Six Cities Join Blockbuster Virtual Fundraiser “AIDS Walk: Live at Home”

The AIDS Walk program and viewing parties take place Sunday, May 16, and raise funds for those vulnerable to HIV and COVID-19.

April 5, 2021 By Trent Straube

You don’t have to leave your house to participate in what’s sure to be one of the nation’s largest HIV fundraising events ever: “AIDS Walk: Live at Home.” This year, six cities are collaborating on a virtual extravaganza Sunday, May 16, that will raise money for organizations fighting HIV/AIDS.

In addition to the virtual streaming program, in-person viewing parties will take place at New York City’s Central Park Boathouse and San Francisco’s National AIDS Memorial Grove in Golden Gate Park. But wherever you’re located, you can register and donate at AIDSWalk.net. Last year’s event received a POZ Award 2020 for Best Virtual Fundraiser. You won’t want to miss this year’s blockbuster.

We are not just another socially distant walk.

Walk to stand against the racism, sexism, and stigma that deny equitable access to healthcare.

Walk to protect the health & well-being of those most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and COVID.#WalkItOut with us: https://t.co/0jmUOEruCb pic.twitter.com/c2iXbpuxDX

— AIDS Walk New York (@aidswalkny) March 24, 2021

Below are the six collaborating cities and the primary beneficiary of funds raised in each city:

- Austin—Vivent Health
- Milwaukee—Vivent Health
- New York City—GMHC
- New Orleans—CrescentCare
- San Francisco—AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation
- Seattle—Lifelong

As the AIDS Walk campaign points out, the event does more than raise HIV funds. It is advocacy in action, a chance to fight LGBTQ discrimination, racism, stigma and other issues that intersect with the HIV epidemic. The event promotes health equity and helps communities at risk not just of HIV but also of COVID-19.

Since the 1980s, cities across the nation have traditionally held their own independent AIDS Walk events to raise HIV awareness and funds for local AIDS service organizations. Last year, the COVID-19 pandemic forced organizers to improvise, as it was no longer safe to hold in-person events. That's when New York City and San Francisco joined forces for a star-studded virtual fundraiser broadcast in July that set the stage for this year's expanded event. (For more about that spectacular and to watch the hourlong show, click "UPDATE: Don't Miss the Largest Single-Day HIV Fundraising Event Ever!")

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“‘AIDS Walk: Live at Home’ will reflect the strength and individual character of all six landmark events and the communities that embrace them year after year,” from Kelsey Louie, CEO of GMHC; Isaac Rodriguez of the AIDS Walk San Francisco Foundation; and Craig R. Miller, founder of the AIDS Walks in New York City and San Francisco, among other cities.

“In Washington state and around the country, we continue to see Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities disproportionately impacted by new HIV cases,” said Claire Neal, the CEO of Lifelong in Seattle, in the press release. “We are grateful for the nearly four decades of support from our community to deliver comprehensive care for our neighbors living with HIV and other serious illnesses and are excited to work hand in hand with like-minded organizations throughout the nation to spread awareness that racism remains a public health crisis for so many.”

“This is a brilliant opportunity for us to participate in a wide-scale effort that brings attention to the HIV crisis that still looms in this country,” added Noel Twilbeck, CEO of CrescentCare in New Orleans. “Together, our voices will be heard as one. With medical advances, access to high-quality health care, prevention education and community outreach, HIV eradication is within our grasp. It is up to each of us not to lose sight that we can and must end the HIV epidemic.”

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Last year, Bette Midler, Gloria Estefan, Betty Who and Katharine McPhee performed in the virtual event, which also featured appearances by Laura Linney, Alan Cumming, the hosts of Queer Eye, RuPaul's Drag Race queens (including Jackie Cox, Latrice Royale and judge Ross Mathews) and many others. This year's lineup hasn't been announced yet, but the live segments and recorded messages will surely enthrall and inspire.

"AIDS Walk: Live at Home" will stream Sunday, May 16, starting at 1 p.m. ET, noon CT and 10 a.m. PT on AIDSWalk.net, CBSN and ABC7/KGO-TV in San Francisco.

Since AIDS Walk New York started 35 years ago, it has raised nearly $155 million. For more information about that event and those in the five other cities, including how to register and donate, visit AIDSWalk.net. There is no registration fee. To find an AIDS Walk near you, plus other HIV-related events, check out the POZ Calendar.

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