AMERICAN HEART CHALLENGE
Dance Playbook

Raise Money.
Raise Heart Rates.
Save Lives.

Proud supporter of the American Heart Association
Thank you for bringing American Heart Challenge, Dance to your school! We are grateful for your support and leadership and are excited to work with you as you build a new tradition at your school.

**What is the American Heart Challenge, Dance?**

The American Heart Challenge, Dance is your opportunity to show the world that you are the generation with heart. It is a nationwide movement of students raising vital funds and awareness for the American Heart Association.

**Who Does the American Heart Association Help?**

- Children with congenital heart defects, the #1 birth defect of all babies
- Participating high school juniors and seniors in earning college scholarships
- Vital community programs that will forever and finally change the course of heart disease and stroke

**So, What’s My Role?**

It’s simple: BRING THE ENERGY! As a student leader you will plan, organize and execute the American Heart Challenge, Dance. The playbook outlines ideas to help you create an amazing event at your school, while building healthier lives in your community.

**A Message From Our CEO**

You make everything we do possible. I applaud your commitment and dedicated efforts to help us create a world of longer, healthier lives.

The future is full of possibilities, because of people like you who fuel our spirit to make the world a healthier place. We’re so glad you’re here!

With heartfelt thanks,

Nancy Brown

heart.org/americanheartchallenge
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Laney, Age 3, Survivor

Laney was born with four congenital heart defects that went undetected from the time she was born until she was seven days old. “At two weeks old, she had a ten hour open heart surgery that ultimately ended with her having to be monitored for the rest of her life,” said her mom, Stephanie. This lifesaving surgery was made possible by donors and supporters like you investing in the future of cardiac medicine.
A mission statement is a short statement of an organization's fundamental purpose. It answers the question, "Why do we exist?" It ensures that everyone in the organization is on the same page.

The American Heart Association is a relentless force dedicated to saving and improving lives – adults and children. Our vision is that all children, regardless of gender, race, location or economic status, should be able grow to their full potential. We can do that by making each day healthier — for today’s children, and for future generations.

The American Heart Association’s Mission:
To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.

Your American Heart Challenge, Dance Mission Statement:

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________
The six cardiologists who founded the American Heart Association in 1924 would be amazed.

From humble beginnings, the American Heart Association has grown into the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. A shared focus on cardiovascular health unites our more than 33 million volunteers and supporters as well as our more than 3,400 employees.

Heart disease is the No. 1 killer worldwide, and stroke ranks second globally. Even when those conditions don’t result in death, they cause disability and diminish quality of life. We want to see a world free of cardiovascular diseases and stroke.

Our size and scope let us have real impact. We have invested more than $4.3 billion in research, more than any U.S. nonprofit organization.
1. **Assemble Committee and Choose Advisor**
   Determine your leadership structure and get a group of interested, passionate students and a school advisor together (more details under Dance Committee, page 10-11). Ideally 7-12 students make up a committee, with a mix of both juniors and seniors, to create a sustainable program.

2. **Choose Event Date**
   The first step is to set an event date and get it on your school calendar, with approval from administration. Some things to consider when choosing a date:
   - **When are academic breaks?** A day in the week prior to Thanksgiving, Winter or Spring Break can provide a good time to hold your event.
   - **When do other large-scale fundraising events occur?** It is a good idea to balance these out on the calendar in order to not compete with them if possible.
   - **When do exams and testing take place?** Typically, this is a timeframe to stay away from to minimize distractions.
   - **Do you have enough time to plan?** Give yourself enough time to put on a successful event. We recommend a minimum of three months.

**Your Target Event Date:**
**Event Location**

In addition to reserving your date, you also want to reserve the location. Most American Heart Challenge, Dance events occur during school hours in the gym, cafeteria or multipurpose locations. Some things that you’ll want to consider when choosing a location:

- Is the space available?
- Is there enough room for the activities you have planned?
- How many students will it hold?
- If the location is outdoors, do you have a back-up location in case of weather?

**Your Target Location:**

**Back-up Location:**

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**Event Length**

In your first year of American Heart Challenge, Dance we suggest a two-hour timeframe that can be built upon in subsequent years.

