



paint the lake PINK walk

Sunday October 4th, 2026 Paulus Park, Lake Zurich

5 Years Strong – United We Walk



Fundraising Guide

Welcome

To Our Walkers, Donors, Partners, and Community

Five years ago, we set out to make sure that no woman would be left in the dark about her own breast health. We believed that with the right information at the right moment, a woman could find her cancer earlier, when it is still curable. That belief became My Density Matters. And every year since, the Paint the Lake Pink Walk has been the heartbeat of this work, where our community comes together to walk, to remember, to celebrate, and to fuel the year ahead.

This year is different. This year is our fifth anniversary.

Five years of survivors and thrivers. Five years of women learning a word they had never heard before, breast density, and what it means for their health. Five years of teaching women to walk into their doctor's office with the right questions, the right information, and the confidence to advocate for the screening they deserve. Five years of communities, partners, families, and friends working together to say, this matters, and we are not slowing down.

Your fundraising is what carries this work forward. Every dollar you raise pays for the education, the tools, and the advocacy that help women act on what they learn. When you ask one person to give, you are putting information into the hands of women who need it. When you build a team, you are multiplying that reach. When you walk on October 4, you are showing what five years of momentum looks like.

Thank you for being part of year five. Let us make it the strongest one yet.

Leslie Ferris Yerger

Founder and CEO, My Density Matters



Why we walk

The Story Behind the Mission

My Density Matters exists because of one mammogram that said everything was fine, and a Stage IV breast cancer diagnosis just two months later. Our founder Leslie was told her mammogram was clear. The cancer was already there. It was hiding in her dense breast tissue, the way roughly half of all women have.

Dense breast tissue and breast cancer both appear white on a standard mammogram. A radiologist looking for cancer in dense tissue is searching for a snowball in a snowstorm. For millions of women, the mammogram alone is not enough, and most of them do not know it. That is why we walk.

Our Vision

A world where breast density no longer hinders the early detection of breast cancer.

Our Mission

We empower women to find out their breast density, learn their screening options, and insist on the essential additional screening they need. Our goal is to ensure that breast density no longer hinders early detection of breast cancer.

What your Fundraising Powers

Education and outreach. Bringing life-saving information directly into communities, schools, churches, companies, and outreach programs across Illinois and beyond.

Empowerment tools. Programs like Check Your Chart, which teaches women to read their own medical records and request the supplemental screening they deserve, and Find Out My Breast Density Day (FOMBDD), our annual awareness campaign.

Stories that change minds. My Story Matters, our growing collection of survivor and thriver narratives that turn statistics into people.

Advocacy with weight. Pushing for policy and insurance change so cost stops being a barrier to the screening women need.

Future advocates. Internships and training that bring the next generation into the breast density movement, extending MDM's reach far beyond today.

Information without barriers. Translating resources for Spanish-speaking communities so language is never the reason a woman misses what her body is telling her.

Where your dollars go

Every Gift, Translated

A donation is never just a dollar amount. It is a mammogram report a woman finally understands, a question she now knows to ask, a screening that catches what a mammogram missed. When you ask someone to give, the most powerful thing you can do is show them exactly what their gift sets in motion. The list below pairs each gift amount with what it accomplishes. Use it to make your ask specific, personal, and impossible to ignore.

\$50	Equips one woman with breast density education materials at a community or company event.
\$100	Funds an educational screening tool, shared on social media, that reaches thousands of women with the questions to ask before their next mammogram.
\$250	Supports a published My Story Matters survivor story that reaches women who may have never heard of breast density.
\$500	Funds a Hispanic community education session led by our community liaison.
\$1000	Powers the production of a complete segment of physician-led educational videos, bringing trusted medical guidance on breast density and screening to women across the country.



Your fundraising roadmap

5 Steps from Sign-Up to Goal

Every great fundraising total starts with a single step, and you have already taken it by signing up. These five steps turn that first decision into real dollars for women who need them. Follow the roadmap and watch what your effort can do!

