

# **walk<sup>®</sup>with a DOC** **GUIDE TO MARKETING**

Thank you for working hard to get people up and moving in your community. We've put together a list of ideas, resources, and "best practices" that we've learned from other Walk with a Doc groups over the years to help you spread the word locally.



# MARKETING OVERVIEW

We'll get into all of these topics in more detail throughout the marketing guide, but if you don't have time to read the whole thing, here's our short list of recommendations.

## PERSONAL INVITATIONS & HANDOUTS

Get as many physicians, nurses, etc. as possible to personally invite patients to the walks with a flyer or business card that has your Walk schedule.

## PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

Connect with community organizations, businesses, and programs that will invite their network to your walks. Also, be on the lookout for other local events or health fairs where you could spread the word.

## EMAILS

Collect email addresses from current and prospective participants so you can send out email reminders.

## SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL MARKETING

Frequently post about the walks on social media and other digital platforms like Eventbrite, Meetup, NextDoor, and online community event calendars.

## INCENTIVES

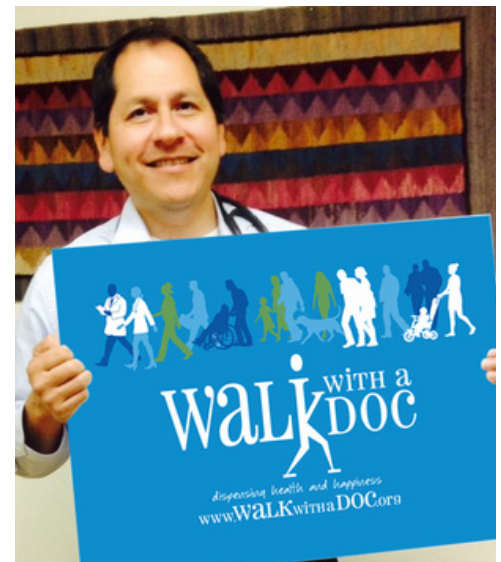
If funding is available, consider providing healthy snacks and/or incentives for participants.

## WALK SCHEDULE/LOCATION

We recommend a consistent schedule to help make your promotional efforts much easier and long-lasting. Ask current and prospective participants for their feedback on what day and time works best.

## STICK WITH IT

Don't be discouraged if it takes time to build a solid group of participants. This is a marathon, not a sprint!



# KEY MESSAGING TO USE IN YOUR PROMOTION

## ABOUT WALK WITH A DOC

Walk with a Doc is a nonprofit started in 2005 by Dr. David Sabgir, a cardiologist in Columbus, Ohio. The program now extends around the world with hundreds of communities getting together to walk with local healthcare professionals on a regular basis. Each free event begins with a short health discussion, followed by the opportunity to walk together as a group. Learn more about the history of the program at <https://walkwithadoc.org/overview>

## COMMON PHRASES TO USE

- Walk with a Doc inspires communities through movement and conversation.
- Take a step toward better health at Walk with a Doc.
- Walk with a Doc is a fun, free, and safe place to take a walk, learn about health, and meet new people.
- Regular physical activity, like walking, is one of the best things you can do for both your physical and mental health.
- Walk with a Doc is based on 4 key components: physical activity, health education, social connection, and time in nature are an all-in-one prescription for a healthier life.



## IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

- Are you trying to reach community members or employees? Older adults or young families? Rural or underserved communities? Cater your messaging based on what would appeal to this audience. Examples:
  - Young parents would want to know that the walks are a way to learn healthy parenting tips and connect with other families.
  - Older adults may want to know that it's safe for people of all ages and abilities, so mention that participants are able to walk at their own pace & distance.



## ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

We want people from all *walks* of life to join our events, so please keep this in mind throughout your messaging. Try to use:

- Phrases like “walkers and rollers” so those in wheelchairs feel welcome.
- “Physical activity” or “movement” instead of the E-word (exercise) which can be intimidating for many people.
- Images that include people of diverse backgrounds, ages, etc.



