Williams Syndrome Awareness Activity & Event Ideas

All events benefitting the WSA will be promoted via mail, email & internet (website & social media outlets).

Organizers will receive hands-on staff support, and will be recognized in WSA publications. You are asked only to follow WSA guidelines and specific deadlines as noted for each activity listed below.

Fundraising Activities:

**Let’s Go to the Movies**
Looking for a fun way to gather family and friends in the comfort of your own home? How about a movie night? Invite family and friends to join you for a viewing of *embraceable* ~ a film about Williams syndrome. We will provide you with the perfect party kit for 20 guests. A DVD copy of the film, plastic silverware and plates, napkins and cups adorned with the WSA logo. You provide beverages and movie friendly snacks. Following the 50 minute film we suggest that you share your personal story and (if you’d like) request donations of any size to support WSA programs and scholarships.

**Online/Letter Campaign**
Create an online donation page, featuring your son or daughter, to support the WSA’s Awareness Campaign. Creating the page is simple. A campaign page is a great fit for volunteers who don’t have the time or inclination to organize an event, but are interested in raising money and generating awareness for Williams syndrome.

If you like the idea but your friends and family are not internet savvy, a letter campaign is a great alternative. Simply provide us with your child’s name, along with a photo, and we’ll send you a letter and response envelopes for you to mail out to friends and family.

**Scavenger Hunt/Poker Run**
These types of events are highly customizable, and guaranteed to be fun and effective awareness events. Given a time frame, a mission, a set of tools/clues, and a playing field/course etc. the participants invade a community, spreading awareness everywhere the game takes them and having a great deal of fun in the process! Funds can be raised through registration fees, raffles, auctions and donations.
**Dine/Shop to Donate**

Many chain restaurants offer “dine to donate” fundraisers for charity. You choose a date and invite your friends/contacts to eat at the restaurant that night. The restaurant then donates 10-20% of the evening’s proceeds to the WSA. It works for dinner, breakfast or lunch. In addition to chain restaurants, many coffee shops, bakeries, ice cream shops and local “mom and pop” restaurants will agree to do something similar. All you need to do is ask! “Five Guys, Burgers & Fries”, Buffalo Wild Wings, Mongolian Barbecue and Iron Hill Brewery are just a few examples of restaurants who held events to benefit the WSA.

Some retail chains such as Alex and Ani, and many in-home retailers such as Pampered Chef, Tupperware, and Tastefully Simple hold similar events. All you have to do is invite your friends and the salesperson will tell them all about the line of items. After a fun evening, you will all have some great new purchases and a portion of the proceeds will be donated back to the WSA.

**Bake Sale**

A bake sale is a great fit for anyone, including kids and teens! Whether you hold the sale in your driveway, work with your child’s school or host a bake sale at your church/gym/community center, it’s easy to plan. All you need is a few great bakers to contribute yummy items to sell and a few volunteers to man the table. After the sale, you can send one check for the total to the WSA.

**Jean Day/Hat Day**

Many offices and schools offer an opportunity for their employees/students to modify the dress code for a day. Offices often allow a Jeans Day and schools are known to support Hat Days. Participants make a donation to the WSA for the privilege or wearing jeans to work or a funny hat all day in school. Work with your HR department or school staff and ask if they would like to help support the WSA and your son or daughter.

**Sell WS Wristbands/T-Shirts etc**

The WSA has a full store of branded items, including our popular wristbands and tattoos. This is a great (and easy) fundraiser, and more importantly, a great way to get people talking about Williams syndrome. You can place an order with the WSA (online or by phone - $1 or less per wristband, depending on quantity) for the number of wristbands you plan to sell. You may then choose to sell them for more than the purchase price in order to raise money for the WSA (people have sold them for $2-$10). Simply send the proceeds to the Williams Syndrome Association after you (or your child/adult with Williams syndrome) completes the sale!
Awareness Activities

Would you prefer to simply spread the word about Williams syndrome? The list of ways to get involved in Awareness Month is endless! All you have to do is host an event or awareness initiative and then let us know after the fact how it went and/or mail a donation to the National Office!

Below are a few examples.

**Contact City Council/Mayor/State Representatives**

Work to get WS on your local government’s mind. Ask a member of your state government (Representative, Senator, Governor or local Mayor) to issue a proclamation, declaring May as Williams Syndrome Awareness Month and recognizing the great work of local volunteers and the national Williams Syndrome Association. We’ll provide you with an information packet to present to your government representatives in support of your request.

**Awareness Displays**

This idea is perfect for those with a knack for the creative! Displays can be set up in school showcases or on bulletin boards at local libraries, churches and/or community centers to help spread the word about Williams syndrome. You will want to approach centers as early in the year as possible to tell them about Williams Syndrome Awareness Month and reserve a time for your display. Display times during awareness month are preferable, but if that time frame is not available, any time leading up to May will be fine. Awareness is perfect for ANY time of year! Displays often contain the following: photos of local individuals with Williams syndrome who folks may recognize; local events, general information about Williams syndrome and the WSA, illustrations or something 3D to demonstrate the WS deletion, WSA materials, etc.

_The national office has resources to help you put together a great display. Don’t hesitate to ask!_

**Class Presentations**

Many parents and individuals with Williams syndrome take time during awareness month to share their story and educate classes (or work colleagues) about Williams syndrome. Whether you prepare a comprehensive presentation or simply ask your child’s teacher for a few moments to tell students about Williams syndrome, you’ll be making a difference and raising awareness! The WSA will be happy to provide you with facts and figures for the more detailed presentations.

**A Word About Williams?**

“A Word About Williams?” is an awareness activity that anyone can take on, including children and adults with Williams syndrome. We provide cards explaining Williams syndrome and the WSA. The cards contain “age appropriate” messages geared to your audience, and you can even personalize the cards with your child’s photo.

These are just a few of the many possibilities! Don’t hesitate to get creative or to think beyond the ideas listed above. If you have questions or would like to discuss your ideas with us, don’t hesitate to contact the WSA - jobyrne@williams-syndrome.org