

Virtual VisionWalk Kickoff – Transcript

Michele DiVincenzo: We are going to go ahead and get started welcome to the virtual VisionWalk Kickoff. Michele DiVincenzo, vice president of events at the foundation. We appreciate everyone joining us for this evening's call. While we are sad to not be walking in person together this spring, we are focusing on what we can do from afar to continue to raise funds an awareness to support our mission while keeping everyone in our community safe. Rather than hosting a physical walk we have created a fun way to celebrate together with a virtual experience. Please find a way to walk, run, dance bike or whatever activity you choose individually or as a family on June 6 and post and share your photos using the hashtag #VisionWalkStrong.

I would like to briefly review some logistical details for the call. Currently all participant lines are in listen only mode.

Today's call is being recorded and available in closed captioning. To activate the closed captioning, please select closed captioning at the bottom of the interface. Today's call does have some slides and all information will be shared verbally. If you are using a screen reader, please be aware the controls are at the bottom of the zoom interface. This control bar may collapse when not in use. If you prefer to prevent the controls from auto hiding, go to the settings within the Zoom platform, select accessibility and then select always show meeting controls. To ask questions during the meeting, you can use the following methods. First you may access the Q and A feature on the Zoom control bar to type in your questions or you can text questions to 843-817-1994. Again, the phone number to text questions during this call is 843-817-1994. If you joined in by telephone only and not on the Zoom app, please submit the questions via e-mail to visionwalk@fightingblindness.org. Again, the e-mail address is visionwalk@fightingblindness.org. At this time I would like to turn the conference over to Kelsey Miller Director of Events Mid-Atlantic region.

Kelsey Miller: Hi everyone. I'm Kelsey Miller I'm the Director of Events for Mid Atlantic. I am going to talk about what we can do leading into June 6. Our virtual walk is a little over a week away and we have a bunch of activities planned for the week leading up to the walk. Make sure you follow us on Facebook, Instagram or YouTube. We will be streaming most

of our festivities on YouTube. Our national Facebook handle is @foundationfightingblindness. Our YouTube channel is @fightingblindness and our Instagram handle is @fightblindness. To further our mission, you can share your team page and let your family, friends, coworkers and neighbors know you are participating in our virtual VisionWalk. We have a couple really fun activities and challenges planned for next week the first in honor of the foundations mission and 2020 year, we have created a 2020 challenge for each vision walker to recruit 20 friends to donate 20 online to their team between Wednesday, June 3rd and Saturday, June 6th. That's next Wednesday June 3rd and Saturday June 6th which is our walk day. Of course, it wouldn't be walk day without prizes so we are going to all those that complete the 2020 challenge will be automatically entered to win a \$100 Target gift card. You can also add a personal challenge for your team for every 20-dollar donation made on walk day you will do five push-ups, you can get creative with it and have fun and make it personal while we are at home we put together a kids scavenger hunt and we do get active on this screen you will see an image of the scavenger hunt we will be sharing these also via Facebook and through email those that complete the most scavenger hunt in each region and submit their card by Sunday, June 7th will win a \$25 gift card. If multiple people complete the entire list we will hold a random drawing and for the bingo every person five in row Bingo prize. They need to e-mail the completed Bingo card visionwalk@fightingblindness.org. Take part in our "Chalk the Walk" movement to raise awareness and inspire others by decorating your neighborhood sidewalks with positive messaging don't forget to post all of your activities whether it's chalk the walk, scavenger hunt, your jog in the neighborhood, walk with your dog, tag @foundationfightingblindness or email them to your event manager or to visionwalk@fightingblindness.org. They will all be compiled into a collective Facebook album to show our strength and connect all of our walkers nationwide.

At this time I am going to introduce you to our fabulous Midwest Events Director Lynda Shellist she's going to share fun ways to spread awareness.

