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## **Walker's 2015 *Change Shoes, Change Lives* Run and Walk to Benefit Academic and Therapeutic Programs for Children**

*Sunday, September 13, hundreds to Needham's DeFazio Park for Walker's sixth annual USA Track and Field certified 5K Run and 1-Mile Walk*

**NEEDHAM, Mass.** – On Sunday, September 13, 2015, Walker, a non-profit leader in special education, behavioral health and residential treatment for children and youth, will host the sixth annual USA Track and Field certified 5K Run and Walk: *Change Shoes, Change Lives*. The family-friendly event at DeFazio Park in Needham benefits children, teens and families served by Walker's therapeutic and academic programs.

The *Change Shoes, Change Lives* event is organized by a volunteer committee of local residents including, Kristin Bittinger of Dover, Bridget Bradley of Needham, Julia DeMayo of Needham, Kathy DeMayo of Needham, Morgan Fuller of Needham, Hannah Mecaskey of West Roxbury, Callie McKay of Needham, Sue McKay of Needham, Maureen Neelon of Braintree, Marsha Shorthose of Needham, and Andrea Shorthose of Waltham.

The 5K run and 1-mile walk will be followed by a finish line celebration featuring food from Café Fresh Bagel, Bertucci's, JP Licks, Not Your Average Joe's, Starbucks, Hazel's Bakery and Volante Farms, carnival games with prizes and giveaways, and magic with Bonaparté-New England's Hottest Magician. Top male and female 5K Run finishers, for age categories 12 and under, 13 – 18, 19 – 39, 40 – 59, 60 – 75, and 76 and above, will receive race medals, Marathon Sports gift certificates and 1-month Boston Sports Club VIP passes.

"We are thrilled by the swell of support from the Needham community, corporate partners and beyond," said Sarah Whalen, Donor Relations and Volunteer Manager at Walker, Inc. "Walker is incredibly proud to partner with a tremendous group of volunteers including New England Sports Network's NESN Connects program who have been our official Route Marshals since 2012, our race partners at Bank of America who are putting together teams of runners, and Santander Bank who will host our water station this year."

Sponsorship opportunities for the event are still available, allowing organizations to show their support for our local community in front of hundreds of participants and spectators. Walker is grateful for the Corporate Sponsors who have helped to make the annual *Change Shoes, Change Lives* event a success including: Bank of America, Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital-Needham, Boston Sports Club – West Newton, Brookline Bank, The Carpet Workroom, City Wide Maintenance of Boston, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Needham, Dover Pack

52, Louise Condon Realty, Inc., Fitness Together – Newton Centre, Gretchen’s Kids, Inc., Intex Solutions, Inc., LifeLine Ambulance Service, Needham Music & Dance, Marathon Sports, McKay Architects, Middlesex Savings Bank, Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP., Needham Driving School, Nigohsian Carpet & Rug, Norfolk Lodge A.F. & A.M., Dave Peterson Design, Roche Bros., and Santander Bank.

For pre-registering, Walker is offering special discounts on run and walk bib numbers. If you live or work in Needham or one of our neighboring towns, the Needham Neighbor Discount lets receive a discounted \$25 5K Run entry fee. Pre-register a 5K Team and receive five bib numbers for \$100. For individuals, there is a \$35 5K Run entry fee for participants ages 14 and up, and a \$15 5K Run entry fee for participants ages 13 and under. At any time, there is a \$5 walk entry fee per person, and a \$25 Walk Team entry fee valid for up to 10 people.

We invite you to change your shoes and help us change lives on Sunday, September 13, 2015, at DeFazio Park, 380 Dedham Avenue, in Needham. Registration/Check-In will open at 8 AM and both the 5K Race and 1-Mile Walk will begin at 9 AM. To register for Walker’s *Change Shoes, Change Lives* 5K Run and 1-Mile Walk, support a participant, or learn more about partnership opportunities, please visit: [WalkerCares.org/WalkForWalker](http://WalkerCares.org/WalkForWalker).

**About Walker, Inc.**

Founded in 1961, Walker serves exceptionally vulnerable yet resilient children and youth facing complex social, emotional, behavioral and learning challenges. Walker’s effective evidence-based and innovative therapeutic and academic programs positively impact nearly 20,000 children and youth each year throughout Greater Boston, the North and South Shore, as well as in Central Massachusetts. Through campuses in Needham and Watertown, community-based clinical and youth development services, professional seminars, consultations and out-posted Walker staff in public schools, Walker’s professionals partner with these children and youth, their families and communities to nurture hope, develop lifelong skills, and build their capacity to be successful in their community. To learn more, please visit us at [WalkerCares.org](http://WalkerCares.org) or [Facebook.com/WalkerCares](https://www.facebook.com/WalkerCares).

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