



**Host Your Own Fundraising and Awareness Event
with the DMRF**

Event Ideas



Planning the Perfect Event

First Steps

Below are some tried-and-true event ideas—each one can be customized to your community, budget, and comfort level. For every event, keep these universal steps in mind:

1. **Plan ahead.** Start planning with enough time before your event to allow for outreach, promotion, and logistics.
2. **Confirm your date and venue early.** Many spaces fill quickly—book as soon as you can.
3. **Set your fundraising goal.** Setting a goal helps your supporters stay motivated. Track progress publicly to encourage donations.
4. **Recruit a small team.** Ask friends to help with set-up, registration, social media, or prize collection.
5. **Check legal and safety requirements.** Consider insurance, permits, and any local rules around raffles or alcohol. Contact the DMRF if you have any questions.

Event Ideas

Active Events

Run / Walk / Bike Ride

Gather friends for a casual 5K or mile run/walk or group bike ride. Participants donate to register for the run/walk/ride. Add fun incentives like themed costumes, a dog walk, or a post-run/ride snack station.

To plan: Choose a scenic route that's safe for all participants. Coordinate water stations if needed – make sure water is on hand. Promote through local fitness groups or gyms. If your event uses public roads or parks, check whether you need a permit.

Keep in mind: Safety comes first—provide clear directions, encourage helmets, and ensure everyone signs a liability waiver. Permits and insurance may be required; the DMRF team is available to assist.



Pickleball, Tennis, or Cornhole Tournament

Reserve or in-kind rent local courts or park space. Charge a donation-based entry fee. Offer prizes for winners (this is a great opportunity to raise enthusiasm through in-kind donations – ex: see if a favorite local restaurant will donate a gift card).

To plan: Set a registration deadline with sufficient time to set brackets in advance, decide whether to play doubles or singles, and confirm how many games each team will play. Offer snacks and water stations.

Keep in mind: Check whether your venue requires proof of insurance. Public parks sometimes need permits for organized events.

Golf Outing

Organize a group tee time or mini-tournament. Charge a per-person donation to play. Add a raffle or auction at the end for extra fundraising.

To plan: Partner with a local golf course early—they may donate tee times or prizes. Seek sponsorships for individual holes.

Keep in mind: Collect donations in advance and communicate your start time clearly. Many courses can handle food and beverage needs if requested. Permits may be required for events involving raffles or auctions. The DMRF is available to assist.

Bowling Night

Book a few lanes and invite friends to form teams. Collect donations per team or per person. Ask the bowling alley if they'll donate a portion of proceeds or offer discounts/donate lanes for charity events.

To plan: Decide how long teams will play and whether prizes will be based on total score or creative categories (ex: "best costume," "most team spirit").

Keep in mind: Ask if the venue will display DMRF signage or allow you to make a short awareness announcement.

Social Events

Trivia or Game Night

Host at home, a community center, or a local bar. Charge teams a donation-based entry fee. Offer prizes or raffles. If hosting a trivia night, consider setting a theme that appeals to your audience – or pick a theme for each round.



To plan: Choose a fun host or emcee, prepare 3–5 trivia rounds, and test your questions in advance. If hosting at a bar, ask if they’ll donate a portion of sales.

Keep in mind: Sound and space matter—make sure everyone can hear questions clearly.

Movie Screening

Host a film night at home, outdoors, or in partnership with a theater. Attendees can make a “ticket price” donation. Some theaters may donate part of ticket or concession sales.

To plan: Select a popular or meaningful film, secure the rights if showing publicly, and set up comfortable seating. Provide popcorn or snacks for extra donations.

Keep in mind: Outdoor screenings may require a city permit or special permission for sound equipment. These outdoor screenings are recommended for hosts who have prior experience holding such events.

Pub or Restaurant Crawl/Progressive

Select a few walkable venues. Participants donate to join, and you can ask restaurants or bars to donate a percentage of sales. Add themes or costumes for fun.

To plan: Confirm each stop ahead of time and distribute a map or schedule to participants. Coordinate with venues to ensure they expect your group.

Keep in mind: Always encourage responsible participation—arrange for safe transportation options if alcohol will be consumed.

Poker or Casino Night

Guests donate to “buy in” to the game. Provide snacks and drinks, and award a small prize for the winner.

To plan: Decide on buy-in levels and chip values and communicate to guests in advance. Consider setting up multiple tables if you have a large group.