Lynda Shellist: Hello. We have a lot of different ways to share on social media, we have Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. They all have national pages as well as local pages if you haven't liked them already please do. We have something exciting that you can put on your Facebook profile

picture it is a #VisionWalkStrong frame. It's a very simple way to do it you just go to your page and hover your profile picture and updates and you click on that and that will give you an option to choose a new frame. At the top it will tell you a search bar where you can put in foundation fighting blindness or you can put in vision walk strong and the frame will come up and you just click on it at the bottom it says use as profile picture and there you go. It's very helpful any time someone sees you post they will see that. It's a great way to create awareness. You can create any type of video while walking or talk about your team, and you can put it on your own personal page, you can send it to your event manager and we will post it on our regional page. If you are looking for a new cover photo we have several options. Reach out to your event manager and we can share that with you during the week of the virtual walk we will be posting new vision walk content every single day. Please share them on your page. Again it's a great way to spread awareness is by sharing the things that we are posting.

We also have sample posts that you can use that we will share with you as well. You can also go on your own social media page and share the link to your vision walk page. It's a great way to ask people for support. If you put the link in there and in your post that people just need to click on it and go straight to your page and that's when they can donate to you or they can join your team. And again, feel free to check with your event manager for any help with any of these. Whatever you do whatever your posting please be sure to use the hashtag #VisionWalkStrong. Thank you so much for spreading awareness on social media as we all know it's a great way to get our message out there, so thank you for listening I would like to turn things over to Alyssa.

Alyssa Steel: Hi! I'm Alyssa Steel I'm the event director for the south region. We understand that fund raising during this time can be very difficult. As a way to help you reach or exceed your fundraising goal, we put together a virtual vision tool kit with resources to help you navigate fund raising for this virtual experience. In this tool kit not only will you find the social media resources as Lynda mentioned you will find sample fund raising letters and e-mails and fund raising ideas you can do with your team like hosting a virtual cooking class or work out or asking your friends and family to donate their commute. These ideas are a great way to connect with your loved ones while also helping you reach your goal. In the tool kit we have also included information and websites for different

on-line platform that you can use to connect with others. These sites include go Zoom meetings, Skype and Google hang outs. We know that navigating these platforms can sometimes be confusing so if you need help putting something together, please feel free to contact your event manager and they will be able to assist you. To view or download this tool kit, you can visit your local vision walk website. In addition to the tool kit we have a few other resources that we would like to share with you. We have sent out press releases locally and nationally to bring awareness to our vision walk. If you have anyone that you would like to share this with like a news station or reporter, again you can reach out to your event manager and we are always looking for people to volunteer to help with this that's a huge help to bringing vision to our walk. We won't be walking this year. We have created Spotify play list with songs you can listen to during your walk or work out. We will be sharing the link to this play list with you in the coming days. We now have custom zoom backgrounds with our vision walk so that you can show your support for the vision walk. Lastly the event staff will be available to you throughout the day if you have any questions or concerns. We are also able to share your photos on the local Facebook pages if you do not have social media. All you need to do is e-mail them over to your event manager.

I would like to hand it off to Donna Cohen she's the event manager for the west.

Donna Cohen: Hello everybody. Thank you so much for joining us this evening. Here to talk a little bit about the day of so June 6th that's when we are all going to get out and walk somehow somehow whether it's our living room or our driveway or our neighborhood or whatever you can do in your town? So I want to talk a little bit about the time line and I do want to preface this by saying this is eastern time so obviously for someone like me in the west instead of 12:00 o'clock it will be nine a.m. pacific time. Be aware we are using eastern time as a standard reference please adjust it for your current time zone. We are going to start off the day with our national anthem and it is going to be performed by one of our own members out here on the west in the Southwest region out of our Dallas vision walk. He's a 13 year old young man named Jeremy Brantley. He's a part of team Brantley. His mother serves as our vision walk chair for Dallas. Bear in mind he's 13 and I understand he was a little surly during his performance if he's wearing his cap and not showing his face those of you who have had 13 year olds you know why. We have some of our local

members from our different regions share how they are going to spend the day what they are going to do and what they are doing and how they are enjoying our vision walk day or virtual vision walk.

