

PROJECT INSTRUCTIONS

Let's Host a Walk-A-Thon Fundraiser!

Raise money and awareness for local shelter pets.

APPROX. TIME

Multi-day

PLANNING NEEDED

Advanced

GRADE LEVEL

Grades 3 – 12

BEST FOR

Groups or Whole Class
Scouts, cubs**ANIMALS HELPED** — All shelter pets at your local shelter or rescue

Purpose

Plan and host a Walk-A-Thon that brings students and the community together to raise funds and awareness for a local animal shelter or rescue.

**WALK-A-THON**

Materials List

- ☐ **Planning checklist or to-do list**
- ☐ **Walk-A-Thon Pledge Sheet (included) or other shelter/school-approved fundraising materials**
- ☐ **Poster board, butcher paper, or construction paper and markers for signs**
- ☐ **Materials for tracking laps or distance (*if using per-lap or per-mile pledges*)**
- ☐ **Water for participants, as appropriate for your event**
- ☐ **Optional: T-shirts, decorations, or other event supplies**



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Contact the animal shelter or rescue you plan to support and get approval from your school or organization before beginning. Ask the shelter how they prefer donations to be collected and whether they have fundraising guidelines, an online donation page, or requirements for using their name, logo, or animal photos.

Check your school or organization's rules for fundraising, collecting money, event locations, permission forms, and adult supervision.

Teacher Tip: Fundraising doesn't have to be complicated! Your shelter may have a donation page or QR code that participants can share with sponsors. You can also use the included Paws Up Projects Pledge Sheet if traditional pledges work for your event and are approved by your school or organization.

Instructions

1. Choose Your Shelter or Rescue

- ☐ Choose the local animal shelter or rescue your Walk-A-Thon will support.
- ☐ Ask the organization how funds raised through your event can help.
- ☐ Optional: Set a fundraising goal to give participants a fun target to work toward.

Teacher Tip: Give students a voice in choosing the shelter or setting the fundraising goal. It's a simple way to build student ownership of the project.

2. Name Your Walk-A-Thon

Give your fundraiser a fun, memorable name! Invite students to brainstorm a name that connects walking with helping shelter pets.

Need some inspiration? Try combining words like:

PAWS • WALK • WAG • STEP • STRIDE • TAIL • RESCUE • SHELTER • PETS

For example: Paws in Motion • Walk for Paws • Steps for Shelter Pets • Wag & Walk

You can also add a short tagline that tells people why you're walking, such as

Every Step Helps Shelter Pets!

Teacher Tip: Let students brainstorm names individually or in small groups, then vote on a favorite.

3. Plan Your Event

- ☐ Choose a **date and time** for your Walk-A-Thon.
- ☐ Choose a **safe, approved location and walking route**, such as a school track, playground, field, or other designated area.
- ☐ Decide **how long participants will walk** or how many laps they may complete.
- ☐ Decide **how laps or distance will be tracked**, if needed.
- ☐ Determine how many **adult volunteers or helpers** you'll need and assign responsibilities.
- ☐ Plan for **check-in, water, rest areas, and first aid**, as appropriate for your event.
- ☐ Make a **weather or backup plan** in case the event can't take place as scheduled.

Teacher Tip: Keep it simple! A Walk-A-Thon doesn't need to be a large community event. A class or grade level can walk laps around a school track or other approved area and still make a big difference.

4. Decide How You'll Raise Funds

Work with your school or organization and the shelter or rescue to choose **one or more approved fundraising methods** for your event.

- **Flat donations:** Sponsors give a set amount, no matter how far the participant walks.
- **Pledges per lap or mile:** Sponsors pledge an amount based on the distance the participant completes.
- **Online donations:** Share the shelter's approved donation page or QR code, if available.
- ☐ Decide how donations will be **collected and submitted** according to your school or organization's guidelines.

Teacher Tip: Flat donations or a shelter's online donation page are often the simplest options. If you use traditional pledges, the Paws Up Projects Walk-A-Thon Pledge Sheet is included to help participants track sponsors and pledges.

5. Promote Your Walk-A-Thon

- ☐ Create signs, posters, announcements, or digital messages to tell people about your Walk-A-Thon.
- ☐ Be sure to include the **event name, date, time, location, and the shelter or rescue you're supporting.**
- ☐ Explain the purpose of the Walk-A-Thon is to raise funds and awareness for shelter pets.
- ☐ Tell participants how they can sign up and how sponsors can donate or make pledges.
- ☐ Share information through **school-approved** newsletters, announcements, websites, social media, or other communication channels.

Teacher Tip: Let students help create posters, announcements, and other promotional materials. **A customizable Family & Participant Letter Template is included at the end of these instructions.**

6. Hold Your Walk-A-Thon

- ☐ Set up the **check-in area, walking route, water station, and rest areas** before participants arrive.
- ☐ Review the **route, event rules, and safety expectations** with everyone before the walk begins.
- ☐ Make sure **adult volunteers are in their assigned locations** and participants know where to go if they need help.
- ☐ Track **laps or distance**, if your fundraising method requires it.
- ☐ Encourage participants along the way and **celebrate every lap and every step!**
- ☐ Take photos during the event, if permitted by your school or organization.

Teacher Tip: Give students event-day jobs such as checking in walkers, marking laps, holding signs, helping at water stations, or cheering along the route.

