

BREATH OF HOPE, INC.

CONGENITAL DIAPHRAGMATIC HERNIA AWARENESS DAY IDEAS

If you are like most of us, you don't have much time or energy to think about Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Day activities.

Here are three easy steps to get started:

1. Find a Partner - You don't have to do this alone.
2. Find a Reporter - Next time you read the local newspaper, pay attention to which reporters write about personal interest stories. Choose a reporter who seems to be sensitive to special family or children's issues, who will do a respectful interview with a family or spokesperson. This spokesperson doesn't have to be you, but it could be! We'll walk you through it - piece of cake. Write down the name of the reporter and find out the phone number and address of the newspaper. Later you are going to ask for an appointment and give them a press release.
3. Find a Project - Are you bookmarking everything? Keeping notes on file in your computer? Good! Set up a meeting (in person, by email, or on the phone) with the other contacts in your area. Think about what a difference YOUR part will make in helping families affected by CDH! Don't forget to include at least one parent, one service provider (teacher, doctor, judge), and one government leader (legislator, head of local department of mental health or developmental disabilities or corrections). This will help you to bridge the information gap in your community!

Now pick one (or more) of the following events to turn into a news story:

 **Candlelight ceremony.** This is the simplest event to show your support on March 31st. Please light a candle on March 31st and keep it lit until you go to bed. When you extinguish your candle, hold a moment of silence and/or recite a prayer for all CDH babies. The following is a sample prayer:

CDH Awareness Day Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father we come to you tonight, honoring and remembering our CDH babies. This day we set aside to help raise awareness to this birth defect called Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia. The little ones that fought so hard yet their little bodies became weary, will forever be in our hearts. Though their stay here on earth was short, their lives held great meaning. To the ones that defied the odds and became our hero's we will never forget your strength and will to survive. The hurdles you overcame will be engraved in our memories.

(Extinguish your candle.)

This day we celebrate all of you, our Heavenly Angels and our Earthly Angels. Thank you Lord for your love and your strength, keep shining your light on us so we may feel your presence.

In Jesus name Amen!

 **Ring some bells.** Plan your own Bell Concordance. Ask a church to ring their bells. If you know a local church that has bells, write a letter and call and make an appointment to talk to whoever is in charge. Take along a few brochures. If you can't find any bells to ring, you can simply have a Moment of Reflection.

 **Put out a donation bowl.** Ask everyone in your office to empty their pocket change into a donation bowl every day. Use a clear fishbowl and watch it fill . . . have a department competition to see which bowl fills first . . . or how many bowls you can fill.

 **Host a breakfast, lunch or cocktail party.** You can ask the church if there is a community service group that might like to provide donuts and coffee in the church hall. Or invite everyone to

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bring a potluck dish to a nearby park, or a facility provided by a local disabilities agency. This is a good opportunity to partner up with other organizations who might like to collaborate in future projects and grant opportunities. With an informal gathering of families and community leaders, the folks who formulate local policy will get to meet the families who impacted by how those policies are implemented.

 **Plan a Walk-a-long.** Even if you only get a dozen people together, you will have a crowd worthy of media attention. This is kind of like a walk-a-thon but not exactly. Instead of pledging dollars per mile, people can make straight donations to support the walk. Just find a public place like a park or a lake or a mountain trail that you can use as a meeting place (and a media interview place).

 **Plan a public Information Table.** Call the manager of your local shopping mall. Ask if you can have a table to distribute information on CDH. We will provide you with handouts and you can get them copied. Be sure to keep the receipt as this is considered an "in-kind donation". Buy several bags of Snickers mini bars and pass them out with one of our "What is CDH" cards. (Use card stock or standard business card forms.)

 **Show a video or give a presentation.** This can be scheduled at your local library. You can request an excellent video from CHOPS to use if you don't have one of your own.

 **Put up posters.** Print out some Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness posters and hang them up on local bulletin boards (at the store, Laundromat, churches, universities, etc.) You might even get your local schools to post them. If you print out some of these on photo paper at "best" resolution on your color printer, they will have a high quality appearance. You can have large posters printed from the small ones for just a few dollars at your local Kinkos, Office Depot or Office Max.

 **Host a Mini-Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Awareness Campaign.** This is great for the office - yours or your doctor's - or any reception area that will give you permission. Just a bowl of Snickers mini bars and some Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia Fact Cards are all you need.

Public Service Announcements for local radio will be available at no cost from Breath of Hope. We will let you know when they are available.