Around 12:15 we will have opening remarks by our chief operating officer Jason Menzo. This will be followed by a warm up with Rebecca Alexander and then just like in any walk, even though we are not together, no walk is complete without official ribbon cutting. We will cut the ribbon and everyone can start doing your activities whether you go and walk and whether you go and decide to draw chalk, Mozart on the street, however you decide to do it. There's a lot of activities for you to participate in after the ribbon cutting. We do want to encourage everybody at some point to get out and walk that 3.1-miles as best you can. So from about 12:20 to about 12:45 that's when we are going to encourage you to do some activities. These activities can be anything they could be you going on walking even if it's a 15 minute walk and say hi to your neighbor across the street and go to the local park we can do activities like I mentioned earlier like a scavenger hunt you can walk or do a dance party to the Spotify list. You can make an eye walk sign and take a picture with it. You can do the bingo, you can sit if it's too hot outside and hang for 15 minutes you can do whatever you want. These 15 minutes is about celebrating VisionWalk. The 15 years that VisionWalk has been around for the foundation then once that's done at about 12:45 no matter what you have done or where you are at we want to encourage you to come back for our closing remarks with our chief executive officer Ben Yerxa we appreciate all being here and participating on the sixth. We would really appreciate that you come back at around 12:45 and close out the morning. So the morning in terms of everything that we are going to do is going to be about an hour. We want you to take the entire day to do something that they encourage you to get out and get some fresh air and celebrate VisionWalk. We know it looks different this year but we will all be thinking of each other in spirit. So that's a little bit about how the day is going to progress. I mentioned a couple of things that you can do during that 15 minutes like walking or some of the games and one thing we definitely want to encourage you to do regardless or when it's all over is post your photos. We have the hashtag #VisionWalkStrong and you have your local Facebook pages and post, post, post. We want to see what you guys have been doing. I know some of the Foundation staff is going to be posting photos. I personally will be posting photos of me and my adorable dog that I can talk about any time. I am sure I will be posting photos of me

relaxing after I walk three miles. Please post your photos and come and walk with us on June 6. I am now going to turn it over to our amazing director in the New York region Ms. Katie Van Benschoten.

Katie Van Benschoten: Thank you so much Donna and thank you for joining us tonight. It's my pleasure to introduce to our local VisionWalk team captains from around the country to share stories about what they are doing to make their vision walk experience special this year, so first I would like to introduce someone from my own area here in New York Karen and Nick from the New York Walk. They are walk co-chairs and they are trustees for the Foundation. So, Karen and Nick.

Karen Montagnese: Hi you can hear me? Hi everybody. This is very exciting this the biggest walk I have ever been in all over the country so this is very good. I was sad that our walk was canceled this year but I was pretty pleased that we were going to get to celebrate together this is a unique experience. Nick and I have been doing this for 14 years we have cochaired VisionWalk. We started as Long Island Chapter Presidents and now you know time has changed and we are trying to do things different. This year we are having a virtual PILATES class. I exercise and do PILATES we have been doing Zoom now since COVID crisis. The studio was nice that we could offer it to everyone. I would like to invite you all of you to join us for a virtual PILATES class at ten thirty in the morning on June 6. Eastern standard time sorry LA but you got to get up early to join us. We are going to exercise for an hour it's going to be good for anybody at any level and all you need is to lie on the floor on your belly or your back and side not too complicated and it's fun and another point we are still fund raising I don't want to forget that point. Our class is offered for free but we do have a levels of donations there on the website. We don't want to discourage anybody to come for any reason and also we always write letters. I am kind of scared or asking, I have RP I am always afraid of asking my husband is good about asking so we just e-mailed out our letters yesterday and today. We are on the late side. It's never too late and we are making money so don't forget to ask, send out your letters and join us for PILATES. The link is on the visual walk website or call Katie if you need anything call Katie or somebody it's at artofpilatesli.com. I hope it's somewhere in the links to just join. This teacher is very good with descriptions verbal descriptions you don't have to see it, I never see it. Yes come join us.