# EXAMPLE TIMELINE

5-6  
WEEKS  
BEFORE  
THE WALK

- ☒ Register your Walk chapter & set your kickoff date
- ☐ Browse the leader portal and design your flyers and social media images
- ☐ Announce your WWAD program on social media and newsletter
- ☐ Start telling colleagues, friends, family, and patients about the program
- ☐ Research potential community partners and local online event calendars

3-4  
WEEKS  
BEFORE  
THE WALK

- ☐ Print flyers and distribute to other healthcare professionals
- ☐ Reach out to community partners
- ☐ Plan which incentives you'll offer at the walk
- ☐ Continue inviting patients and posting on social media

1-2  
WEEKS  
BEFORE  
THE WALK

- ☐ Hang flyers/posters around the office
- ☐ Remind staff and community partners
- ☐ Send out a dedicated email with all the details of the walk
- ☐ Continue social media promotion. Try to post several times this week if possible (consider boosting or running ads)
- ☐ Submit a news advisory to local media
- ☐ Continue personally inviting patients

1-2  
DAYS  
BEFORE  
THE WALK

- ☐ Post one last reminder on social media.
- ☐ Check out the leader portal for instructions on the waiver and other "day of" materials.

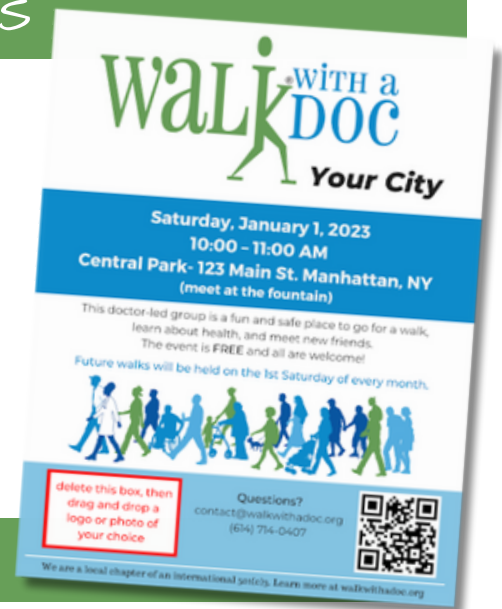




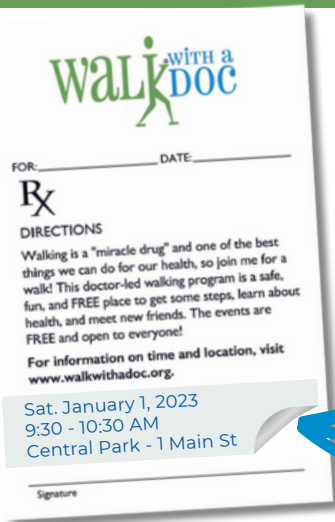
# PAPER MATERIALS

## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN FLYERS/HANDOUTS

- About Walk with a Doc (make sure to mention that it's free and open to the public)
- Your ongoing walk schedule (ie 1st Saturday of the month at 9 AM) so your materials are long-lasting rather than only promoting a single event
- Any snacks or incentives you'll be providing
- Contact information and website or QR code
- You can find various templates on the leader portal, including flyers, posters, prescription pads, business cards, and postcards.



## SHARING IN THE CLINIC/HOSPITAL



- Our research suggests that **personally inviting** patients and giving them something to take home is one of the most effective marketing tactics. Recruit other healthcare providers to invite their patients too.
- Promote within various departments, such as cardiac rehab and physical therapy.
- Hang flyers in the clinic/hospital hallways, waiting rooms, exam rooms, check-in/out desk, cafeteria, bathrooms, and anywhere else that people often visit.
- Include a flyer in a patient's discharge paperwork.
- Consider printing out labels with the next walk date/time to easily stick on the materials.

## SHARING IN THE COMMUNITY

**Businesses:** shoe stores, health-food stores, and community bulletin boards.

**Community Partners:** libraries, schools, churches, etc. (see the "Partners" page)

**At the park where you host your walks:**

- Walk the park and invite people to your upcoming WWAD event.
- Ask the park administrators if you can leave a banner, poster, or yard sign at the walk meeting place or a stack of flyers at the park's visitor center.

**Canvas the Neighborhood** (~5 mile radius of your walk location)

- Go door to door and deliver flyers (note - it's illegal to open mailboxes but you can leave a flyer on the door or front porch).
- Consider paying for Direct Mailers that get delivered to nearby mailboxes.

**Current Participants**

- Give a stack of flyers or business cards to your current walkers so they can easily spread the word to family, friends, and groups they're a part of.

# SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL MARKETING

## WWAD RESOURCES

- Visit the Leader Portal for example social media posts and images.
- Follow @walkwithadoc for easy-to-share content.
- Tag @walkwithadoc in your posts so we can like and share.
- Join the [Leader Facebook Group](#) to share updates, ask questions, and encourage other Walk leaders.

## POSTING FREQUENCY

- “Save the date” post a few weeks before the walk
- Reminder(s) the week of the walk
- During the walk: post some pictures/videos on your story, or even live-stream the event to Facebook Live, YouTube, etc.
- Recap post after the walk - share a picture and details of the next one.

## UNIQUE ACCOUNT FOR YOUR WALK CHAPTER

- Many leaders create social media accounts specifically for their Walk chapter.
- Use a custom profile picture that includes your city so people can easily tell which chapter you're promoting. Use the [template](#) on the leader portal or email us for help.
- On Facebook, you have the choice of making a page or a group. We recommend groups, which allow members to interact with each other, share pictures, and ask questions see [here](#) for an example.
- If your organization already has a Facebook **page**, consider making a WWAD **group** within that page (see [here](#) for instructions).



## MORE FACEBOOK TIPS

- Schedule Facebook **events** and invite friends to join. It's easy to set up a recurring schedule.
- Consider joining other local “groups” on Facebook and post information about your walks.

## OTHER PLATFORMS

- Promote your events on platforms like [Meetup.com](#) (paid), [Eventbrite](#) (free), or [NextDoor](#) (free).
- Search for local online community events calendars and submit your Walk events.

## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- **Tagging** - Consider tagging any local partners/sponsors in your posts too.
- **Paid Advertising** - Consider running paid advertisements or [boosting posts](#) to extend your reach. Email us if you need help creating the ads.
- **Digital Signage** - Have your Walk information looping on the screen in the waiting room, homepage of your website, or electronic billboard.

# NEWSLETTER & EMAIL

## COLLECTING EMAIL ADDRESSES

- Whenever someone shows interest in your walks, ask for their email address.
- You could also include a sign-up sheet at the check-in/out desk.
- Encourage current participants to include their email address when signing in at the walks. If you've been sending us your sign-in sheets and/or using the e-waiver, we can send you a list of email addresses anytime.

## CHOOSING HOW TO SEND EMAILS

- You can send emails from your personal email address (please "bcc" everyone).
- Create a new email account for your WWAD program (i.e. WWADnyc@aol.com).
- Utilize an email marketing platform to schedule emails in advance.
  - MailChimp is free for up to 2,000 email addresses.
  - ConstantContact is another great service, but requires a fee.

## SUGGESTED EMAIL FREQUENCY & CONTENT

- A few weeks before the walk: send your participants all the details including date/time, location, speaker, and topic.
- A few days before the walk: send a reminder email.
- A few days after the walk: send a thank you email with a recap of the health topic you discussed, pictures, and a "save the date" for the next walk.

## EMAIL SIGNATURE

Consider adding the Walk info to your email signature so everyone you communicate with will know what you're up to!

Jane Doe, MD

Walk Leader - Walk with a Doc Columbus  
Join me on the 2nd Saturday of every month at 9 AM for a walk at Central Park

**PROUD MEMBER**



[WWW.WALKWITHADOC.ORG](http://WWW.WALKWITHADOC.ORG)

## AUTO RESPONSE

You could also set up an "auto response" to tell everyone who emails you about your upcoming walk.

SeaMar Marysville ...

Wed, Feb 26, 2020, 4:44 PM



to me ▾

Hello!

Thank you for the email. Our SeaMar WWAD team will get back to your question(s) as promptly as possible. We hope to see you at our next walk event @ Jennings Memorial Park on Feb 29th @1pm.

If you have medical question, please contact your physician or call 911 if it is an emergency.

Sincerely,  
SeaMar Walk with a Doc

# PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with local businesses and community organizations can amplify your impact as everyone works together to invite their network of people to the walks.