STEP 1

Set up your fundraising page – After you register for the walk, you will receive a confirmation email with a link to create your personal Zeffy fundraising page. Add a photo of yourself or a loved one, set a goal you can stretch to reach, and write a sentence about why you walk. Pages with a photo and a personal note raise meaningfully more than pages without.

STEP 2

Make the first gift to your own page – donors look at your page before they give. If the total still reads zero, they hesitate. Give first, even a small amount, so the next person who lands on your page sees momentum and joins it.

STEP 3

Share your why – The single most powerful sentence you can write is the one that says why this cause matters to you. Are you walking in honor of your mother, your friend, yourself? Say it plainly. People do not give to organizations. They give to people they care about, for reasons they understand.

STEP 4

Start close, then go wide – Begin with your inner circle: family, closest friends, a few colleagues you trust. A personal text or email to ten people will outperform a public post to a thousand. Once you have a handful of gifts on your page, take it wide on social media.

STEP 5

Update, thank, and ask again – Most donors give once when asked, then never hear back. Be different. Post when you hit 25 percent, 50 percent, 75 percent of your goal. Thank donors publicly by tagging them. Then ask the next group. Three asks beats one ask every single time.

5 ways to make this count

Celebrate 5 Years: 5 Ways to Make Your Walk Count

Five years of My Density Matters is worth celebrating, and you are part of the reason it has come this far. The five ideas below are built specifically for this walk, each one a simple way to turn your participation into real impact. Try one. Try all five. There is no wrong way to make this anniversary year your biggest yet.

STEP 1

Sponsor 5 honoree bibs – The honoree bib lets you write the name of a survivor or thriver you want to honor. It will be displayed prominently _____. Each bib is \$40. Buy five for \$200, dedicated to five women in your life, and invite each of them or their family members to give in return. This is the most emotionally direct ask you can make.

STEP 2

Recruit 5 friends and start a team – Teams build momentum. A team of five can easily become a team of fifteen. Have fun with it and create a costume theme. The team with the Most Funds Raised wins an award. Start with five names today.

STEP 3

Share 5 facts in 5 days – For the five days before the walk, share one fact about breast density on social media each day. Use the five facts on the next page. Tag My Density Matters, use the official hashtags, and end every post with your fundraising link. Five posts, five chances, five new donors.

STEP 4

Ask 5 people for \$50 – Five people. \$50 each. \$250 raised in a single afternoon. Send a personal text or email to five specific people, not a broad blast. Personal asks convert at roughly five times the rate of group asks.

STEP 5

Dedicate your walk to 5 women – Name them publicly. Mothers, daughters, friends, colleagues, the woman in line at the grocery store who said her sister was just diagnosed. Tag the five women you walk for in a post, explain why, and invite your network to give in their honor.

5 facts in 5 days

Your 5-Day Countdown

In the five days before the walk, share one breast density fact each day. Tag My Density Matters, use the official hashtags, and end every post with your fundraising link. Five posts, five chances, five new donors.

DAY 1

Dense breast tissue and cancer both appear white on a mammogram. The more dense tissue you have, the harder it is for a mammogram to find the cancer.

Post it: Dense tissue and cancer both show up white on a mammogram, so cancer can hide. This is why I walk. [your link] #PaintTheLakePink #MyDensityMatters #CheckYourChart

DAY 2

Mammograms can miss up to 50% of cancers in extremely dense breasts.

Post it: Mammograms can miss up to half of cancers in extremely dense breasts. Women deserve to know this. Help me spread the word. [your link] #PaintTheLakePink #MyDensityMatters #CheckYourChart #5YearsStrong

DAY 3

71% of breast cancers occur in women with dense breasts.

Post it: 71% of breast cancers occur in women with dense breasts. Knowing your density is one of the most important things you can do for your health. [your link] #PaintTheLakePink #MyDensityMatters #CheckYourChart #5YearsStrong

DAY 4

43% of women over the age of 40 have dense breasts.