Katie Van Benschoten: Thank you, Karen. We did post the link to the chat feature in Zoom and we will be sending it out with the notes that go out from all of this with all the links.

Karen Montagnese: Okay. I want to see you all. Sort of see you. Whatever. (laughter)

Katie Van Benschoten: Our next speaker tonight is representing our Chicago vision walk in the Midwest region its Abbey Fink. Abbey, are you there to chat?

Abbey Fink: Hi. My name is Abbey I'm with the Chicago walk this is my second year participating. Prior to quarantine I organized a big concert fundraiser. We had 450 people in attendance, so you paid 30-dollars to get in and that included live music from an amazing band, dinner and drinks. We offered a cash bar and bake sale and had over one hundred raffle items that businesses donated it was a super fun night and raised a lot of money more than money raised hoped that a cure would be found. Right around the same time of this event news was just coming out about the Corona virus a few weeks later it seemed any other events would not be possible due to nationwide shut down. It was crushing because like many of you I made it my mission to help find a cure. I am selling team shirts which I have on right now. I had these made for the vision walk and I'm still selling them so people can get them for the virtual walk. I had PURIVIDA bracelets made to represent a sunrise and sunset two views I will always see. These are great for both men and women and they sell for six dollars each. Another amazing idea for fund raising in this time is to host an on-line Facebook party with profits being donated to the foundation fighting blindness. -- with profits being donated to foundation fighting blindness. This is happening from the comfort of your own home. If you have a great product you love to see if they can set up an on-line party to benefit the foundation fighting blindness. I hope you find these tips helpful thank you.

Katie Van Benschoten: Thank you so much Abbey those are great ideas for our creative fund raising. Our next speaker is representing the Jacksonville area. It is Adriann Keve who is the chapter President and VisionWalk media and marketing chair. Please share your story.

Adriann Keve: Hello I have been involved with the foundation for the past 11 years an been involved in every vision walk we have had in Jacksonville. We usually do a big GALA to fund raise that had to be postponed to August that's going to be for next years walk for us. We are still looking for ways to fund raise. We are pursuing sponsorships an we are asking our businesses that we frequent and if they want to sponsor the walk and we have had some success with that and we also have team that is very successful with their letter writing campaign and there is a lot of money with it and I think one of the keys for those guys is that they include a self-addressed stamp envelope with so it makes it super easy to send your donations back to them and another THEUPBLG that we are doing is well, that I did was it was recently my birthday so I asked my friends and family to donate to the vision walk and support me in the vision walk for my birthday instead of gifts and cards. Another thing that I have planned is that I am going to do something a little bit out of the box that my family dozen know about yet so hopefully they are not watching, but I plan on maybe doing something a little bit crazy with my hair if I get enough people to donate X amount of money or to get x number of people to join the team, so that's what we are doing.

Katie Van Benschoten: Thank you so much I hope you share photos of new hair styles when you hit your goal. The last team captain story is from our west region it's Cathy Quock who is the walk chair for the Bay Area Cathy are you there to chat with us?

Cathy Quock: I am an I hope everyone is hear me okay. My name is Cathy Quock I'm the walk chair for the San Francisco bay area. This is the fourth year that I have been chairing the walk and actually for the past four years I have hosted a poker and Bingo fundraiser which luckily this year I planned earlier than normal and I think it was one of the last events preCOVID, so it was the last Saturday in February and normally what I do is I use the profits for that fundraiser to pay for lunch on the day of our walk if you have ever been to the bay area we have participants coming from Sacramento all the way down to gill Roy or is a lin TPHA it's quite a large area. One of my passions was to make sure that I made it nice for people to come and if they are driving two hours I want to make sure I pay for their lunch so that's what I have been doing for the past few years and so unfortunately since there's no walk physical walk this year I am using part of that money and because I really wanted to encourage people to post their pictures to our Facebook page I am actually having a little bit of