## PARTNERSHIP IDEAS

- Recreation centers, senior centers & retirement communities
- Health-focused businesses: grocery stores, healthy restaurants, gyms, yoga studios
- City/County departments: parks & recreation, public health, aging, city council
- Schools, youth clubs, scout troops, after school programs, and libraries
- Faith-based organizations, AARP, YMCA, Rotary club, and other nonprofits
- Community events: 5K, farmers market, festival, health fair, other walking clubs
- Medical society and other clinics, hospitals, and healthcare professionals
- [Other WWAD chapters](#) that are nearby

## HELPING WITH PROMOTION

- Make it easy for your partner to spread the word. Provide each partner with:
  - A stack of flyers/postcards
  - A template to share in their newsletter and on their social media channels
- Some partners might offer you the chance to host a WWAD booth at an upcoming event.
- For any speaking opportunities, [click here for example slides](#)



## SPONSORSHIP

- Providing funding for promotion and/or incentives
- Directly donating items, healthy snacks, or drinks
- Use the “Sponsorship Request Flyer” from the Leader Portal.

## RECOGNIZING YOUR PARTNERS

- Allow them to say a few words or pass out some information at the walks.  
Note: please don't allow them to sell anything at the walks.
- Tag them on your social media posts & include a “thank you” in your newsletters.
- Add their logo to your flyers, website, and social media posts. If you're a [Premier Partner](#), you can also add logos to shirts, banners, and other merchandise.

## TARGET AUDIENCE BASED ON WALK LEADER SPECIALTY

If your speaker is a:	Reach out to:
Pediatrician	School, daycare, youth group, scout troop, YMCA
Cardiologist	Local Red Cross or American Heart Association
Neurologist	Local Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or Stroke Foundation
Gerontologist	Senior centers, retirement communities
Sports Medicine	Fitness centers, school sports teams



# MEDIA, NEWS, PRESS

## TELEVISION & RADIO

- Contact local news & radio stations and see if there's an opportunity for you to share information about your WWAD program and the benefits of walking.
- Check out the "Key Messaging" page of this Guide for talking points or watch some examples from other leaders on our [YouTube channel](#).



## NEWSPAPER & MAGAZINE

- Feature your walks in local newspapers, magazines, and community bulletins, as often as you can, especially if you're targeting older adults.
- Partner with your local paper to do a Q&A session with the featured doctor every month - [click here](#) for an example.



## INVITING LOCAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE YOUR WALKS

- Submit a Press Release to announce your new Walk with a Doc program.
- Submit a News Advisory to promote your ongoing WWAD events at least 5 days in advance, but check for deadlines. Earlier is better for small news outlets!
- Should I use a press release or news advisory? [Click Here](#)
- Find templates for both on the Leader Portal
- How To Submit:
  - Search for local news media outlets online and look for an email address for the newsroom news desk, assignments editor, or "news tips" to send the release or advisory.
  - There are organizations that exist with the sole purpose of distributing press releases and news advisories. Submit the document to one of these websites:  
1. [eReleases](#)    2. [NewsWire](#)

# INCENTIVES & ADDITIONAL IDEAS

## INCENTIVES

- If funding is available, people love freebies! Check out the items on our [online store](#). If you have other ideas for incentives you'd like to offer, send us an email and we'll look into options.
- Make walkers **earn** the incentives:
  - Receive a free pedometer at your 1st walk and a free t-shirt at your 3rd walk.
  - Bring someone new to a walk and you both get a water bottle.
  - Attend at least 8 out of 12 walks this year and earn a gift card to a local grocery store.
- For more expensive items (ie FitBit) consider raffling them off.
- Reach out to local businesses and ask them to donate items (ie snacks or tennis shoes) or provide coupons (ie free coffee or smoothie) that you can offer as incentives.



## WALK WEAR

Get all of your colleagues/staff to wear their WWAD shirts at work the day before your walk and call it Walk Wear Friday (or whatever day it is).

## NEW PHYSICIAN ONBOARDING

If you're with a large hospital, require all new physicians (including residents) to attend and/or lead one of your WWAD events to get them exposed to the program and encourage them to invite patients.





# ONE FINAL TIP



## JUST KEEP WALKING

Although she encouraged a different means of transportation, Dory from Finding Nemo had the right idea with “Just keep swimming.”

Even if your walks only consist of a few people, you’re planting seeds for a healthier community. You never know when your efforts will reach a person whose life will be renewed with hope thanks to your willingness to walk alongside them.



What did we miss? How are you spreading the word about your WWAD program? Please reach out with your ideas, success stories, and any setbacks we can help with.