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As walking has become more common, walking organizations have grown in number and popularity. Each organization has expanded organically in its own unique way. Walkers seek out interesting experiences and often share a devotion to one or more organizations and events. But, there remains a general public lack of awareness of events and walking organizations. Unfortunately, with the changing nature of the press and online communications, the ability to spread the word is mostly limited to word of mouth and the whims of social networks.

Many walkers in our organizations have experienced a variety of different walking events. There are interesting educational events, physical challenges, and events located in near and far away locations. Events can be large or small-scale, charity oriented or simply friendly and social. There is already a tradition for community walks in many parts of the world. Yet, this is still not apparent in the U.S.

However, there is power in numbers. Increasing the numbers of members and participants can help create awareness of the benefits of walking. Larger events can attract even more walking participants, funding and opportunities. Ultimately, we believe walking can be a valuable public interactive sport that can benefit a broad population in numerous ways. Walking itself is worthy of funding by individuals and organizations interested in benefitting the general public as well as targeting underserved populations.

We began a dialog between walking groups to discover ways we can collectively help elevate the activity of walking. Our initial takeaway is that we can further our goal of making walking a popular activity by working together in the following ways:

### **United Walking Events**

We propose designating certain walking events to be designated as United Walking events with no single organization owning them. The objective would be to encourage a large-scale crowd and provide a venue where each organization can promote what they do.

### **United Walking Events Calendar**

We propose hosting a comprehensive walking event database that would allow any United Walking organization, large or small, to offer event information to the public. This would provide a single free calendar of information accessible on computer, tablet or smartphone. Events would link out to the hosting organization for further details and registration.

### **United Walking Programs**

Special programs can be developed for educating and training including advice on places to walk, equipment reviews, physical therapy, walking abroad, promoting children's and senior programs and how to create walking events and tours.

### **Become a United Walker**

We will provide information on our website as to how you and your organization can become a United Walker. You may choose to join one of our partner walking organizations or sign up to receive our regular email newsletters to keep up to date on our progress. Let's walk together!