

Step Big Walk for Parkinson's: Team Townsend

How do I start a team and reach my fundraising goals? Fundraising can be intimidating and overwhelming and finding ways to be creative and fun can prove to be a challenge. We strive to make the Step Big Walk for Parkinson's not just a fundraiser, but an event where we can gather together as family, friends and coworkers to support those affected by the disease.

At the SD Parkinson's Foundation we want to help you build your team and reach your fundraising goals so we asked Ray Townsend, one of our top fundraisers, to offer some insight and advice on how he has become so successful throughout the past few years. Here's what Ray had to say...

How do you share your story & the importance of the Parkinson Foundation with others?

Email tends to be my communication method of choice (*that's the IT nerd thing coming through*).

In terms of the walk, I try to send multiple emails prior to the walk - to provide multiple opportunities to say yes! I also send at least one, usually two, follow-up emails after the walk. I try to keep all of them short and to the point (*people are busy*).

I send the first email inviting them to join Team Townsend about six weeks before the event. I thank them for their past financial and/or moral support. I include information about the walk and remind people that 100% of their donation is used to help local SD families impacted by Parkinson's. I also usually include some brief but interesting facts about Parkinson's. And, since these are all people I have a personal connection with, I will include an update of my status if the email isn't getting too long. I'll then send a reminder email about two weeks before the event and a final reminder a few days before the event.

About a week or two after the event I send a thank you to all donors and walkers. In my opinion this email is the most important one! There are a lot of worthy causes in need of financial support and volunteer help to pick from. The fact that these folks chose to join Team Townsend and support the SD Parkinson Foundation means a lot to me. I include a reminder to those that have company matching to please do what is required to make the match happen.



Who do you recruit for your team?

I stick to people I have a personal connection with. Mostly that's family, friends, and former coworkers.

How do you set your team fundraising goal?

I simply look at what we raised last year, adjust it for inflation and add a small percentage.

What materials do you provide your team for fundraising?

Nothing, other than keeping them informed. Last year I did offer that if we met our goal my wife would make cookies for all Team Townsend members that came to the walk. (*It would have been a better move if I'd asked her first, but when she found out about it she just smiled and shook her head and then came through with the goods!*)

What is your favorite part about the walk?

Making new connections...connections with team members; connections with other individuals impacted by Parkinson's disease; connections to information on treatment and support options; connections with care providers such as Avera Therapy & Rock Steady Boxing and the SD Parkinson Foundation.

