

Charity Walkathon Guidelines: A step-by-step approach

From: The National Khidmat-e-Khalq Office

To: All Qaideen

Vision: Charity walks are a great to show you care about others and yourself. Raise money and awareness about diseases. Help others find cures. Support a good cause and stay healthy.

Three/Four Months Prior:

- Choose a Date and a rain date. Best months to hold a walk are April/May or September/ October.
- Choose a site. Usually a city park or state park with a five-mile course.
- Select a charity, which serves the local community. Some examples, Children's special hospital, Meals on Wheels, Alzheimer's association. Choose a charity that has a low overhead cost. Contact the organizer from the charity and discuss your plans. Some useful websites;
- American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org
American Diabetes Association: www.diabetes.org
American Heart Association: www.americanheart.org
American Lung Association: www.lungusa.org
Arthritis Foundation: www.arthritis.org
Erase MS: www.erasems.org
Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation: www.breastcancerinfo.com
National Osteoporosis Foundation: www.nof.org
- Writing/Calling for permission to hold the walk from the Mayors office or state parks office. **In some cases might take up to 6-8 weeks.**
- In some cities you may need permission from the Police.
- Third party liability insurance for the event. Can be obtained through the Jamaat where we have a masjid.

Two Months Prior:

- Publication of forms to raise money. Indicating the purpose of the walk and type of charity briefly so that it all fits on one page two sides (Note: example of forms attached) May use Microsoft Publisher.
- Start raising money from local community. Do not just raise money from within the Jamaat. Contact your work place, colleagues, non-ahmedi friends, and local businesses for donations. Try going to people who get regular business from you i.e. local grocery store, barbershop, car mechanic, fast food chain etc. Assign a minimum amount to take part in the walk.
- One person can easily raise more than \$100 (from past experience)
- Some guidelines for individuals raising money are leaving your form on the Cafeteria notice board.

- Have a poster placed in the masjid. The walk should be open to all Ahmadi and their non-Ahmadi friends.
- May be able to convince the local charity to arrange for T-shirts for walkers raising a certain amount of money. e.g. \$125.

One-Month Prior:

- Develop a committee that will be assigned various tasks. e.g. Food preparation, contacting local press, raising money, Planning the track.
- Start planning for food and drinks for the walk. Sometimes water coolers can be obtained from Mac Donald's or Dunkin Donuts. Try to get a rough estimate of people participating. While burgers, sandwiches are appropriate; your Jamaat may consider arranging a Bar B Q along side with the walk.
- Finalize arrangements with the local charity. Make sure somebody from them also participates in the walk.
- Develop a code of conduct that will have to be distributed to all the walkers. Copies attached.
- Go to the site, walk on the path yourself. **Identify any possible problem spots.** Develop a map for the site (some parks may already have one).
- Have a designated water distribution spot. Plan for markers on the track if needed. (NOTE: Most parks do not allow any signs to be posted)
- Follow up your progress, at least, on a weekly basis and more if needed. Make sure all the members of your committee are carrying out their assigned tasks.
- Designate one member to record the event (photo/video)

One-day prior:

Obtain all equipment needed. e.g. Tables ,chairs, paper pencil. Ensure food preparation is being carried out according to the plan.

Day of the walk:

- Set up a registration table, Breakfast table. You could have invited a local politician to start the walk. Start the walk with prayers. **Avoid speeches.**
- Except personal checks, no cash money should be collected on site. Assign one/two persons to be at the venue of the walk early to secure your site.
- Ensure water points are established.
- There should be walker familiar with the track walking just in the front starting a few minutes prior to the walk who will act as a guide and one person assigned at the end to ensure the park is left clean. He can pick up any trash left by walkers.
- At the end, all walkers should be given lunch. You may have a prize distribution based on the most money raised by an individual/ most money

donated by one person/ most money donated by one business etc. and a certificate of completion of the walk.

After the walk:

- Tally all the money collected and give it all to the charity for which the money was raised.
- Send out thank you letters to people who helped you with the walk including the local authority personnel.
- Make sure you send a report to KK office MKA. Photographs are highly desirable.

FAQs:

1. How to raise money? We feel shy asking people for money.
 - a. Post a form in your office/ college/ work place notice board
 - b. Ask your friends and colleagues preferably your American friends
 - c. You can approach some local businesses. Remember, you are not asking money for yourself
2. Can we donate this money to the Jamaat? Or our Masjid?
 - a. No. This money has been raised for charity and has to be given to that charity. This is your opportunity to give back something to the community you live in.
3. Can lajna participate?
 - a. Yes. Lajna members appear to be excellent participants and fundraisers. However, arrangements have to be made to maintain the proper standards of Taqwa during the walkathon. e.g. a 2-minute delayed start of the walk for lajna.
4. We are a small Jamaat with less than 25 khudaam. How can we organize such a big event?
 - a. You can do it as a regional event. Good example would be Zion, Milwaukee, Indiana and Chicago for one walkathon. The walk can be arranged in a small majlis as well as long as you can arrange for participants. We organized a walk in a city in UK with just 10 Khudaam. The numbers of participants were nearly 500!
5. Why do we need insurance?
 - a. By law in some cases you have to cover for third party insurance just like it is mandatory to have car insurance

6. Is there a fee to make a reservation with the park?
 - a. In some cases you may have to pay a small fee.
 - b. In some cities the city may charge you a separate fee for granting permission for the walk.

7. This does not sound like a religious or spiritual activity. Why is the Jamaat trying to promote such programs?
 - a. This activity is for Huqooqul-Ibad as mentioned in the Qur'an. You are helping a charity such as American Cancer Society, American Heart Association. Again it is your opportunity to give something back to the community you are living in
 - b. Huzoor as our Imam has participated and encouraged these activities.

8. Where should I go if I need more information?
 - a. You can approach Mohtamim Khidmat-e-Khalq and his team at any time.

9. Helpful websites?
 - a. MKAUSA.org

10. Who should we write the check to?
 - a. Preferably the check should be written to the charity you are raising money for.

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Action Requested:

Please give us your feedback so we can improve this document over time,
Jazakummullah.