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**Event Start and End Time**

A dance party can be a great way to start the day in an energized way and create buzz around the school. The end of the day is another popular choice. Keep in mind how much set-up time you’ll need before the event starts.
6. **Set Your Goals**

In order to gauge success once the event is over, it is important to set goals at the beginning of your planning process. These goals can be your overall school goals and committee goals. You will also want to look at short-term and long-term goals with date benchmarks along the way.

- For example, your long-term goal may be to recruit 500 students to fundraise for the American Heart Challenge, Dance. Your short-term goal could then be to recruit 100 fundraising students by February 1.
- These goals will help you to prioritize your focus and resources, as well as keep you on track for success.
- Your American Heart Association partner is a valuable resource for the goal setting process and will walk you through setting both long-term overarching fundraising and recruitment goals, as well as benchmarks along the way.

**Your School Fundraising Goal:**

$ ____________________________

**Your Recruitment Goal:**

___________ fundraising students

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**CT, Age 3, Survivor**

Three-year-old CT was born with hypoplastic left heart syndrome, which is essentially half a heart. He spent the first eight months of his life in the hospital fighting for his life. CT has had four major open heart surgeries, along with a list of other surgeries due to his heart disease to help him thrive. CT has one more open heart surgery with hopes that his anatomy will stay strong until adulthood, when he will eventually need a heart transplant. Even though CT fights a battle everyday he continues to be a fun little boy very full of life! Without the American Heart Association, CT would not have the odds of living in his favor.
The below timeline is a sample to serve as a guide, with the ability to both condense and expand the timeline. Take the time as a committee to create a calendar of your own timeline, make sure to include your short-term and long-term goals and deadlines to help keep you on track.

Month 1
• Select and form your committee
• Begin to hold regular meetings
• Finalize event date, location and time
• Set your goals
• Draft a logistics day of event schedule
• Ensure fundraising website is set-up
• Finalize any incentives
• Identify survivors

Month 2
• Create a promotional plan and start to promote to your school and your community
• Start to recruit students to sign up online and start fundraising
• Finalize event timeline and ensure you will have all equipment needed

Month 3
• Hold your American Heart Challenge, Dance event!
• Celebrate your success and the impact you’ve made!
• See “Event Wrap-Up” on page 21 for details on what to do after your event.
It can be hard to get people to commit to something they don't yet fully understand, having never experienced it. As a committee member, you are leading the way and bringing this program to life.

You can look at existing clubs like student government, national honor society, etc. as a place to start recruiting members. If you’re already part of an established group, all you need to do is identify who will serve in which role.

Look for students whose values align with the American Heart Association, who have enthusiasm for making a difference, time to dedicate to the cause, and strong leadership and organizational skills. You may even want to have an informational meeting where interested students can learn more.

The committee will plan, organize and execute the American Heart Challenge, Dance event. They are responsible for planning and promoting the event, recruiting fundraising dancers and creating a sustainable program at your school.

When you’re looking to recruit students, a good size committee group is 7-12 students, with no more than 15 students recommended. This group size makes it manageable to divide out the responsibilities. You will also want to have two chairs who serve as the leads of the committee.
Finding an Advisor
The previous student committee qualities are just as important when you’re looking for a faculty advisor. With whom would you enjoy working with? All you need to do is ask them if they would be interested in serving in this role. Some common expectations include:

- Encouraging and motivating the student leaders
- Facilitating meetings
- Helping students to navigate school policies
- Growing student leadership skills

Committee Roles and Expectations
Once you have found your group of members, you will need a way to organize and assign responsibilities so that nothing gets missed and your efforts don’t overlap. You need a committee structure, with 7-12 students making up the committee.

It is important to determine the expectations of committee members so that they know what is expected of them, as well as what they can expect from others. As a group, work together to create a list of expectations. Some things to consider are:

- Meeting attendance requirements
- Communication response time
- Requirement for funds raised in order to lead by example
It’s Time! All your hard work, time and dedication are about to come to life as you make a real impact on the lives in your community and making hearts healthier.

