



# TEAM CAPTAIN TOOLKIT

Your complete guide to fundraising for the 2026 New York City Buddy Walk®



# Welcome, Team Captain!

Thank you for stepping up as a Team Captain for the NYC Buddy Walk! Your leadership makes all the difference.

The Buddy Walk is one of the most joyful days of the year, a true celebration of people with Down syndrome and the incredible community that surrounds them. As a Team Captain, you are the heartbeat of your team. You'll recruit walkers, inspire fundraising, and make sure everyone shows up ready to celebrate.

This packet has all the tools, tips, and resources you need to be a successful Team Captain and create an unforgettable walk experience.

## Your Role as Captain

- Register your team** on the NYC Buddy Walk Website and set your fundraising goal.
- Recruit Team Members** - friends, family, coworkers, neighbors! The bigger the team, the bigger the impact!
- Lead fundraising** by sharing your personal page and encouraging your team to do the same.
- Communicate with your team** and keep them motivated, informed, and excited all the way to walk day!

# Ideas for Fundraising

Need a little inspiration to get started with fundraising? You're in the right place! Here are some examples of creative and fun ways to help you reach your goal.

## Set a Bold Goal

Teams that set a goal of \$1,000 or more raise 3x more than those without a goal. Aim high, you'll be amazed at what your community will give when you ask!

## Social Media Blitz

Post 2-3 times per week. Share milestones, personal stories, and countdowns. Invite people to donate by sharing your story via Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or whatever social media channels you use. Giving social media shout-outs to donors and teammates is a great way to create momentum.

## Personal Ask

A personal ask goes a long way! Ask five friends, five coworkers, or five family members to give to your fundraising page.

## Corporate Matching

Many companies have matching gift programs. Ask your company and encourage your supporters to ask their companies about a match. [Click here](#) to see if your company has a matching program.

# Ideas for Fundraising

## Eat for a Cause

Ask a local restaurant to donate 10% of their profits on a designated day for NDSS.

## Lemonade Stand

Host a good old fashioned lemonade stand with your kids or loved one with Down syndrome!

## Yard Sale

Clean out the clutter and support NDSS! Get the word out to friends, neighbors, and supporters that you are hosting a yard/garage sale fundraiser. Ask them to donate items to be sold, and to come shop your sale. Include a donation jar along with information about NDSS and your fundraising effort.

## Host a Mini Fundraiser

Bake sale, trivia night, or a pizza party! Small events create big buzz and bring in donations while building excitement.

## Fitness Class Fundraiser

Partner with your local gym, yoga studio, or fitness instructor to charge a donation based entry.

# Ideas for Making the Ask



Below is a template you can use to personalize letters or emails when asking for donations to your team.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am participating in the 2026 NYC Buddy Walk on Saturday, September 12, 2026. As the world's most widely recognized public awareness program for the Down syndrome community, the flagship Buddy Walk attracts participants from coast to coast each year and benefits the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), a human rights organization for people with Down syndrome. NDSS envisions a world in which all people with Down syndrome have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life, realize their life aspirations and become valued members of welcoming communities. Join us and help make this vision a reality.

(If you have a personal connection, this is a great place to share your story and who you are participating in honor of.)

I hope that you'll consider making a donation to my walk team. No donation is too small and every dollar raised allows NDSS to continue it's important work on behalf of our loved ones with Down syndrome.

To make a secure, tax-deductible donation to NDSS, please visit my personal fundraising page: (insert link here)

With gratitude,  
Signature

# Ideas for Making the Ask



You can use the language below for social media posts. Social media is a great way to share your team with your community and reach more supporters.

## **Social Media Outreach**

I'm excited to share that I'll be participating in the 2026 NYC Buddy Walk on Saturday, September 12!

(Share your personal story or reason for walking here.)

The Buddy Walk benefits the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), a human rights organization supporting individuals with Down syndrome. Please consider donating, joining my team, or doing both to support this important work.

Donate here: (insert link)

## **Show appreciation to everyone who supports your fundraising efforts**

Recognizing those who support you is equally important as asking for those donations. Post personalized "thank you" messages on your social media pages. Include a picture of your loved one with Down syndrome (extra points if you have one of the donor with your loved one) with a personalized shout out to your donor. Other people will see this and want you to do the same for them.

# Fundraising Incentives



Turn your fundraising into rewards! Teams that raise \$321 or more will earn exclusive fundraising incentives. The more your team raises, the more prizes you can earn, all while making a meaningful difference.

PRIZE	\$321+	\$500+	\$1,000+	\$2,500+	\$3,500+	\$5,000+	\$7,500+	\$10,000+
Custom NDSS Shoes								
Welcome to NYC Gift Basket								
Guaranteed 2027 TSV Spot and VIP Reception Invite								
Backpack Cooler								
Custom Team Name Sign for Walk								
NDSS Hat								
Custom Tote with Team Name								
NDSS Shoe Laces								

## ADDITIONAL FUNDRAISING PRIZES

### \$3,210+

Entered to win Buddy Cruise 2026 with Royal Caribbean for Four (4) Guests, One (1) Stateroom. Winner will be chosen at the Walk.

### \$25,000+

2 Tickets to 2027 NDSS Gala & Auction

### Top Walk from Home Team

Breakfast Delivery

# Team Captain Checklist

Use the checklist to stay organized and fundraise for your team. Thank you for being a Buddy Walk Team Captain!

## Recruit Your Team

- Invite friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors to join
- Share your team link via email, text, and social media
- Encourage each team member to register and personalize their page

## Fundraising

- Make a personal donation to kick off fundraising
- Share your fundraising page regularly
- Ask team members to help fundraise
- Thank donors promptly

## Packet Pickup Friday

- Stop by to pick up your t-shirts, wristbands and incentives at the Marriott Marquis

## Walk Day

- Make sure to wear your t-shirts and wristbands
- Gather your team for photos and tag NDSS on social media
- Celebrate your impact and have fun!

Questions? Email Misty, at [madams@ndss.org](mailto:madams@ndss.org) for support.

Thank you for signing up to be a Team Captain for the Buddy Walk! Your leadership plays a vital role in bringing people together and building a strong, supportive community. We can't wait to celebrate with you in September!