Post it: 43% of women over 40 have dense breasts, and many have no idea. I am walking to change that. [your link] #PaintTheLakePink #5YearsStrong #MyDensityMatters #CheckYourChart #5YearsStrong

DAY 5

85% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no known family history.

Post it: 85% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no known family history. No family history does not mean no risk. Walk with me. [your link] #PaintTheLakePink #MyDensityMatters #CheckYourChart #5YearsStrong

Sources: My Density Matters®, mydensitymatters.org/references-citations



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@my-density-matters

Communication Templates

Copy, Paste, Personalize

Edit the bracketed fields, drop in your fundraising link, and send. The more personal you make it, the better it will perform.

Email appeal

Subject: Walking with me on October 4? Here is why it matters.

Hi [Name],

On Sunday, October 4, I am walking in the Paint the Lake Pink Walk in Lake Zurich, and I am raising money for My Density Matters, the nonprofit behind it. This year is special: it marks the organization's 5th anniversary.

Here is why I am doing this: nearly half of all women have dense breast tissue, which can hide cancer on a standard mammogram. Most women have no idea. My Density Matters is the organization changing that. They educate women on their breast density, give them the tools to ask the right questions, and advocate for the additional screening that finds cancer earlier, when it is still curable.

[One or two sentences about your personal why. Example: I am walking in honor of my mother, who was diagnosed at Stage IV after a clean mammogram. I do not want any other family to hear those words.]

My goal is to raise \$[Amount] to help mark My Density Matters' 5th anniversary year. Would you consider a gift to help me get there? Even \$50 puts breast density education into the hands of a woman who has never heard the term.

Here is my fundraising page: [Insert Zeffy P2P link]

Thank you for reading, and thank you for considering. It means more than you know.

[Your name]

Social Media and Text Templates

SOCIAL POST 1: CAMPAIGN LAUNCH (Facebook/Instagram/Linked IN)

I just signed up for the Paint the Lake Pink Walk on October 4 in Lake Zurich, and I am raising money for My Density Matters as it celebrates its 5th anniversary.

Nearly half of all women have dense breast tissue, which can hide cancer on a standard mammogram. Most women do not know. My Density Matters is changing that.

Five years of this work. Five years of women learning what their bodies are doing. I am walking to keep that going. Will you help me hit my \$[Amount] goal?

Link in bio (or comments). #PaintTheLakePink #5YearsStrong #MyDensityMatters #CheckYourChart

SOCIAL POST 2: MILESTONE UPDATE

Halfway there.

Thanks to [tag 3 to 5 donors], I am 50 percent to my fundraising goal for the Paint the Lake Pink Walk. Every dollar funds breast density education and the screening advocacy that finds cancer earlier.

I am walking on October 4 for [your reason in one short sentence]. If you have been meaning to give, this is your sign.

[Insert link] #PaintTheLakePink #5YearsStrong #MyDensityMatters #CheckYourChart

TEXT MESSAGE

Hi [Name], quick ask. I am walking in the Paint the Lake Pink Walk on October 4 to raise money for breast density education and earlier cancer detection. My goal is \$[Amount]. Would you be willing to give \$25 or \$50 to help me get there? Here is the link: [Insert link]. Thank you so much.

Resources and Support

Official Hashtags

Use these on every social post so we can re-share your content:

#PaintTheLakePink

#MyDensityMatters

#CheckYourChart

#5YearsStrong

Event Day Quick Facts

Date	Sunday, October 4th, 2026
Location	Paulus Park, Lake Zurich, IL
Route	3 mile walk around scenic Lake Zurich
Check-In	Begins at 9:30am, along with the pre-party. Walk at 10:30
Awards	Given to Most Funds Raised, before walk begins

Need Help? We Are Here.

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Community Liaison

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