When you think about your event, choose station activities that your student body will enjoy and for which you have the equipment. Below is just an example of what your event can look like, with corresponding minutes.

**0:00 - 0:02**
Students run in through a high five tunnel with music playing

**0:02 - 0:05**
Welcome and mission message led by student committee

**0:05 - 0:12**
Divide into four stations (to mimic the four chambers of the heart) and pick four activities, one at each station. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Basketball
- Selfie Station
- Physical challenge like wall sits or push-ups, etc.
- Coloring station
- Rock, paper, scissors
- Fundraising station
- Simon Says
- Volleyball
- Dodgeball

Before each rotation everyone will come together to do the American Heart Challenge choreographed dance and hear a mission message.

Make the event yours – you can have dance offs, set an overall theme or divide grades or teams into themes and dress accordingly!
0:15 - 0:37
Station 1

0:37 - 0:39
American Heart Challenge dance, mission message and rotate

0:39 - 1:01
Station 2

1:01 - 1:03
American Heart Challenge dance, mission message and rotate

1:03 - 1:25
Station 3

1:25 - 1:27
American Heart Challenge dance, mission message and rotate

1:27 - 1:49
Station 4

1:49 - 2:00
Closing ceremony with final reveal and leaderboard of top fundraising students

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED**

- **Music:** Check out the American Heart Association’s Spotify channel for playlists. You could even ask a student to DJ the event.

- **Speakers:** Make sure you have speakers to project both the music and your emcee.

- **Screen/AV Equipment:** To show the American Heart Challenge choreographed dance, which you can find on YouTube, show a running leaderboard and share messages from survivors.

- **Microphone:** You will designate a student to serve as the emcee of the event and give the welcome message, help groups rotate and conclude the event.

- **Decorations:** Decorate the room in your theme, with hearts for the American Heart Association or as a way for students to share for whom they are dancing for, like a loved one.

- **Station Equipment:** Be sure to gather any equipment you may need for your station activities.

- **Reveal Numbers:** During the closing ceremony you may want to create or paint signs with your final fundraising numbers that students can unveil one-by-one to announce your final total.

- **Food/Drinks:** For a two-hour event food and drinks are not necessary. Encourage students to bring their own water bottle to stay hydrated.
In order to promote American Heart Challenge, Dance and recruit students to accept the challenge and start fundraising, here are some tips.

**Share with Administration**
It is important for teachers and staff to know about the event in case they are asked. Under communications template section, you will see a sample email for your principal to send to all staff. It would also be great to attend a school staff meeting if you can, along with your advisor, to share about this event before you start to promote it.

**Educate Your Committee Members**
It is imperative that your members are educated on the mission of the American Heart Association, who you are helping, what your event will be like and what is required to attend in terms of a fundraising minimum.

**Practice an Elevator Speech**
An elevator speech is a clear, brief message or “commercial.” It communicates all the necessary information. It’s typically about 30 seconds or less, the time it would take you to ride from the top to the bottom of a building in an elevator. What would you say?

The more personal you make it the better. Think “draw them in” versus “sell them.” You want to express confidence, be excited, make it conversational and think about their needs and goals, not yours. Don’t forget to share about the people they’ll be helping!

**WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ELEVATOR SPEECH:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>Tell them about your dance party and the activities!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHEN &amp; WHERE</td>
<td>Let them know the date, time and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY</td>
<td>Share why you’re passionate about the American Heart Association and improving the health of your community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW</td>
<td>Let them know that they can earn access by showing they have heart and raising $50* or more for the American Heart Association. Don’t forget to share the deadline and how they can raise funds by sending texts, sharing on social media and sending emails.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Alternatives are available
Our American Heart Challenge website and App are online registration and fundraising tools. You have the ability to create a personalized website for your school.

**Personalizing Your School Page**
To get started login to the website at heart.org/AmericanHeartChallenge with your provided username and password by your American Heart Association staff partner and go to My Headquarters.

1. Update your school fundraising goal by clicking **Update School Goal** under School.

2. **Edit your school page** by editing the photo with something personal to your school, like a school photo or your mascot. Edit the story with details about your event and create a custom URL to make it easy to share your link.

