



## 3.7 Mile Walk for Freshwater

**WHY 3.7 miles?** In some regions of the world, such as parts of Asia and Africa, people have to walk great distances to find drinking water. Women and children are usually responsible for this task. The average distance a woman in the developing world walks to get water is **3.7 miles a day**, and she typically carries a load weighing **40 lbs.** That's a long way to go and a lot of water to haul!

The average amount of water a family in Asia and Africa uses in one day is a little less than **5 gallons**. By contrast, an individual in the United States uses an average of **100 gallons of water a day**. Hold a water walk in your community to raise awareness about access to freshwater around the world, and help make a difference in the lives of families in need!

### Planning For the Event

- Form a **planning committee** and recruit volunteers! If you are able to find people to help you plan the event, delegate the following planning responsibilities each committee member. For example, one person can be in charge of publicity, another of logistics.
- Reach out to possible **partner organizations** (see examples below) that might like to partner with your organization/school/group to host the walk and become a co-sponsor.
  - **Community:** YMCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, local environmental organizations, Parks and Recreation departments, local water advocacy groups, etc.
  - **College Campus:** Sororities and fraternities, student geography or environmental groups, community service groups, etc. Maybe partner with a student Public Relations club to help get the word out, and women's organizations (Since freshwater is typically a woman's issue in the developing world, women might be interested in participating.)
  - **K-12 Schools:** Make this a class or club project such as the senior project for the National Honor Society, or an environmental or geography club fundraiser.
  - **Businesses:** Contact an athletic or sporting-goods store, freshwater organization, etc. Solicit corporate donations for water, reusable water bottles, energy bars, other snacks and sports drinks to be handed out along the route and at the end of the race. Sponsors will often donate giveaways, such as branded T-shirts, caps and water bottles.
- Research a **freshwater charity** to serve as a possible partner for the event and that will benefit from your fundraising. Contact local organizations dedicated to preserving freshwater (i.e. local creek conservationists, river advocacy groups, etc.), or use the Global Action Atlas to find a worthy organization.
  - Contact the charity you'd like to donate your collections to, notify them of the event, and ask if they would like to partner with you.

- Ask if they could send a spokesperson or promotional materials to give away at the run or to publicize the event.
- Set a **date**, choose a starting and ending **time**, and map out a **route**.
  - The date should be rain OR shine [Ideally near or during Geography Awareness Week: November 14-20, 2010].
  - You should allow AT LEAST 2 hours for people to complete the 3.7 miles.
  - Decide if the walk will be inside (e.g. in an indoor gymnasium) or outside on a track, around a park, or along roads. You can drive your car around, watching the trip odometer to map a 3.7 mile course or use **Google Maps** or **MapMyWalk.com** to plan a course.
  - Choose the starting and ending locations. If the end location is different from your start location, be sure to indicate that on flyers and advertisements.
- Get **approval** for your route from the necessary authorities.
  - If you need to reserve space, shut down roads, or contract officers to direct traffic and participants, make sure you talk to local officials, administrators and police.
  - Discuss procedures and policies for traffic management. Contact law enforcement agencies about local ordinances, road closures, traffic barricades, crowd control and security issues.
- Set **registration** procedures, policies, and an entrance fee.
  - Try to find a technology provider that specializes in event management software and online event registration. An integrated online event management system will allow you to design a custom online registration form, link to that form from your organizations website, or put the link to that form on promotional flyers and advertisements.
  - If you are able to use an online event registration form, be sure to make the email address question compulsory. This way, you can depend on your email database to contact participants about walk information and changes.
- Public Relations and **Publicity** – see the “Publicize Your Event” page of the “Host an Event” Guide.
- Plan all **logistics** of the walk and find **resources**!
  - The number of participants in your walk will determine the number of volunteers and amount of resources you will need. So, the more accurate headcount you can get before the walk, the better.
  - Here is a list of resources you should think about for your walk:
    - Rope, tape, and cones for course marking
    - Signage for start and finish areas
    - Signage for services and support areas
    - Portable toilets
    - Trash receptacles
    - Food
    - Water
    - Tents
    - Tables

- Stage/PA system
- Take a look at your walk route and strategically place your water stops, trash receptacles, portable toilets, food tables, and so on. Keep in mind that people will gather around the start/finish line, so you may want to place more of your resources there.
- When planning for your food and water resources try to get a local market or store to donate concessions for the race. Oranges, bananas, water, and bagels are all great things to have for after the walk.
- Have a **meeting** with all volunteers and coordinators to make sure everyone knows when and where to arrive and what individual roles are.
- Consider printing brightly colored **t-shirts** for volunteers and/or participants (you can even include fun taglines like “Will Walk for Water”). If there are any donors or partners for the event, be sure to put their logos on the t-shirts. Make a few extras and sell them at the beginning and/or end of the race.
- Reach out to **local news outlets** and ask them to consider covering your event. Designate at least one volunteer to serve as a press “liaison” during the event.

### Running the Event

- Volunteers: Have volunteers wear **nametags** that clearly designate them as volunteers.
- Show up early to **set up**. You'll want to arrive at the walk route three to four hours before registration begins to mark out the course, set up stations and tables at the beginning and end of the race, get volunteers and materials ready for check in, etc.
- **Register** participants and give out any materials or freebies.
- Take **pictures** at the event!!

### After the Event

- Send out **photos** and press releases to local news organizations, schools, and all participating partners highlighting how successful your event was.
- Send **thank-you letters** to sponsors and donors.
- Have a **debrief meeting** with volunteers to discuss what did and did not work well.
- Finish any **financial transactions** with business and the designated charity.

**For more information and advice on how to organize a charity walk, visit this website:**

**<http://ezinearticles.com/?How-to-Organise-a-Charity-Walk-Or-Run&id=4799883>.**