

H2O for Life Walk for Water



Introduction

Walking for Water is an annual sponsor event which takes place around World Water Day (22 March). **Walks may be done anytime of the year. Any time you can organize a Walk will make a difference!** Students of all ages walk 6 kilometers with 6 liters of water on their back, as many women and children in the developing world do on a daily basis. The money raised goes to water projects in developing countries. The walk is also used for educational purposes: drinking water and sanitation are given extra attention in class – including the project to be sponsored – both by the teaching staff and guest speakers. (Materials will be provided by **H2O for Life** upon request)

H2O for Life encourages your school to challenge students THIS YEAR, 2010, to Walk for Water around World Water Day! Remember, any size group may participate. Numbers will grow year by year!

Background information on the walk

Walking for Water is a fundraising and awareness-raising concept where students, family members and community members walk 6 kilometers, carrying 6 liters of water in a backpack. That's just under 4 miles, and is the average distance that women and girls in developing countries must walk every day, typically carrying 20 liters of water. **H2O for Life is encouraging students and families of ALL ages to participate in the Walk.**

Funds are raised by students themselves, mainly as donations from friends and family. It's a perfect community initiative to build excitement and engage our younger generation to help tackle the global water crisis. The money is used to finance water projects in developing countries. As a preparation for the walk, teachers use materials provided by **H2O for Life** and other sources to educate the children about the importance of clean water and adequate sanitation in developing countries.

In the Netherlands, (the originators of this walk activity) during their March 2009 series of walks, one million Euro was raised for international water development projects, with low organizational costs. Walking for Water was launched eight years ago, and has exceeded expectations every year. Starting with a few hundred students walking at the first event, 2009 saw 18,000 children from 380 schools walk for water. In 2010, 30,000 children from 640 Dutch schools are expected to participate.

Aqua for All has now opened up Walking for Water, as a concept that can be replicated and improved upon by any organization around the world that wants to host a Walking for Water event. Groups such as NGOs, municipalities, churches or Rotary Clubs can function as a 'Support Centers', and organize events for one or more schools. Just as exciting, the money raised can now be used to fund **H2O for Life** projects for schools in need around the world. Help us promote "**H2O for Life Walk for Water**" this year!

A quote from Sjef Ernes, director of Aqua for All, Netherlands:

"I hope you see the simplicity and power of Walking for Water, and myself and my team look forward to working with all of you as we bring the global water crisis to life amongst children, their families and their friends."

(The document for the Walk for Water has been adapted by **H2O for Life** with thanks to *Aqua For All* for their previous work to implement the Walk for Water.) Please join us in this fantastic opportunity for students to Make a Difference in the world)

10 students, 100 students, 1000 students- All participants make a difference!

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The five basic principles of Walking for Water (modified version for H2O for Life)

Who?

Walking for Water is a sponsored walk for schools. The entire school can be involved in the educational aspects of drinking water and sanitation, encouraging all students to participate; or individual groups can gather friends and organize a walk on a smaller scale. All groups are encouraged to join us!

What?

The students walk 6 kilometers with 6 liters of water in a backpack - as many children in developing countries do every day. Students ask their family, friends and neighbors to sponsor their walk.

When?

Walking for Water takes place every year in the week of World Water Day (22 March).

For what?

Each school has its own specific drinking water and/or sanitation project provided by **H2O for Life**, or may choose to donate funds to an **H2O for Life** designated school in need. All projects target the poorest of the poor in rural or peri-urban (unplanned urban) areas in the developing world.

Why?

Walking for Water has two goals:

- to raise awareness
- to raise funds.

The goal of the WALK is to raise awareness about the worldwide problems of drinking water and sanitation. **H2O for Life** will supply hand-outs and educational materials to help teachers present the issues in their schools. Contact us at: www.h2oforlifeschools.org or info@h2oforlifeschools.org

It is an easy concept. Choose a water project for a school in need from our list on the **H2O for Life** website, and raise awareness and funds to support the project!

www.h2oforlifeschools.org

Questions? Contact H2O for Life

info@h2oforlifeschools.org or 651-756-7577

Preparation

The Walk

Doing a 6 km walk with 6 liters of water may sound simple enough... but it actually takes quite a lot of preparation.