3. To send **Emails** to registered students and donors, choose your contact group and a sample message. It is recommended to send two messages a week in the month leading up to your event.

4. To see who has registered click on the **Reports** tab where you can see individual students and how much they have raised. You can even download this report.

If you need help at anytime you can click on the **Live Chat** box on the right-hand side.
How to Fundraise for the American Heart Challenge

1. As a student you can fundraise through the website or the App. On the website under your headquarters, update your personal goal and consider leading with a personal donation and making an extraordinary impact.

2. Next, under the Email tab send 10 or more emails to family and friends asking them to support you and the American Heart Association.

3. Get social! Post your link on social media or use the App to send text messages.

Go Mobile!

1. Search American Heart Challenge to download the App on your phone and register (first time user) or login.

2. Edit your page by uploading a personal photo under the Pages tab. If you’re raising money in honor or in memory of someone, be sure to share that by editing your story. The more personal your page is, the more money you will raise.

3. Edit your goal by clicking on the arrow, which will take you to the mobile friendly version of the HQ. Family and friends want to help you reach your goal, so be sure to update this.

4. Send messages to ask for support through email and text, and post on social media. Did you know that text messages have a 100% open rate?
COMMUNICATION
TEMPLATES
Email and Social Posts

STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT EMAIL
(from Principal)

Dear Staff,
In the spirit of giving back, I’m excited to announce that our school will be participating in a program sponsored by the _____________________ (insert club name) for the American Heart Association.

With your help, we can continue to support the American Heart Association’s fight against heart disease and stroke, which are the No. 1 and No. 5 causes of death in the United States, as well as congenital heart defects, which are the No. 1 birth defect of all babies. Their mission is to change the course of heart disease and stroke through healthy habits and critical research. Nearly everyone knows someone who has been touched by their work.

On ________________ (insert date) we will be holding a dance party from __________ (insert time) in the __________ (insert location) for participating students.

Registration has begun, and I would like to invite you to join the effort as part of our school team at heart.org/AmericanHeartChallenge

I greatly appreciate your support in this endeavor and look forward to kicking this off with our students as we make a difference in the health of our community.

Principal

FACEBOOK ANNOUNCEMENT POST
Put your dancing shoes on! Our school is participating in a program called #AmericanHeartChallenge sponsored by the ________________ (insert club name) in support of the @AmericanHeartAssociation. The American Heart Challenge, Dance is a chance to show us you have heart by helping others, learn tons of healthy habits, and have a whole lot of fun. Your generosity will help scientists develop technology and treatments that literally save lives. To sign up, visit heart.org/AmericanHeartChallenge and register under our school.

FACEBOOK REMINDER POST
It’s almost here! #AmericanHeartChallenge benefiting the @AmericanHeartAssociation is on (Date of event). Remember to dress accordingly and get ready for an afternoon of dancing!

TWITTER ANNOUNCEMENT POST
Get ready for #AmericanHeartChallenge! Our school has kicked off our event to benefit @American_Heart. Register today heart.org/AmericanHeartChallenge ♥
FAMILY EMAIL

Hello, families! It’s almost here! The American Heart Challenge, Dance event benefiting the American Heart Association will take place on (Date of event). Students, remember to wear dancing shoes and bring your best moves! Also, we’re closing in on our service-learning goals, so keep up the good work! We can’t wait for next week.

ROBOCALL SCRIPT

Hello, families! This is a friendly reminder that the American Heart Challenge, Dance event benefiting the American Heart Association will take place next week, on (date of event). Be sure to register online at heart.org/AmericanHeartChallenge today!

#AmericanHeartChallenge #DanceChallenge #HaveAHeart #DanceYourHeartOut #DancingAndDonating #WereTheGenerationWithHeart #AmericanHeartAssociation

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Finn, Age 4, Survivor

Four-year-old Finn was born with multiple heart defects, and spent the first eight months of his life in the hospital. Finn has had 14 heart surgeries so far, and underwent a customized procedure last year that corrected his special heart anatomy and has given him the gift of life. Today Finn is very energetic and loves to have fun.
Incentives are an important piece of creating fun and encouraging students to get involved in the fundraising efforts, especially as you are building your event in the first year.

