or iPads (your group would need to purchase at least one Square reader, available from Apple stores).

## **LEADING UP TO EVENT DAY**

Be sure to keep your event participants updated on event details and send out email reminders, if possible, leading up to the event. If necessary, coordinate a last push for registrations and ask

current registered participants to invite their contacts. A goal for registrants (such as 100 people or \$5000 pledged) can be a motivator for participants to encourage others to sign up.

A few days or the night before the event, prepare any race packets that participants will pick up, organize registration forms and waivers, and add up current donations. Make sure you have all necessary equipment for the event (such as registration tables and signs). A checklist can be a helpful tool to ensure you have everything you need.

## EVENT DAY

It's the big day. You're the event director, and you're nervous. How can you make sure the day goes smoothly? Be the first one to show up. Bring your event materials (signs, banners, participant lists, nametags, refreshments such as water and energy bars, and any other materials you have) to the event start location well before the event starts. Work with your leadership team to make sure everything is set up for the event.

Plan the event day by assigning committee members to different stations including the start

line, on the course, finish line, refreshments and prizes (if available).

It's important to do everything you can to make sure the event starts on time. You could tell your leadership team to pretend like the event is going to happen earlier than it's scheduled to be sure they're prepared early and have a buffer zone for last-minute surprises.

There are basically three parts to the race or walk for your participants:

- Pre-Event: This is where you welcome people to the event. Show them where the race or walk starts, make sure they have their race # (if applicable) and registration packet, water, etc.
- Race or Walk
- Post-Event: Once your participants finish with the race or walk, they want to party. Remember to make it fun and also keep the impact of the race front and center for participants (such as providing clean water for children in Iraq).

Have a great event!

# EVENT DAY CHECKLIST

Not all of these items will be applicable for your event. Choose the ones that are relevant for you.

## Water Station Set-Up

- Water
- Sports Drink
- Pitchers
- Signs
- Plain Cups
- Sports Drink Cups
- Table(s)
- Trash Bags
- First Aid Kit
- Tape
- Turn Around Signage

## Timing Set-Up

- Computer(s)
- Printer
- Connection Cords
- Power Strip
- Extension Cords
- Table(s)
- Tent
- Tent Shield
- Chairs
- Printer Paper
- Scratch Paper
- Extra Ink Cartridge

## Parking Set-Up

- Flags
- Vests
- Signs
- Sign Holders
- "Event Parking" Signs

- "Event-in-Progress" Signs

## Course Marking

- Delineators
- Cones
- All Signage
- Mile Markers
- 2-way Radios
- Flour
- Flags
- Barricades

## Check-In and Regular Set-Up

- Safety Pins
- Banner(s)
- Scissors
- Administration Box
  - Safety Pins
  - Cash Box (Change, Extra Pens)
  - Clip Boards

## Registration Folder

- Registration Tent Signs
- Blank Bib #'s
- Sharpies
- Day-of Registration Forms
- Pens
- Waiver
- Waiver Sign Sheet
- Scratch Paper

## Check In Folder

- Check In Tent Signs

- Check In List
- Pens
- Highlighter
- Waiver
- Waiver Sign Sheet
- Scratch Paper

## Manual Timing Folder

- Stop Watches
- Manual Timing Bib Numbers
- Manual Timing Time Sheets
- Pens
- Clip Boards
- Stab Wires

## Goody Bag Set-Up

- T-shirts
- Goody bags
- Bars
- Flyers
- Table Tents

## Other

- Paper towels
- Trash bags
- Awards
- Mega phone(s)
- Generator

## PA System

- Mic
- Cord
- iPod

## **BREAKING DOWN THE EVENT**

The race might be over for the participants, but you still have some work to do. You don't want to find yourself in the middle of leftover food, trash bins, tents and equipment, with only a handful of people sticking around to help out. Plan ahead

and recruit volunteers to help with clean-up. You may also want to consider using a separate team for clean-up from the pre-event registration and set-up.

## **AFTER THE EVENT**

You will start receiving feedback anywhere from hours to weeks after your event. If you're lucky, you'll find words of praise in your inbox, but it is also likely that participants will complain. Try to answer as nice as possible, don't take it personally,

and most of all, don't let it get you down. People like to complain. Try to make them feel like you're listening and taking their complaint seriously.

And don't forget to say thank you. Those two small words go a long way. Don't forget to thank:

- Your sponsors.
- Your participants: Send an email directing them to race results (if applicable) and where to find the event next year, when the website will be updated, and when more info will be available.
- Local authorities and police.
- Volunteers: If they are happy with their experience, they'll help out again. And next time, they'll already know what to do.

Final step is to post walk/race results and photos for participants to see. Post anything associated

with the event so people can remember their experience... and remember to sign up next year!