The Route

It is advisable to map out the route well beforehand. To make sure it measures 6 km, you could measure it on a map or cycle the route with a bicycle computer or GPS receiver. We also recommend you walk the route yourself to see what it feels like.

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***At Schools, a track or field area often works well for a walk, and is easy to organize and monitor. It is also an easy gathering place for a group.**

Tips

If you do not choose to use the school grounds:

- Do not make the walk too hard (inclines, unpaved roads).
- Avoid traffic, busy crossings and major roads.
- We advise a circular route (the start will become the finish) and a nice break halfway, if possible offering a soft drink and/or snack. Make sure that there are volunteers to man these areas. .
- Children will enjoy the walk more if you make it as varied as possible.
- Include an area with lots of people. The walk will get more local attention this way and people will be able to see what the children have to do for the money they collected. Successful areas to pass through have included: care homes, parks, shopping streets, government offices and buildings of the sponsors.
- If possible, visit a water-related point of interest along the way.
- Give the start and finish of the walk a purpose. The start is the place where water is handed out (watersupply point – the “source”). The finish is where the water is collected or returned to nature (back to the pond, ditch, flower beds, trees, water barrel, etc). Make sure the start and finish are easily recognizable:
- Make a good map and description of the route so it is clear for everyone exactly where it is. If possible, mark the route with arrows or other signage.
- Permits: The local authority will need to be notified of the event. The walks often require a permit, but sometimes all that is needed is to inform the authorities. Ask well in advance what is needed in your particular area.

Volunteers:

Start early with recruiting volunteers – perhaps amongst the school staff or parents. Volunteers are vital for a trouble free walk:

Recruiting Donations:

Information for Participants:

The student’s achievement to be sponsored is clear: walk 6 km with 6 litres of water!

Recruiting sponsors can be done in many ways. The most obvious is to ask parents, other family members, neighbors and friends for money

Please note: the students fundraising is a mandatory part of the event.

When the Netherlands organizes the walks, the assumption is that each child raises an average of € 30. Your school can set a target goal for students depending on your unique school dynamics.

Tips for schools:

- Start two weeks before the walk with recruiting sponsors, preferably introductory materials have been presented to students about the water crisis. The students are motivated and know why they are collecting money.
- Tell the students the best time to catch potential sponsors at home is during the evening meal.
- Practice with the students what they should say – a good opening sentence is important.
- Let the students take care of handling the money themselves. The children will almost certainly achieve their goal. It also means the children do not have to go back to each sponsor after the walk.

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- It helps the students if the teacher gives them a target amount. In the Netherlands, \$25.00 per child was more than realistic. This is also close to the cost of a combined drinking water and sanitation installation for one world citizen.

The day of the walk (on or around 22 March)

6 liters of water

Four plastic soft drink bottles of 1.5 liters each, filled with tap water, make up 6 liters in total. This is the easiest way to measure 6 liters of water and put it into backpacks. (back-packs are the easiest way for students to transport the water. (students should not be encouraged to carry the water on their heads.) Care should be taken to ensure water is gathered from a sustainable source, especially if the walk is in a region prone to water shortages, and disposed of similarly. Note: it takes a long time to fill 4 bottles of water- have students fill and supply their own water bottles for the event) It makes sense to do it the day before – but unless the bottles are then stored appropriately, the water can no longer be consumed during the walk.

Miscellaneous

Total sum raised

The students should submit their sponsor forms the day before the walk if possible, otherwise be sure to have a collection center at the beginning of the walk.

Insurance

If something happens to the students or teacher during the walk, this should - in principle - be covered by their private insurance rather than the school's insurance. The volunteers should also be covered by their own insurance, both with regard to any injuries they may sustain and their responsibilities during the walk. However, depending on the jurisdiction, you may wish to take independent legal advice on this matter.

Donating funds that are raised: Once your school or group has completed the [Walk for Water](#) please send the donation to:

H2O for Life
5527 Hugo Road
White Bear Lake, MN 55110

Please make checks payable to “H2O for Life” and designate the name of your school and the school that you are funding in a developing country, or designate “H2O for Life School in Need”.

Thank you for your participation, and Enjoy the Walk!

For further information please contact:

H2O for Life
info@h2oforliveschools.org or
651-756-7577

(H2O for Life is a 501c3 non-profit organization)