Keep in mind: Check local laws regarding gaming or raffles—some areas require permits or prohibit cash prizes.

Super Bowl/Home Team Watch Party

Invite friends to a home or bar watch party. Charge a small donation to attend. Include a raffle or participate in DMRF’s “SB Squares” event for added excitement.

To plan: Offer snacks and team-themed decorations.

Keep in mind: Encourage early RSVPs so you can plan food quantities and sufficient seating.



Picnic/BBQ or Potluck Party

Host a community picnic or potluck in a park, backyard, or community space. Invite guests to bring their favorite dish and make a suggested donation to attend. You can include games, a short awareness talk, or a raffle to add fun and engagement.

To plan: Secure your location early—many parks require a permit for groups. Provide clear guidance on what types of dishes or items to bring, and ensure you have essentials like tables, seating, serving utensils, and trash bags. Offer water and drinks or ask a local store to donate beverages.

Keep in mind: Consider accessibility, weather backup plans, food safety (keep perishable foods cold), and dietary restrictions—be sure to check for common allergies such as nuts or gluten and label dishes accordingly.

Virtual or Digital Events

Video Game Stream or E-Sports Tournament

If you have streaming experience, host a gaming event through Twitch or YouTube. Encourage donations during the stream and offer in-game “challenges” when donation goals are met.

To plan: Choose a platform you’re comfortable with, test your setup in advance, and assign someone to monitor chat and donations. Create graphics or overlays featuring the DMRF.

Keep in mind: Clearly explain how viewers can donate and display your fundraiser link throughout the event.

Virtual Trivia or Game Night

Host via Zoom or another platform. Share a DMRF donation link and encourage guests to give as part of their “registration.”

To plan: Send trivia questions in advance to co-hosts, test your technology, and assign a scorekeeper. Add themed rounds for extra fun.

Keep in mind: Encourage participants to invite friends—the more players, the greater the impact. Make sure you have a co-host to assist in case of technical difficulties.



Online Cooking Competition

Host a virtual cooking competition where participants prepare their favorite dishes and share photos or short videos online. Invite friends and family to “donate to vote” for their favorite entries, with each donation counting as a vote toward the winning dish.

To plan: Choose a theme (e.g., comfort food, desserts, international cuisine) and set a submission deadline. Create a social media post, group, or webpage where participants can share their entries and donors can cast votes via your DMRF fundraising link. Announce the winner in a livestream or post-event email and celebrate with shoutouts.

Keep in mind: If using social media, monitor comments and posts to maintain a positive, inclusive atmosphere.

Community & Workplace Opportunities

Tailgate at Your Alma Mater

Set up a small stand or gathering before a game. Ask for donations in exchange for snacks or drinks. Display banners or signs with DMRF’s logo.

To plan: Secure permission from the venue or tailgate area. Decorate your space with DMRF signage. Offer fun incentives like photo ops or small giveaways.

Keep in mind: Bring extra supplies and trash bags to leave your space clean.

Block Party

Host a neighborhood block party with food, games, and music to support the DMRF. Invite local families and businesses to participate and collect donations at the entrance or through small activities.

To plan: Check with your city for street closure permits and recruit volunteers for setup and clean-up. Add raffles, bake sales, or simple “donate to play” games.

Keep in mind: Provide shade, water, and accessible areas for guests. Safety and clear traffic flow are key.

Ice Cream Social at Place of Worship

Partner with your faith community to host a fun ice cream social and raise awareness of dystonia. Collect donations at the door or via a shared fundraising link.



To plan: Confirm with your place of worship and ask local shops to donate ice cream or toppings. Include a short awareness message during the event.

Keep in mind: Offer dairy-free and allergy-friendly options and clearly label ingredients. Ensure a volunteer will monitor the ice cream station to avoid cross-contamination.

Ask Your Workplace to Donate

Some workplaces offer matching gift programs or community sponsorships. Ask your employer's HR department if they can match your fundraising or make a direct contribution.

To plan: Share your personal story in a workplace newsletter or meeting. Ask if you can host a casual lunch-and-learn or donation drive.

Keep in mind: Many employers will double or even triple gifts—make sure donors submit their match requests.

For questions or assistance, please contact:

DMRF events at events@dystonia-foundation.org, or call the DMRF office at (312) 755-0198.