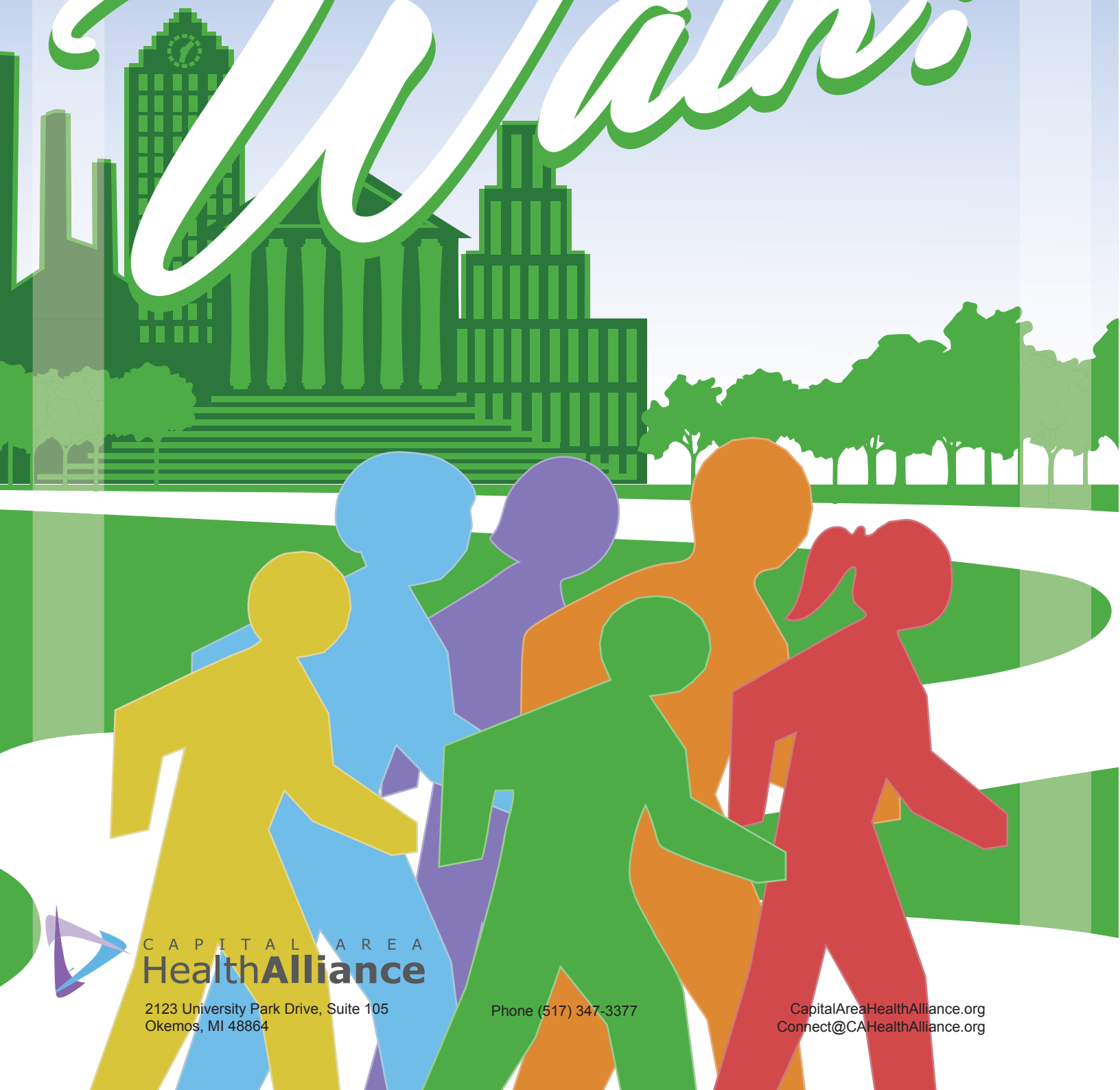


Let's

Walk!