7. Wrap Up & Celebrate

- ☐ Collect any remaining pledges or donations according to your school or organization's guidelines.
- ☐ Submit the funds to the shelter or rescue using the method you arranged with them.
- ☐ **Thank the participants, sponsors, volunteers, and others who helped make the event possible.**
- ☐ Share the **amount raised** and celebrate what your group accomplished for shelter pets.

Teacher Tip: Involve students in announcing the donation total so they can see the impact of their work.

Standards Connections

Framework	Connection
Common Core ELA	Speaking & Listening — Students collaborate to plan the Walk-A-Thon, communicate event information, and explain the purpose of the fundraiser to others. Writing — Students may create signs, announcements, flyers, or digital messages to promote the event and communicate information clearly. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1, SL.4.1, SL.5.1, SL.6.1, SL.7.1, SL.8.1, SL.9-10.1, SL.11-12.1; W.3.2, W.4.2, W.5.2, W.6.2, W.7.2, W.8.2, W.9-10.2, W.11-12.2)
Common Core Math	Applied Math — Students may set a fundraising goal, calculate donations or pledges, track laps or distance, and compare the amount raised with their goal. Math connections will vary depending on the fundraising method and how the event is organized.
SEL Competencies	Social Awareness — Students recognize the needs of shelter animals and understand how fundraising can support their care. Responsible Decision-Making — Students help plan a safe, organized fundraiser while considering rules, responsibilities, and the needs of others. Relationship Skills — Students collaborate to plan, promote, and carry out the Walk-A-Thon while sharing responsibilities and working toward a common goal.
Service Learning	Community need identified (<i>funding and support for local shelter animals</i>); students plan and carry out a Walk-A-Thon fundraiser that engages others in supporting a local animal shelter or rescue while seeing how their collective efforts can make a real-world difference.

Project Photos

Fundraiser Example	Example Thank You Flyer for Participants
	

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. How did your Walk-A-Thon help the animal shelter or rescue you chose to support? Why is community support important for shelters and the animals in their care?
2. What role did you play in planning or carrying out the Walk-A-Thon? How did working together help make the event successful?
3. Besides the money raised, what other impact did your Walk-A-Thon have? Think about awareness, community involvement, and helping others learn about shelter pets.

Extension Ideas

- **Explore Where the Money Goes:** Research or ask the shelter how donations help animals in its care. Create a poster, infographic, or presentation showing examples such as food, medical care, enrichment, or other shelter needs.
- **Put the Numbers to Work:** Use your Walk-A-Thon results to calculate totals, compare the amount raised with your fundraising goal, or create graphs showing laps, distance, pledges, or donations.
- **Create a Thank-You Campaign:** Write thank-you notes, create a class message, or design a digital thank-you for participants, sponsors, volunteers, and others who supported the Walk-A-Thon.
- **Share Your Project:** Document your Walk-A-Thon with approved photos and share the results with your school or community. If sharing on social media, tag **@pawsupprojects** and your local shelter or rescue.

Did you do this project?

We'd love for you — or an adult — to post your project on Paws Up Projects to inspire others.

pawsupprojects.org/post-your-project



Projects for Kids Who Love Animals
pawsupprojects.org

Family & Participant Letter Template

Copy and customize this message for your school, classroom, Scout troop, or youth group.

Dear Families and Participants,

We're excited to host **[Walk-A-Thon Name]**, a Walk-A-Thon fundraiser benefiting **[Shelter/Rescue Name]**!

Participants will walk **[laps/miles/for ___ minutes]** to raise funds and awareness for local shelter pets. We hope you'll join us in making this event a success!

EVENT DETAILS

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Who Can Participate: _____

What to Bring/Wear: _____

Water **[will / will not]** be provided.

[Add any additional event-day information, such as check-in instructions, appropriate footwear, weather information, or what participants should bring.]

HOW FUNDRAISING WORKS

We will be raising funds through **[flat donations / pledges per lap or mile / online donations]**.

How to participate in fundraising:

[Insert instructions, donation link, QR code, or other information.]

If using pledges based on laps or distance, participants' **[laps/miles]** will be recorded at the Walk-A-Thon so final pledge amounts can be determined.

TURNING IN DONATIONS

[Explain how and where donations should be submitted, including who checks should be payable to, if applicable.]

Donation/Pledge Deadline: _____

Please follow the fundraising and donation instructions above rather than sending money directly to the shelter unless instructed to do so.

QUESTIONS OR INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

Contact: _____

Thank you for supporting our Walk-A-Thon and helping us make a difference for shelter pets in our community!



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WALK-A-THON PLEDGE SHEET

Participant Name: _____

Walk-A-Thon: _____

Supporting: _____

Animal shelter or rescue

Event Date: _____

Help Me Support Shelter Pets!

I'm participating in a Walk-A-Thon to raise funds for a local animal shelter or rescue. Thank you for supporting my walk and helping shelter pets!

Sponsors may choose either a flat donation or a pledge for each lap/mile completed.

Please use only one pledge option per sponsor.

Sponsor Name	Flat Donation	Pledge Per Lap/Mile	Amount Due	Paid
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	
	\$	\$	\$	

Total Laps/Miles Completed: _____

Total Amount Raised: \$ _____

Please return this pledge sheet and donations according to the instructions provided by your school or organization.