

**WALK
WITH US**
TO PREVENT SUICIDE

2026

**Out of the Darkness
Chicagoland Walk
Event Guide**

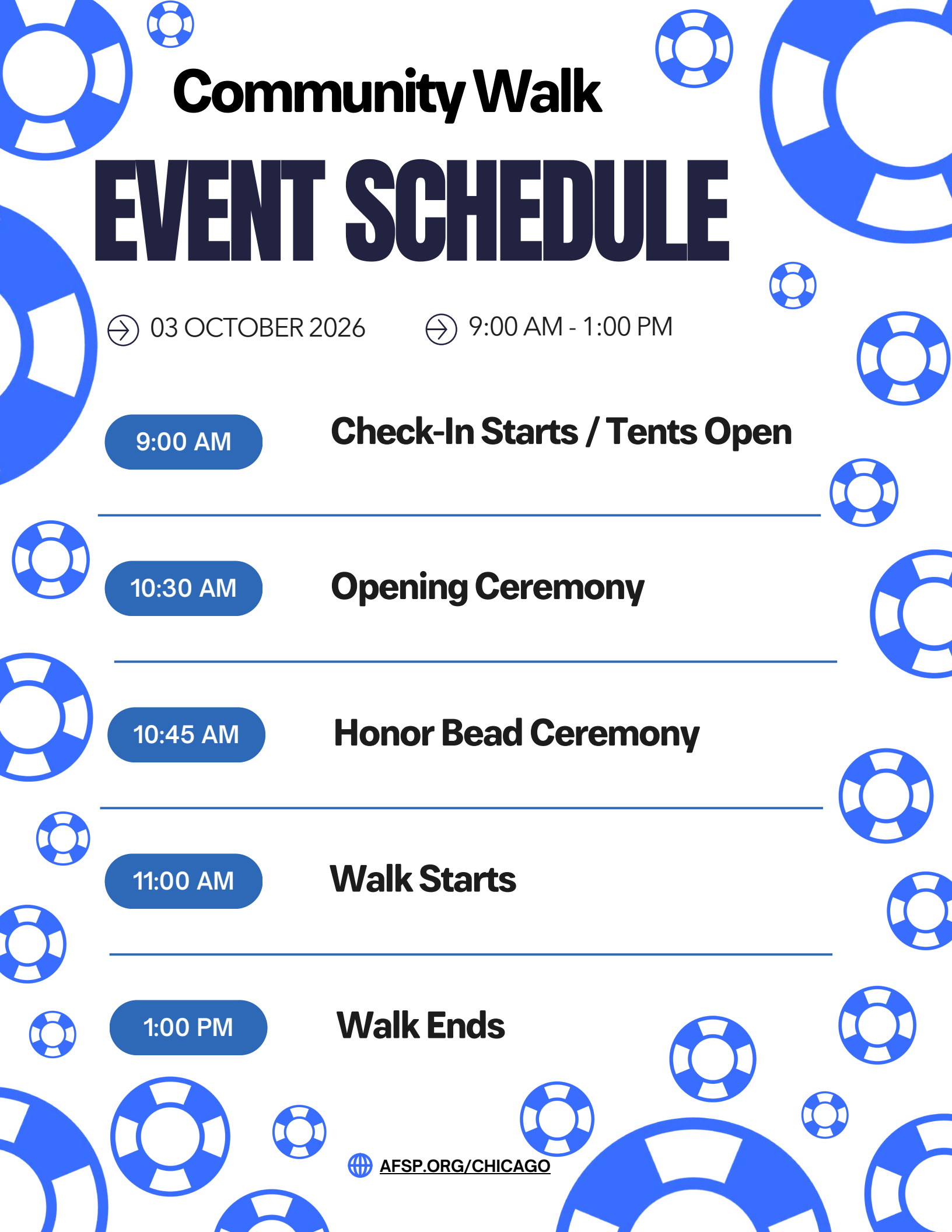
afsp.org/Chicago



**American
Foundation
for Suicide
Prevention**



**OUT OF THE
DARKNESS**
Community Walks

The background of the entire page is decorated with various sizes of blue life preserver icons. Some are large and partially cut off by the edges, while others are smaller and fully visible.