CAPITAL AREA
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Let's Walk!

Welcome and congratulations on starting a walking group!









The Capital Area Health Alliance (CAHA) is excited to assist you on the journey of starting a walking group. Walking groups benefit both individual participants and the community at large by motivating and encouraging others to walk, leading to a healthier community.

The health and success of your walking group is important to us. We would like your help in making this pilot toolkit as useful as possible. Tell us what you like, what you used and what you would change. Register your walking group with CAHA, and we will connect you with other walking group leaders, provide support and give you access to a CAHA Walking Group Facebook page, where you can share success stories and pictures. It will also give CAHA the feedback we need to improve the toolkit for future use.

The United States Surgeon General has released a Call to Action to Step It Up! and be more physically active through walking. Research has shown that social support can be an important influence on an individual's overall health and well-being. Tapping into the social support provided through a walking group can be very beneficial toward sustaining walking efforts. Walking with a group provides accountability, unity and bonding between members.

Walking is easy to begin and sustain. Everyone knows how to do it, and the only equipment you need is a pair of walking shoes. A good goal to reach is to walk for 30 minutes five days a week. Strive to increase your minutes weekly; every step helps.

Walking can help you lose weight, but did you know that walking also...

-  Boosts creativity
-  Manages stress
-  Builds energy
-  Lifts your mood
-  Improves fitness
-  Promotes better sleep
-  Increases self-confidence
-  Is good for your bones

The benefits of walking are endless, and most of all, **walking feels good and is fun!**

Let's Walk!

Walking Group Toolkit

Register with CAHA. Use the Walking Group Toolkit Registration form included in the packet. You can e-mail your registration to CAHA at connect@cahealthalliance.org, or register online at http://capitalareahealthalliance.org/walking_group_toolkit.php

Organize Your Group.

Who:

- ☐ Co-Workers – Are there people at your workplace that are already walking? They could be the start of the walking group.
- ☐ Friends – Do you have a group of friends you see on a regular basis? They may be interested in joining a walking group. What about family members?
- ☐ Neighbors – Your neighborhood or neighborhood organization is a great place to start a group, and it is close to home.
- ☐ Existing Group – Is there an informal walking group that already exists that can be built upon?

Where: Your walk could be more successful if you use a location that is already part of the walkers' routine. Maybe it is walking in your neighborhood or a path near your workplace, walking with other parents from your kid's school or day care, or walking from the senior center, coffee shop or library.

When:

- ☐ Make sure you are realistic about what you can commit to.
- ☐ Set a specific schedule for day, time and frequency.
- ☐ **For best results, meet to walk at least once a week.**

Plan Your Walk. Use the Planning Checklist included in the packet. Plan an alternate indoor walking route for rain, snow or excessive heat and have a system to communicate route changes to participants.

Promote and Recruit.

- ☐ Use the enclosed flyer to spread awareness of the walking group.
- ☐ Distribute the flyer to your friends, co-workers or neighbors.
- ☐ Distribute the flyer along the walking route.
- ☐ Have other group members help distribute the flyer and invite their friends.
- ☐ Check with HR to send an email blast to your office and post flyers in the break room.
- ☐ Use social media to promote your walking group, engage walkers and maintain excitement.

First Meeting.