a, I guess it's not a contest but it's something to encourage people to post their pictures and so we are going to give a 25-dollar gift card to ten people who post pictures kind of just at random. So that's one of the things we are doing. Actually since today is my birthday my daughter is going to help me post something on Facebook so that we can have people join my team as my birthday present and hopefully we get a lot of people to join therefore increase awareness and get them to join us for our walk on Saturday June 6th. That's what I have thank you all so much for everything you do.

Katie Van Benschoten: Well, thank you so much Cathy from all of us happy birthday and thank you for celebrating with us today. So next up we wanted to least the last half hour of this call to answer any questions that anyone has about the virtual vision walk that we are celebrating or anything like that so we do have a few ways that people that you can all submit your questions if you are at your e-mail you can send them to visionwalk@fightingblindness.org. You can text your questions to 843-817-1994, you can use the chat feature in Zoom and submit your questions that way.

So I do have we have one question that's been submitted and that was asking about the T-shirts if the walks were printing them locally and about getting those distributed? So the answer is yes we are printing our shirts locally. We will be printing them after our fiscal year ends on June 30 so we can capture all of the sponsorships that come in and so that any one who raises their hundred dollars by June 30th we will still receive their shirt and then we will be sending them out or distributing them later in the summer once we receive them all. So we will be doing the shirts and they will be coming out later in this summer and you will have lots of time to hit your hundred dollars or more.

If there are other questions?

Alyssa Steel: I have a question via text this is for Michele D what is happening to the vision walk that are scheduled this fall.

Michele DiVincenzo: It's a great question and thank you for passing that onto me. At this point in time we haven't made a decision we will keep everyone posted as we monitor the situations surrounding COVID19. If we need to pivot and make that a virtual walk we would be doing that and

letting all of our fall team captains and participants know and the goal would be to host another virtual vision walk for our fall events sometime in October. Again, nothing official at this point and we will keep everyone posted if and when that decision is made.

Katie Van Benschoten: The next question is if there is a general page on the web site. We can direct friends and family to with all the information including date, time, time line, the link to the activities and basically a complete package, so you will all be getting an e-mail tomorrow with all of the details they will be updating the visionwalk.org as well as the information and the links you will all get that in an e-mail tomorrow to share and it will be on our variety of pages that you will have access to, but visionwalk.org will be updated as well as the local walks.

Other questions? I am sure there's lots of them unless we did a perfect job explaining everything tonight?

From the e-mail we did get a question about getting into the different, getting into view the webinar and asking about registration. For registration we are asking people to go in and register for the walk so that we can keep sending all the participants links to join us that day and you can also be able to watch our presentation on the sixth on our Facebook page that Kelsey gave the link to and we will send it out. If you do need help registering you can talk to your local manager and also just reach out to any of the staff at the Foundation we can help you with registering especially if your group does need assistance. Let us know what we can do to help and we will be able to take care of you. Other questions? Anything else?

Kelsey Miller: This is Kelsey we got one through the chat channel. The question is where can I find the list of the scavenger hunt activities. We will be sending the scavenger hunt activities both tomorrow and next week again and we will be posting it on Facebook. If anybody doesn't receive those by next week please reach out to your local event manager and we can share it with you as well.

Michele DiVincenzo: Katie this is Michelle we have questions coming through so I will read them and one of the directors you can handle so Brenda is asking most of my team members will be totally blind or legally blind how will we access all the information you will be posting?

Katie Van Benschoten: That is a great question, so we are creating these as PDF's but also can send plain text versions if anyone does need those. So we will have those and anything we post on Facebook will also have the image description so they will be accessible in that way, but as always if something we are providing isn't accessible for you and you need it in a different format we can work with you to create something that you can use but we will be doing our best to make sure that we are putting out is accessible for as many people as possible on our social pages and what we are posting.