Community Walk

EVENT SCHEDULE

➞ 03 OCTOBER 2026

➞ 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

9:00 AM

Check-In Starts / Tents Open

10:30 AM

Opening Ceremony

10:45 AM

Honor Bead Ceremony

11:00 AM

Walk Starts

1:00 PM

Walk Ends



AFSP.ORG/CHICAGO

Preparing for Walk Day

We want you to have the best Out of the Darkness Walk experience possible! Here is a guide to help you prepare.

All are welcome!



Registration

- We recommend all attendees register for the walk online at afsp.org/Chicago prior to event day. If you pre-register online, you do not have to check-in
- QR codes for day-of registration and donations will be available at the Registration Tent
- We will also have paper registration available at the Registration Tent

What to bring to walk day?

- Water Bottle
- Charged Phone
- Sunscreen
- Photos for Remembrance Activity
 - *(copies please, not original photos)*
- Any day of event donations you would like added to your team page (checks/cash)
- Chair or blanket (optional)

Do I need to stop by the registration tent?

Please check-in at the Registration Tent if...

- You have not yet pre-registered online
- You are bringing a cash or check donation to the event
- You have reached the \$150+ fundraising threshold on your personal fundraising page and need to pickup your walk t-shirt. (Please note -if your whole team wants a shirt, each member must raise \$150 to their personal fundraising pages.)

All other attendees are welcome to bypass the Registration Tent.

Tag & Follow Us On Social Media

@afspnational

Official Walk Hashtags:

#StopSuicide #OutoftheDarkness

#TogetherToFightSuicide

#AFSPIL

#OOTDChicagolandWalk



Getting To The Walk

Montrose Harbor | 601 W. Montrose Ave. - Chicago, IL



We strongly encourage taking public transit or rideshare due to limited parking in the area.



Parking

- Very limited free and paid street parking may be available on Montrose Ave. east and on Simonds Dr. from Montrose Ave. north to Foster Ave.
- The Montrose Lot (right yellow star below) will be rented for the event and will be free on a first come, first serve basis. (*Fills quickly - arrive early.*)
- Paid parking available at the Wilson Lot. (left yellow star)



Directions

- **From the South and/or West:** Take Lake Shore Drive north, exit at Montrose, Wilson or Foster. Follow along to Simonds Drive.
- **From the Northwest:** Take I-90 East to Irving Park Ave. - East to Lakeshore Drive. Go north on Lakeshore Drive and exit Montrose, Wilson or Foster. Follow along Simonds Drive.
- **From the North:** Take I-94 south to Peterson. Exit Peterson and go east to Lake Shore Drive. Go south on Lake Shore Drive (Hwy 41). Exit at Foster, Wilson or Montrose. Follow to Simonds Drive.

Highly Recommended



Public Transit Options

- #146 Bus route stops at Marine Drive and Montrose
- CTA Brown line stops at Montrose Ave
- Plan your trip at www.transitchicago.com

RideShare Dropoff Information

- If using a RideShare, please use this address when requesting the ride:
- **601 W. Montrose Ave., Chicago, IL 60613**





Walk Day Layout

Montrose Harbor
601 W. Montrose Ave. - Chicago, IL



Walk Route

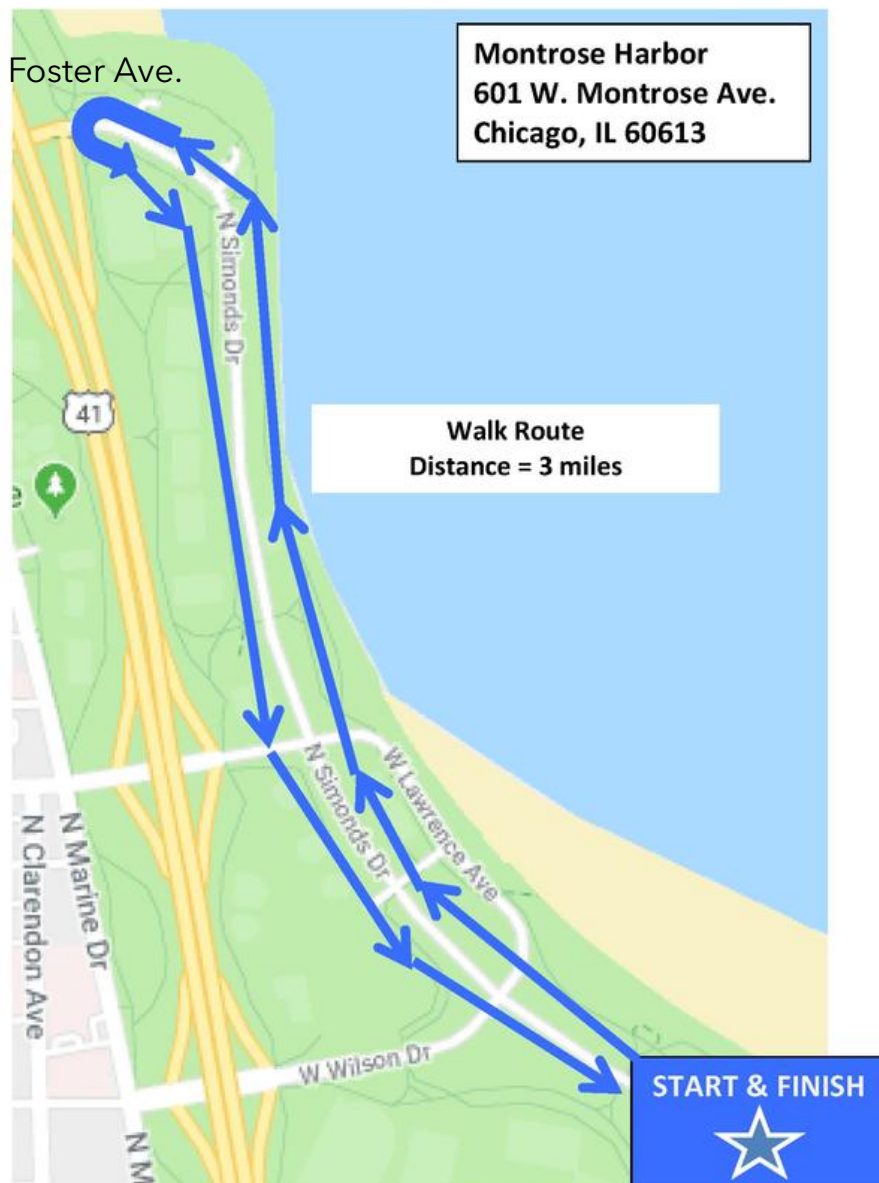
Route Length: approx. 3 miles



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Chicagoland Walk Route



- We encourage participants to create signs to carry along the route. Add messages and photos to honor loved ones, inspire hope, and raise awareness. (Please use [safe messaging](#) and no profanity.)
- Route is mostly paved but there may be patchy gravel areas.
- Reminder that this is a walk, NOT a run.

EVENT SAFETY

Your Safety during the Community Walk is most important to us. If you see someone in an emergency situation, please call 9-1-1 and alert event staff



FIRST AID AVAILABLE

The event will have a First Aid available, equipped with basic first aid supplies including medical ambulance.

In the event of an emergency or serious injury, please call 911 immediately, and notify a staff member in a **red shirt.**

WATER & HYDRATION

FREE WATER AVAILABLE AT:

- **Start/Finish Line**
- **1/2 turning point on walk route**
- **Water stations throughout the walk site**

On-Site Activities



Complimentary Honor Beads will be available on-site to show your connection(s) to the cause. Learn more about our signature way to share our connection with the cause on the next page.

Our Loss Survivors Tent and Mental Health Services Tent will be available for support and resources.



Check out the merchandise tent, photo booth, and resource tables.



Raise \$500+ and visit the Blue & Red Ribbon Tent to receive your ribbon, certificate and gift.

- \$500 - \$999 - Red Ribbon Walker
- \$1,000+ - Blue Ribbon Walker



More On-Site Activities



Leave a message or share a photo on the Why We Walk Wall.

Raise \$150+ (including day-of donations) to receive the official walk t-shirt, which can be picked up at the T-Shirt Tent.



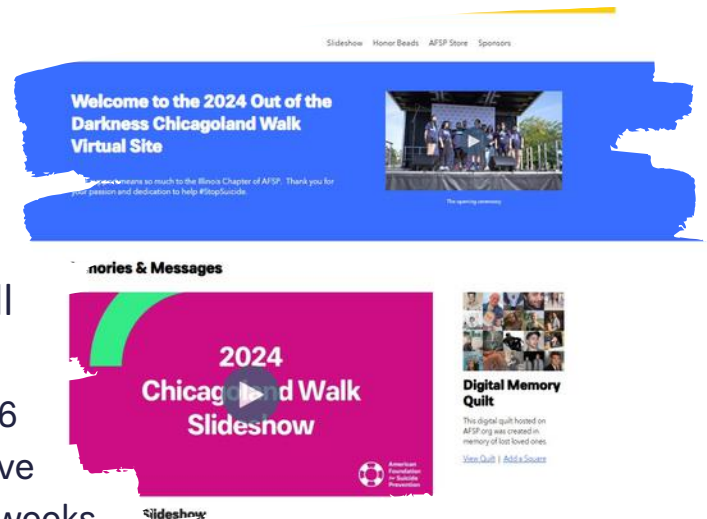
Tribute Slideshow will be played on the jumbo video wall.



VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

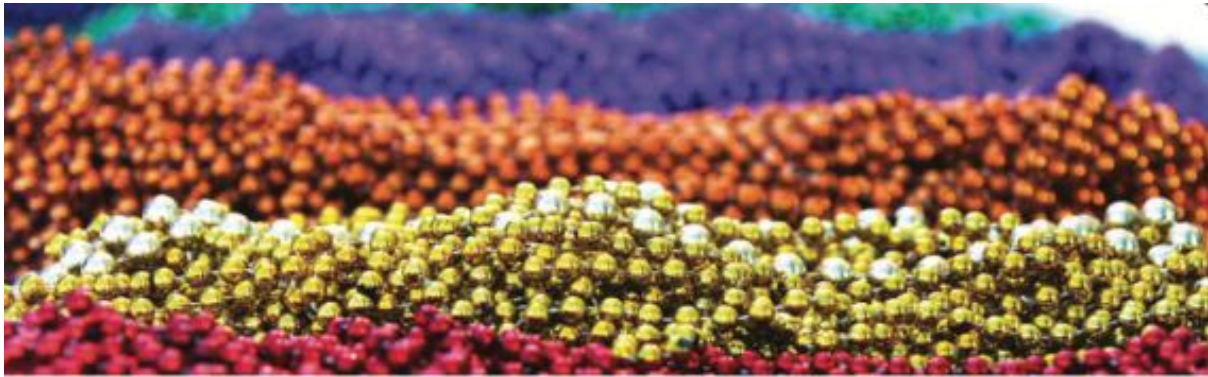
For those unable to attend in-person. Site will open at **8:00 am (CST) on 10/03/2026**.

- Virtual site: afsp.chicagowalk.org/program-2026
- Virtual participants raising \$150 or more can have t-shirt mailed. Complete [this form](#) to arrive 2-3 weeks after the event.



Honor Beads

The Out of the Darkness Walks are journeys of remembrance and events that unite a community - a time to acknowledge the ways in which suicide and mental illness have affected our lives and our loved ones. We all wear honor beads - each color shows our personal connection to the cause, and helps us identify others who understand our experience.



What's Your Color?

Losing someone to suicide or struggling with a mental illness can feel like no one understands what you are going through.

Each color shows our personal connection to the cause and helps us identify others who understand our experience.

 Loss of a Child	 Loss of a Spouse or Partner	 Loss of a Parent	 Loss of a Sibling
 Loss of a Relative or Friend	 Loss of a First Responder/Military	 A Personal Struggle or Attempt	 Supporting Someone Who Struggles or has Attempted
 Supporting Suicide Prevention	 Honoring the LGBTQ Community		



- ***Is there a registration fee?***

- There is no registration fee or fundraising minimum to participate. You can register for free at afsp.org/Chicago
- We strongly encourage each participant to set a \$150 fundraising goal to help support AFSP's work to stop suicide and receive the official walk t-shirt!
- *More fundraising recognition prizes can be found at afsp.org/ootdrecognition*

- ***If I raise enough money, will my whole team get a shirt?***

- The event shirts are only given to *individuals* who raise \$150 by event day
- If your whole team wants a shirt, each member must raise \$150
- Shirts are available onsite for pick-up

- ***How do I sign up to volunteer the day of Community Walk?***

- We need volunteers to help with set up, activations throughout the day, and tear down
- Individuals and groups are welcome to sign up to volunteer at chicagowalk.org/Volunteer

- ***Can I bring my dog?***

- Unfortunately as much as we love pups, we ask that you leave them at home.

- ***What if I do not want to walk or cannot walk?***

- Participants are welcome to join the pre-walk festivities (community resource tent, loss and healing activities, AFSP resource booth, Honor Bead Ceremony and Opening Ceremony etc.) but are not required or expected to do the walk. They are welcome to hang out in the park while their team does the walk or can also go home after the opening ceremony if they wish not to stay.

- ***What happens if it rains?***

- Rain or shine, we will gather to support and raise awareness for this important cause. Please come prepared for any weather conditions and bring any necessary items, such as umbrellas or raincoats.

- ***Where should I park?***

- Check out page 4 of this document for parking suggestions.

- ***Can I bring a cooler, a folding chair, picnic blanket, a tent...?***

- Participants are welcome to bring a cooler with snacks and non-alcoholic beverages, folding chairs, picnic blanket, but pop up tents are not allowed in the walk tent area. *AFSP is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.*

- ***Can I bring a stroller or wheelchair?***

- The walk route is mostly paved, however, there may be gravel patches and/or curbs.



- ***Do I need to register my child?***
 - Everyone who is 13 or older by the date of the walk must register. Minors between the ages of 13-17 must have a parent or guardian agree to the electronic waiver when registering online, and must have the signature of a parent or guardian on the participant waiver when registering at the walk.
- ***How long is the walk?***
 - The walk route is approximately 3 miles. Visit page 6 of this packet for more details.
- ***What do the funds support?***
 - All donations support the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.
- ***How does the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention fight suicide?***
 - AFSP uses your donations to:
 - Fund Research for Suicide Prevention
 - Create and Distribute Education Programs
 - Advocate for Public Policy
 - Support Survivors of Suicide Loss
- ***What if I want to volunteer more than just the day of the Walk?***
 - AFSP is a volunteer-led nonprofit organization, and we would love for you to join us as a volunteer. We have events throughout the year, and your involvement can make a significant difference in our mission to save lives and bring hope to those affected by suicide. Learn more at afsp.org/illinois
- ***What time does the walk end?***
 - Opening ceremony concludes at 11AM with the walk to follow. While walkers are out, some tent activities will begin tearing down, however we will have some AFSP resources still available. The walk will end at 1PM.
- ***I raised more than \$150, where do I get my other recognition prize?***
 - All recognition prizes can be found at afsp.org/oofdrecognition
 - Gifts are awarded based on individual fundraising efforts, not team totals.
 - 6-8 weeks following the walk, an email from customerservice@kotisdesign.com will be sent to all walkers who are eligible to claim their incentive prize.
- ***Can donations be made after my walk has taken place?***
 - Yes. You may continue to send in donations, even after the event has taken place. The deadline to submit donations for the OOTD Chicagoland Walk is December 31st.
- ***What is AFSP's tax ID number (or EIN number)?***
 - The Out of the Darkness Walks are charitable events run by AFSP, which is recognized as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. The tax ID number or EIN number for AFSP is 13-3393329.
- ***Where can I get a copy of the 501(c)(3) (Not-for-Profit Organization) letter for AFSP?***
 - You can find all of the updated AFSP financial information by visiting afsp.org/financials

THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 SPONSORS!

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Bruce C. Abrams
FOUNDATION



afsp.org/Chicago

