

CASE STUDY 5 - Walks

Money Makers for Non-Profit Organizations

Start your own Walk

AIDS Coalition of Southern NJ

Starting your own walk can inspire your supporters and raise money. The AIDS Coalition was making preparations to round up volunteers and walkers for the AIDS WALK Philadelphia. This was an annual event that required a herculean effort to pull off. However, when we evaluated the return on our collective time invested, we revealed that our efforts were not very profitable.

Our supporters had been walking in the Philadelphia Walk for years, and they were looking forward to participating. Since we had collectively decided that participating in the Philadelphia Walk would cost too much and not offer enough benefits to our clients, we had three choices: Participate in the Philadelphia AIDS Walk even though it was not profitable, Cancel our walk participation, which would disappoint our supporters and cause them to question our commitment, or start our own walk. I decided to choose option number three. This was not the easiest option, but I knew that it would keep the funds raised going directly to our clients, and it would establish an ongoing source of funding.

So I created and branded AIDS Walk South Jersey: I acquired a corporate sponsor who donated \$5,000 and was happy to participate because it showed that they supported the community. Next, I solicited in-kind gifts from local businesses sympathetic to our cause.

With the base funding in place, I coordinated volunteers, and motivated walkers to come to Cooper River Park, a local park that had a walking track encircling water. I designed a logo, printed flyers and had buttons made. Then, I hired the vendors and set up the special events, (Car Smash, Motorcycle Rides, Face Painting, a Juggler, etc.).

The expenses were negligible considering that we raised over \$30,000, and established an ongoing source of income for the organization