



Bark For Life Fact Sheet

What is Bark For Life?

The American Cancer Society "Bark For Life" (BFL) is an American Cancer Society fundraising event associated with the Relay For Life. The ACS BFL honors the care-giving qualities of our canine "Best Friends" and caregivers. It presents an opportunity for people to be empowered through their canine companion partnerships and to contribute to cancer cures through the mission of the American Cancer Society. Participants come together to celebrate cancer survivorship, to honor people lost to cancer, to fundraise in support of cancer research, education, awareness, patient services, advocacy, and to help eliminate the suffering that cancer causes worldwide.

Who plans a Bark For Life event?

The event can be organized either prior to or after the community event and can be organized by a team as a team fundraiser, by an individual, or by an event planning committee member.

What is the suggested timeline for planning a Bark For Life event?

BFL events are just like any other fundraiser. The more time you give for planning, the more successful your event will be. The recommended timeline is a minimum of 3 months to pull the event together.

How does the Bark For Life support the local Relay?

This is a stand-alone event that supports the local/community Relay For Life event. All BFL contributions raised by participants go to the community event total.

Who participates in Bark For Life events?

All Canine Caregivers (including Family pets, Guide Dogs, Service Dogs, Rescue Dogs, Therapy Dogs, Police Dogs, Cancer Survivor Dogs, and Diagnostic Dogs), their owners, and anyone interested in participating in the event.

How do people sign up for a Bark For Life?

People sign up as individual participants. They need to fill out the registration form (provided by staff partner) and pay the registration fee associated with the event. Participants are asked to collect donations and turn them in at the BFL event.

What happens at the Bark For Life event?

A typical BFL event is a walk (length of walk varies by location) in which participants and their canine companions walk together. Prior to the walk, there is an opening ceremony in which participants are welcomed and thanked for their contributions, a survivor or caregiver shares a story about their cancer journey, and the walk is kicked off with an official survivor lap. Participants then complete the walk and are thanked upon their return to the finish line. BFL events should also include mission messages and track signage throughout the entire event to educate people about how they can fight back against cancer. Events also include a closing ceremony in which participants are thanked and awards (such as top fundraiser or first runner in with pet) are given out.

How do you fundraise for BFL?

Participants of BFL find a great deal of success with their fundraising by simply asking their contacts to make a donation to the American Cancer Society. This can be done via face-to-face asks, letters, and e-mails. Participants are also welcome to fundraise in creative ways such as collecting donations at a doggy treat bake sale, pet wash, etc.

Are there additional fundraising opportunities associated with the BFL?

Yes, in addition to collecting donations, there are several fundraising opportunities. Many BFL events sell sun/moon or bone donation cards in honor or memory of someone who has faced cancer. They are posted on stakes surrounding the walking path. Other BFL events sell food or other items at the event to raise additional dollars.

Are there additional resources available?

Yes, there is a registration form, participant contribution form, poster, and guidebook available via your staff partner.

Who do I contact with additional questions about Bark For Life?

Please contact your local staff partner with questions or send an e-mail to mwrfl@cancer.org