- An administrator or teacher performs a dance if your goal is reached. This can be done before your event by setting a half-way goal to drive early momentum.
- If your school goal is reached, administration will dance battle the dance or football team.
- Students can come on the morning show or be featured on the school website if they raise $_________+.
- Top fundraising student can dress as your school mascot.
- Top fundraising student(s) gets to create a spirit day for the school (wear a hat day, wear a certain color day, wear pajamas, etc.).
- Top fundraising/participation grade gets an early dismissal day.
- Grade level or classroom who has the highest participation wins _________________.
- Students who raise $_______+ can slime/pie your Principal.
- If your school goal is reached your Principal will serve lunch, stay on the roof for the day or dress up in a costume for the day.
- The first student to hit a fundraising benchmark will get their name on the school marquee or on the school’s social media pages to be recognized.
- For every $______ raised students get to vote for a teacher to do a physical challenge like push-ups.

You will want to come up with incentive ideas at the beginning of your planning that will be done along the way, versus just one at the end.

For example, an incentive could help to recruit fundraising students a month before the event if anyone who is signed up online and has money raised gets entered to win something. Incentives can be individual or to rally the whole school together.
Congratulations, you just had a successful American Heart Challenge, Dance event to support the American Heart Association! Thank you for inspiring your school and community and your commitment to building a strong American Heart Challenge, Dance program at your school, we are so grateful!

All that’s left now is to wrap-up your event. Here’s how to do that:

• Count any cash or check donations and mail in with your pre-paid envelope.

• Announce your success and what you raised on social media, morning show, school website, etc. It’s time to celebrate!

• Let your American Heart Association partner know your official total so that they can celebrate alongside you!

• Order thank you gifts.

• Have a post committee meeting to assess and capture notes on what went well and what you would want to do differently next year.

• Send thank you notes soon after to top fundraising students, your advisor and any volunteers or supporters.

CONTACT US!
To connect with your American Heart Challenge, Dance staff partner, email americanheartchallenge@heart.org and let us know your school name and address.
The American Heart Association and the American Dance Movement have collaborated to bring dance to students across the country. “American Heart Association believes in a healthy heart and the American Dance Movement believes in a healthy body and mind. So it’s a beautiful partnership between these two organizations,” said producer Nigel Lythgoe, American Heart Association national volunteer and co-founder of the American Dance Movement.

The American Dance Movement was co-founded by Nigel Lythgoe, creator, producer and on-air judge of the hit show So You Think you Can Dance and Adam Shankman, producer for Hairspray and Step Up.

The American Heart Association and American Dance Movement will co-host special end of the year dance celebrations for the three high schools that raise the most funds through the American Heart Challenge, Dance. These celebrations will also feature special dance celebrity guests.

In addition, schools can utilize a dance routine video, led by celebrity dancers Stephen “tWitch” Boss and Allison Holker. The video is packed with cardio-pumping dance steps to help students move their way to heart health through step-by-step dance instruction. Click here to view the American Heart Challenge routine video or search ‘American Heart Challenge’ on YouTube.
The American Heart Association is working with high school students in a nationwide movement to finally and forever change the course of heart disease, stroke and congenital heart defects, through the American Heart Challenge; a service-learning and fundraising program.

The American Heart Challenge engages high school students to focus on whole body wellness and to live a heart-healthy lifestyle.

**The American Heart Challenge Creates:**
- Leadership development opportunities
- Community service hours
- College application builder
- A positive cultural experience
- Physically and emotionally well-rounded students
- Community minded students

**Eligibility:**
- Must be a current high school junior or senior
- Demonstrate leadership skills within your school’s American Heart Challenge event
- Have a passion for impacting the health of your community
- A letter of support by your American Heart Challenge advisor

**Apply online by APRIL 15, 2020 at heart.org/scholarship**

$1,000 COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS!
The American Heart Association’s Mission:

To be a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives.