

LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGNS

STATISTICS HAVE SHOWN THAT PEOPLE USING “**LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGNS**” TO RAISE MONEY FOR THE HYDROCEPHALUS ASSOCIATION HAVE A MUCH HIGHER DOLLAR AVERAGE RAISED THAN PEOPLE USING OTHER METHODS OF RAISING MONEY. **WE ENCOURAGE EVERYONE PARTICIPATING IN A DIY EVENT TO TRY A LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN AS WELL AS RAISING MONEY “IN PERSON”**, FOR THE BEST OF BOTH METHODS. LETTERS MAY BE SENT VIA U.S. POSTAL SERVICE, VIA EMAIL OR BOTH.

(IF SENDING A HARD COPY LETTER, ENCLOSING A SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE WILL INCREASE YOUR RESPONSE RATE.)

LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGNS ALSO HAVE ANOTHER, VERY IMPORTANT, PURPOSE – IN ADDITION TO ASKING FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO SUPPORT YOUR DIY EVENT, THEY HELP INCREASE **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS** ABOUT HYDROCEPHALUS AND ITS CHALLENGES – A VERY IMPORTANT GOAL IN MAXIMIZING HA’S POTENTIAL. NEED ASSISTANCE OR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CONDUCTING A LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN? PLEASE CONTACT THE HA OFFICE –DIY@HYDROASSOC.ORG

RAISING MONEY WITH A LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

Follow these simple steps to create your own letter writing campaign and reach your fundraising goal.

MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER FIRST!

1. WRITE THE LETTER

Your own letter comes from **your heart**. As one parent writes, “*Someone’s going to ask you to donate to something. It might as well be me. I can think of NO BETTER CAUSE! Please, make the Hydrocephalus Association **your cause to support.***” Tell **your family’s story** – how hydrocephalus has impacted not only the patient, but **every member of the family**. (Sample letters are below.)

2. MAKE COPIES OF YOUR LETTER (If using Postal Service for delivery)

- Photocopies of your letter are totally acceptable.
- Sign each letter individually; perhaps with a personal closing, “Thanking you in advance for your support”. Make sure to leave the signature block blank (do not use an electronic signature).
- Print copies of the HA Fact Sheet included in this document to send with the letter.
- **Enclose a self-addressed envelope for their reply** (*stamped, if possible*).

3. MAIL AND/OR E-MAIL THE LETTER

Mail and/or Email the letter to:

- Family and extended family
- Friends and neighbors
- Co-workers and acquaintances
- Business associates and vendors (go through your Rolodex and business card file)
- Clubs, organizations and classes to which you or your family members belong



If you need help preparing your mailing, organize a letter addressing party. Pull the entire family together to sign, stuff, stamp and address your envelopes – even the kids can help! You'll be surprised what people will do for free food.

Mail or email your letters, **ideally eight weeks** before the DIY event. But if you're running late don't despair, there's still time – you have until 4 weeks after the event to finish collecting money.

4. **COLLECT YOUR DONATIONS**

Nothing is quite as exciting as receiving your mail or checking your DIY fundraising webpage and seeing donations begin to arrive! You can expect to raise approximately \$600 - \$800 with a letter writing campaign. Some families have raised \$20,000 or more!



5. **Attend the DIY event benefiting Hydrocephalus!**

Have fun! Join your family, friends and others who are working to make a difference!

6. **THANK YOU NOTES**

Let each one of your donors know how much you appreciate their support. Use this occasion to announce how much your DIY event raised and how they helped make it happen.

Questions? Need more help? Contact the Hydrocephalus Association at:

4340 East West Highway · Suite 905
Bethesda, MD · 20814
Toll Free: (888) 598-3789 · Telephone: (301) 202-3811
www.hydroassoc.org · DIY@hydroassoc.org

SAMPLE LETTER #1 - Used to raise money for a WALK team.

The Rodger Family
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Total Raised:
\$22,798

Date

Dear Team Alex Members,

I have decided that since I am 12, and heading into 7th grade in a few weeks, maybe it should be my turn to write this year's WALK letter!

I hope everyone is having fun this summer. My summer has been great; baseball camp, band camp, a trip to Atlanta with my Dad to see the Braves play (an incentive trip for getting all A's on my report card!) and a relaxing trip to Sanibel. I am looking forward to starting my 2nd year in the Pre Med Academy at Boca Raton Middle School; continue to play the trumpet in Band, and moving to the next level of baseball in Boca Raton Little League.

The South Florida WALK to End Hydrocephalus is Saturday, November 9, 2013 at Quiet Waters Park (Shelter #10) in Deerfield Beach. Last year's WALK was the biggest and best ever! My Mom and Dad (with our family and friends) worked really hard to raise a lot of money and with the help of all the other teams; we raised over \$57,000 (That was \$7,000 over our goal!)

In the next few months, I will work hard to raise Hydrocephalus awareness. It is important that more people know about it for change to happen. My Mom says there are too many shunt surgeries happening and more research is needed. I have been really lucky that I haven't needed surgery in four years; I hope I never have to have one ever again. (I have had 7 already!) The WALK is also important to me because it is a chance for people to come together as one. I want other families affected by this condition to know that they don't have to be labeled by it. ***Anything is possible.*** We have ***20 teams*** registered and almost ***\$17,000*** raised so far. I ***know*** we can reach our new goal!

Please help me support the Hydrocephalus Association and people like myself! You can:

1. Join us at the WALK on Saturday, November 9th at 9 am as a *Family Team*, a *Corporate Team*, an *individual walker* or a "virtual walker" Please remember to register on our website.
2. If you are unable to be at the WALK to End Hydrocephalus but would like to donate, you can simply use the enclosed envelope (please make all checks payable to the **HYDROCEPHALUS ASSOCIATION** with Team Alex in the memo) Our address is: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
3. You can donate directly to Team Alex on line on our website [insert URL to WALK Team or Participant Page](#)
4. You can encourage your company and/or local businesses to become corporate sponsors by donating either monetarily or in kind (food, water, prizes for our raffle.)
5. Learn more about Hydrocephalus (www.hydroassoc.org) and help spread the word!

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact my Mom, Eileen Rodger at [insert Team Captain's email address](#) or at XXX-XXX-XXXX. All donations are gratefully accepted and tax deductible. (Tax ID#: 94-3000301)

Thank you and hope to see you there!

Alex (Michael and Eileen) Rodger

SAMPLE LETTER #2 - Used to raise money for a WALK team.

The Harris Family
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

It's hard to believe but it was more than 13 years ago when we sat with a pediatric neurosurgeon looking at CT scans of our newborn baby's head, as he explained that he had a condition called hydrocephalus. At the time, I didn't even know how to pronounce it, or that people even have ventricles (spaces filled with cerebral fluid) in their brains. We were told that his condition was "incompatible with long term survival" and that it would be fatal if we did not act quickly. The doctor told us, that **there is no cure** but that he could possibly save our son's life, his sight, his hearing and his mental abilities by operating to place a shunt into his brain. The shock of that moment with some hope that there is treatment caused us to look past an important point...."**there is no cure**".

As most of you know we have been blessed. The shunt has worked so well for Joey that we sometimes forget that it is just a temporary treatment and that **there is no cure**. In January of this year however, we were again reminded that **there is no cure**, when Joey's shunt suddenly failed again. In an instant we were back to where we were 13 years ago... where we will probably be again at some time in the future.

While we continue to be grateful for the many doctors, nurses and bioengineers that have helped Joey, there still **is no cure** for hydrocephalus. The shunt is at best a temporary treatment for life threatening condition that requires numerous unplanned brain surgeries to stay well. Joey has had 9 surgeries since his first. We also know that Joey is fortunate. So many others with hydrocephalus that we have come to know, have dealt with so much more than he has. With a little more research we may be able to change this. That is why this year we are walking again to raise money and awareness for the Hydrocephalus Association; especially for those who have it worse than Joey, because **there is no cure....**and there should be.

We are very excited that the WALK to End Hydrocephalus will be held at the Chicago lake front. Please come walk with us on September 14 at 9:30 AM on the lake front at Soldier's Field in Chicago. To join or sponsor **Team Harris**, for the Chicago WALK to End Hydrocephalus, follow this link ([insert link to WALK team's web page](#)) to visit our team web page. Some email systems do not support the use of links and therefore this link may not appear to work so you may copy and paste the following into your browser:

Joey Harris Personal WALK to End Hydrocephalus Page Link:

[insert entire URL for team's web page](#)

If you're receiving this letter in the mail you can type the address above into your web browser, too. Or, if you prefer you can send us a check made payable to the **Hydrocephalus Association**. Thank you for your support – for Joey and all of those living with the challenges of hydrocephalus.

Tim, MaryBeth, Tim, Terry, Brian and Joey Harris



Facts about Hydrocephalus

Hydrocephalus

- Hydrocephalus is a chronic condition caused by an abnormal accumulation of cerebral spinal fluid, resulting in pressure on the brain

Hydrocephalus Is Common

- Over one million Americans have hydrocephalus, in every stage of life, from infants to the elderly. Many US military personnel who suffered traumatic brain injury during service in Iraq and Afghanistan are developing hydrocephalus as a result.
- Anyone, at any age, may be diagnosed with hydrocephalus.
- Almost 8,000 babies are born with hydrocephalus every year.
- Hydrocephalus is the most common reason for brain surgery in children.

There Is No Cure

- Currently there is no prevention for hydrocephalus –and there is no cure.
- The most common treatment is brain surgery to implant a shunt – but **a shunt is not a cure!** A shunt is only a control – and in children has a 50% failure rate in the first two years, requiring additional surgeries.
- While many people are helped by surgery, many more need further operations to stay well. Over 40,000 hydrocephalus operations are performed annually in the U.S. (*one every 15 minutes.*). Having a shunt may result in a single patient enduring dozens of brain surgeries just to survive; a single patient undergoing 100+ is not rare.
- The medical costs of treating hydrocephalus are over \$1 billion per year, yet in 2016 government funding of hydrocephalus research totaled less than \$6 million.

There Is a Crisis in Diagnosis

- An estimated 700,000 older Americans have normal pressure hydrocephalus (NPH) – as many as 250,000 may be misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease or dementia. Sadly, many are living in nursing homes unnecessarily -- when properly diagnosed and treated the patient often returns to normal functioning.
- Hydrocephalus often is undiagnosed and untreated in younger adults, leading to substantial loss of productivity and increased healthcare costs.

More Effective Treatment Is Needed Now

- In the past 50 years, although the technology has improved, there has been **no significant progress** in the treatment methods for hydrocephalus.
- **Research is essential.** Since 2010 when the Hydrocephalus Association added "**funding research**" to its portfolio it has **committed more than \$6 million to research** making it the **largest non-profit, non-governmental funder of hydrocephalus research in the U.S.!** But new revenue resources must be found to continue HA's aggressive research program.

The Hydrocephalus Association (HA)

- The Hydrocephalus Association was founded in 1983. It is the largest non-profit organization dedicated solely to hydrocephalus in the world. Its mission: *to promote a cure for hydrocephalus and improve the lives of those affected by the condition.* You can help. Join the Hydrocephalus Association now in their fight against hydrocephalus!

Hydrocephalus Association

4340 East West Highway, Suite 905 • Bethesda, MD 20814-4411

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The Hydrocephalus Association is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit – Tax ID: 94-3000301