- ❑ Have everyone introduce themselves. Exchange phone numbers or emails to stay connected.
- ❑ Set motivational goals with your group and encourage individual goals (*see box below*).
- ❑ Set boundaries and expectations.
 - ✚ Do you allow pets on the walk?
 - ✚ Are headphones allowed?
 - ✚ Can anyone just show up to walk?
- ❑ Give the Welcome Kit to each participant, and make sure they fill out and return the Individual Registration and the Prepare for Walking forms to you. The Welcome Kit includes:
 - ✚ Participant Welcome Page
 - ✚ Individual Registration – To be filled out and returned to you
 - ✚ Prepare for Walking Form – To be filled out and returned to you
 - ✚ Walking Journal – Encourage each group participant to keep a personal journal of minutes walked and how they felt about each walk
 - ✚ Walking Tips & Resources

Staying Motivated. Ideas include:

- ❑ Name your walking group.
- ❑ Use the Buddy System. Knowing that you have a buddy that is counting on you to walk with them will help keep you motivated. You can support and encourage your buddy by contacting your buddy if they do not show up to walk.
- ❑ Start healthy conversations on your walk - have different themes to discuss during walks.
- ❑ Take 5 minutes at the beginning of each walk for one or two people to share the benefits they're gaining from walking.
- ❑ Track success and recognize participants' milestone achievements.
- ❑ Set a goal to walk so many minutes within a certain time frame, and if you are successful, have a potluck to celebrate.
- ❑ Walk for a cause.
- ❑ Increase your walking to build up to completing a race.
- ❑ Mission walk – add a task to your walk such as collecting cans for charity or cleaning up litter.
- ❑ Post success on social media.

Walking Group Registration Form

(Return to CAHA at connect@cahealthalliance.org or sign up online at http://capitalareahealthalliance.org/walking_group_toolkit.php)

The Capital Area Health Alliance (CAHA) is excited to assist you on the journey of starting a walking group. It is our goal that the participants in your walking group will increase their knowledge about the benefits of walking, increase the number of minutes they're walking each week as well as increase their confidence in their ability to be physically active. Starting a walking group not only benefits the individual participants of your group but also the community at large by motivating and encouraging others to walk, leading to a healthier community. Registering your walking group with CAHA will provide a forum to connect with and learn from other walking group leaders, receive technical assistance from CAHA and have access to a CAHA Walking Group Facebook page.

Leader Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Walking Group Name: _____

Location of Walk: _____

Is this a newly established walking group? _____

How did you hear about the toolkit? _____

Measuring Success: After registering with CAHA and beginning your walking group, CAHA would appreciate your feedback. Please fill out and return the following items to CAHA after three months of walking, we will send a reminder.

- ☐ Individual Registration Form for each walker in your group (included in packet or submit online)
- ☐ Post-Survey - for each walker in your group (you will receive this three months after registering)
- ☐ Leader Feedback Survey (you will receive this three months after registering)
- ☐ Walk at least once a week for three months

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Planning Checklist

Name of Walk:

Day:

Start & Finish Point:

Start Time:

Walk Duration:

Approximate Length of Walk:

Date Beginning:

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- ☐ Adequate parking
- ☐ Access to public transportation
- ☐ Availability of public restrooms and drinking fountains
- ☐ Shade and seating
- ☐ Check the walk for obstacles (e.g., uneven paths, tree roots, overhanging bushes/trees, busy roads, slippery surfaces)
- ☐ Adequate lighting (e.g., streetlights)
- ☐ Pre-walk the route; time the walk and pace; consider hills
- ☐ Do you have a mobile phone in case of emergency?
- ☐ Can the route accommodate different walking abilities? Can they turn around at a shorter point? Are there rest spots?
- ☐ How will you communicate any route or schedule change?

Walking Group Leader Attendance Form

[illegible]

Group Goal #3 _____

Group Goal #4 _____

Group Goal Examples: come each week, bring a friend, increase total minutes walked by group each week, goal of number of participants

Walking Group Leader Attendance Form

[illegible]

Group Goal #3

Group Goal #4 _____

Group Goal Examples: come each week, bring a friend, increase total minutes walked by group each week, goal of number of participants

Walking Group

Join us in making new friends,
feeling better and building energy!

Location:

Contact:

Day:

Time:

*Let's
Walk!*

For information about other walking groups contact
the Capital Area Health Alliance
at (517) 347-3377 or connect@cahealthalliance.org

