

STEPtember Toolkit

CPARF — Cerebral Palsy Alliance Research Foundation

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1. Welcome & About STEPtember

Welcome!

Hello Friend!

Thank you for joining STEPtember to support CPARF. By taking part, you're helping to create a world that people with disabilities not only deserve but are part of shaping.

Your decision to fundraise supports vital research and technology innovation that opens doors and expands opportunities. Together, we're working toward a future where accessibility and inclusion are the standard, not the exception.

We're so grateful to be on this journey with you. Thank you for stepping up and showing what's possible when we move forward together.

With gratitude,

Chris Olver

Executive Director

Cerebral Palsy Alliance Research Foundation

About STEPtember

Every September, thousands of people from over 85 countries step up for people with disabilities by taking on a challenge to step, move, play, ride, or stretch every day. This is a feel-good fundraiser that promotes physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

About CPARF

CPARF funds scientific innovation to redefine what's possible for people with disabilities.

2. Donor Outreach Templates

The Ask

Subject: Join Me in Supporting Life-Changing Research & Tech Innovation

Dear [RECIPIENT NAME HERE],

This STEPtember, I'm proud to be part of a global movement that's redefining what's possible for people with disabilities. I've committed to taking 10,000 steps a day for 30 days to raise funds and awareness for CPARF, and I'd love your support!

I'm taking on this challenge because [INSERT PERSONAL REASON HERE — e.g., “Every step forward in research and innovation gives families like mine more answers, more options, and more hope, that's why I'm asking you to give.”]. Every step I take supports innovative research and tech that can help improve the lives of people with disabilities.

More than one billion people worldwide live with a disability. CPARF funds cutting-edge science and technology to improve treatments, mobility, communication, and overall health and well-being.

My goal is to raise [INSERT FUNDRAISING GOAL], and every donation — big or small — gets us closer to a more inclusive, accessible future. Your gift is tax-deductible and directly supports CPARF's life-changing work.

Please consider donating here: [YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE URL]

Thank you so much for your support — it truly means the world.

Warmly,

[YOUR NAME HERE]

P.S. Did you know your gift could be doubled by your employer? You can check through CPARF's Employee Giving Search tool.

The Thank You

Subject: Because of You, I'm One Step Closer

Dear [RECIPIENT NAME HERE],

Thank you so much for supporting my STEPtember challenge! Your generous donation means the world to me and is helping create real change for people with disabilities.

Thanks to you, CPARF can continue funding cutting-edge research and technology that improves mobility, communication, and quality of life and well-being for people with disabilities.

Because of you, every step I take this month carries even more meaning.

Thank you for believing in a more inclusive future — and for being part of the movement to make it happen.

With heartfelt gratitude,

[YOUR NAME HERE]

P.S. Don't forget to check if your gift could be doubled through your employer's matching gift program.

3. Fundraising Page Set Up

Step 1: Create Your Account

- Go to september.us and select “Sign up”
- Choose your registration type
 - *If you have a registration code, you will enter it on the payment page*
- Enter your information & goals
- Include how many years you have participated in STEPtember

Step 2: Personalize Your Page

- Upload your photo
 - *Make sure you own the copyright for this photo*
- Personalize the language for your page

Note: you can continue to update your page throughout the event by logging into your account

Step 3: Join/Create an Organization (Optional)

- Create your own or search for your organization's name to join
- You can have unlimited members and teams in an organization (each team is limited to 4 members)

Step 4: Create a Team (Optional)

- Create your own team of up to 4 people
- You can also do this after your personal setup is complete

Step 5: Spread the Word!

- Share your page on social media
- Email your network — add individual emails or upload a spreadsheet with your contacts to reach even more people

Make Your Page Shine

Story Sharing

Add your story to your welcome message and upload meaningful photos. The “why” behind your campaign is the key to your fundraising success. Let your network know what's driving your support of CPARF's mission. Making it personal will only gain you more support!

Multimedia Sizing

- Profile Photo: 400x400px JPG/PNG, less than 300KB
- Image Header: 2500x400px image, less than 1MB
- Video Header: 2000x800px, running for 10-15 seconds, final video should be compressed to be under 15MB
- Content Image: 800x800px JPG

Donation Tracking

On your dashboard, you can either view recent transactions or go to “My Donations” to see how much you have raised and everyone who has given to your fundraiser. There is even a “thank” button right there to send a note of appreciation to your supporters!

4. Social Media Tips & Tricks

Spread the Word: Support CPARF!

Kick off your STEPtember journey by sharing your “why.” Let your community know you're moving for CPARF to help create a more inclusive and accessible world for people with disabilities. Post your fundraising link, talk about your goals, and invite others to support or join you. Every step — and every share — makes a difference!

Infuse With Your Own Story

Why are YOU participating in STEPtember? For someone you love? For yourself? Let your passion spread to your community!

Engage Your Followers

Interact with followers by thanking supporters, liking comments, and responding to questions. Recognize donors and volunteers in dedicated posts to inspire further contributions!

Create Eye-Catching & Engaging Posts

Engage your audience with high-quality, minimally edited images and videos, and include a clear call to action. Use ALL CAPS to highlight key points. On Instagram, add your fundraising link to your profile. Remind your community that every donation, big or small, brings you closer to your goal!

Image Size Matters

Use 1080x1080 px for most platforms (Instagram, LinkedIn, Threads) and 1200x630 px for Facebook. Aim for a 1:1 aspect ratio.

Consider the Timing

Different social media platforms see peak engagement and impressions at various times during the week. Try testing out different times to post on different platforms to see the results and try to keep a level of consistency.

How Many Times Should You Post?

Aim for 2-5 posts per week, spaced out to avoid overwhelming your followers.

Make Your Content Accessible

Include image descriptions to ensure it can read by screen readers for people who are blind and low vision. Emojis are great for creating eye-catching content but be sure to limit emojis to three per post for readability.

Mix It Up

Use a mix of static photos, videos, and carousel posts. Try lighter, bite-sized content on Instagram and Facebook Stories.

Find Your Voice

Your posts should sound like YOU. Keep it authentic and true to your voice. When you're writing, think about connecting like you would in a real conversation—be personable and engaging. Remember, there's always a human behind the screen.

5. X Marks the Spot: Guide to \$10K

Raising \$10,000 may sound big, but with passion, planning, and persistence, it's absolutely within reach. Use this guide to create a meaningful and impactful fundraising experience during STEPtember.

Host a Community Event

Bring people together for a fun, low-lift gathering like bingo night, trivia, a game night, or a fitness class. These kinds of events build connection, raise awareness, and open the door for donations. Keep it simple and make it meaningful.

Develop an Online Presence

Promote your fundraiser online to reach a broader audience. Use email, spruce up your fundraising page with photos and updates, and post on social media platforms. See the Social Media sections of this toolkit for tips and tricks.

Reach Out to Your Network

Ask your network to do two things:

- Donate to fund research and technology innovation
- Share your fundraiser with their networks to boost awareness and donations

Market to Unique Networks

To boost attendance, reach out to groups interested in supporting disability research and your event's theme. For instance, if it's a sports-themed event, invite local teams to participate.

Create Fundraising Incentives

Encourage participant-led fundraising by offering incentives. For example, reward the top three fundraisers with free t-shirts or give a nice bottle of wine to those who raise over \$250.

Utilize Matching Gifts

Many companies offer matching gifts as an employee benefit, doubling donations made to nonprofits. Donors can use our online Employee Giving Search tool or consult their HR department to find out if their company participates.

Invite Your Office

Challenges are more fun together! Ask your coworkers or HR if your office wants to join STEPtember — it's a great way to build camaraderie and expand your fundraising network through a shared wellness challenge.

Thank Your Donors

Show appreciation to your donors after they donate and at the end of your fundraising campaign.

Be Patient

Don't be discouraged if you don't reach \$10,000 in your first year. Building your network and event takes time, so stay persistent and committed to your goal. You can do it!

6. Reach 10K Steps at Work

Taking 10,000 steps daily is a simple and effective way to boost energy, improve mental clarity, and support long-term health. It can help reduce stress, prevent chronic illness, and boost confidence.

Hello Sunshine

Start your day with a brisk morning walk. Enjoy the sunrise and listen to birdsong for a peaceful beginning to your day.

Use the Stairs

Ditch the elevator when possible — it's a quick and effective way to add steps.

Set Hourly Movement Breaks

Take quick 2–5 minute walks or movement breaks every hour. These short bursts can re-energize you.

Make It Social

Walk with friends or family members. Look for local walking clubs. This will help maintain motivation and build a sense of community.

Rethink Your Commute

Park farther away, get off public transit one stop early, or bike/walk to work.

Incorporate Movement into Daily Activities

Walk while talking on the phone or in meetings. Do household chores that require movement, like gardening or cleaning.

Benefits of Consistent Movement

- Good for your heart
- Promotes better sleep
- Improves your immune system
- Enhances your mood

Promote It Throughout Your Office

Challenges are more fun together! Talk to your work colleagues, or even HR representative, to see if your whole office wants to join in the fun!

7. Keeping the Buzz Alive

Hitting your step goal doesn't have to feel tricky! Follow these tips to help you stay motivated, bring others along for the ride, and hit your goal with pride!

Week-by-Week Buzz Builder

Week 1: Launch Loudly

- Post your “why” on social with a photo and personal story
- Personally message 10–15 friends and family to donate
- Set a mini-goal for the week (like \$250)
- Thank every donor publicly (stories and tags = visibility!)

Week 2: Keep It Fresh

- Share a “progress check” update (use a graphic or video)
- Start a fun challenge (e.g., donate \$25 and I'll do 25 push-ups)
- Ask 3 close friends to share your fundraiser
- Share something personal you've learned or felt so far

Week 3: Go Interactive

- Poll your followers: Should I wear a banana costume if I hit \$1,000?
- Create a “match me” challenge (if I raise \$100 today, I'll match it!)
- Highlight where donations go — show impact, not just goals
- Give donors a shoutout with a custom thank-you or silly reel

Week 4: Finish Strong

- Create urgency — “5 days left!” “We're almost there!”
- Run a flash challenge (most donations in 24 hours = prize from me!)
- Share one final video/story/post of impact
- Thank your donors again — and celebrate your total!

Extra Momentum Tips

- Use visuals – progress bars, team photos, throwbacks, impact stats
- Be repetitive in new ways — repetition helps, but change the format
- Be real and share your story — authenticity matters
- Ask people to share, not just donate — let your friends be your cheerleaders

People want to support something meaningful. Give them that chance, over and over again.