Michele DiVincenzo: Then we had a question from Kim can we get a copy of the full transcript of this meeting text only?

Katie Van Benschoten: I would ask Chris if you might jump in on that one?

Chris Adams: The answer to that is absolutely yes we will have a transcript available within the next few days.

Katie Van Benschoten: Awesome. Thank you, Chris.

Michele DiVincenzo: We also got a question here from Fiona when is the closing date for money to be raised and so the answer Fiona is all donations need to be received by June 30, so we can raise money until June 30 which is the last day of our fiscal year.

That's the last question I see let's give a couple more minutes to see if any others pop in? We also have one on text please explain why it's important to register since we are not having a physical walk?

Katie Van Benschoten: So that's a great question we will message people about all the details all of these tips and tools and everything that we are creating that will be sent out to all of our registrants over e-mail. It's also on our social pages but you will be guaranteed to get it and guaranteed to send it to all of those people so you won't have to hunt for it. Please do register it will be where you create your fund raising page so when you want to send out your link to help raise money for the walk you would get that link by registering for your local walk or for our virtual vision walk which is without location, to cover anyone who wanted to join us that isn't

in one of our spring walk areas. So that's why we are asking everyone to register even though it's not a physical walk.

Kelsey Miller: We just got another question will the scavenger hunt e-mail be e-mailed to everyone or should I e-mail it to all my team members. It will be sent to everyone that's been registered but as a team captain we recommend that you check in with your walkers and team members after make sure they have all the information and they did receive the e-mail it's always great to continue to communicate with them and make sure they have all the information they need.

Katei Van Benschoten: Are there other questions out there coming in? Michelle anything from you?

Michele DiVincenzo: There's one here that how do you send a thank you to someone who has donated to my fundraiser. This is my first year.

Katie Van Benschoten: That's a great question. When someone makes a donation in your participant or fund raising headquarters there is an option for you to comment on someone's the donation notice it sends them an e-mail with your thank you comment and it would also post that thank you that your fund raising page in the comment section at the bottom. That comment section kind of functions as like a social media kind of feed where all the different comments are there and the notifications about the posts but it does send that person an e-mail saying that a comment was made on their donation. You can also of course always send them an e-mail or call them especially if you know who it is hopefully you know who all of your donors are but if you can always send them a personal message as well. If you do want note cards from the foundation we do have those that we can share with you after the we get back in our offices and it we will send you note cards that you can mail out to people to thank them after the walk. You have a couple different options some immediate and some long term.

Donna Cohen: Katie I just want to add when you are registered for the walk and you get a donation you should get an e-mail notification that you received a donation and so that way if you don't know of someone is donated to you or your team you should get notified by the system that a donation has been received.

If for system reason you ever want to find out who has donated to you or your team just call your local event manager and they will be happy to send you a list of all of your donors as of that moment and who they are and how much and or if they are anonymous donor we can always find out who that person is so that you are aware. Don't hesitate to reach out to your event manager for a list of your donors at any time.

Any other questions? Well, if there are no other questions tonight I will say that you can always keep submitting them and talk to your local event manager and always reach out to us through the visionwalk@fightingblindness.org e-mail all of those methods will still be available after this meeting tonight and you can get that information and get information about the walk and we are happy to share all of that with everyone. So before we close for this evening I did want to take a moment and thank some of our national sponsors and partners. We have a few of them that joined us those Ora Clinical, Spark Therapeutics and Maui Jim we are grateful for their support of our VisionWalk and our mission. If you submitted questions we will be following up with everyone to make sure that all the answers are you know fully understand everything, like I said you can continue to submit them to us. I do want to thank you all for joining us this evening for being part of our virtual vision walk and in the foundation family. We truly appreciate your help and support of finding these preventions, treatments and cures. We are looking forward to celebrating with everyone on the virtual vision walk day and beyond and having everyone there with us on June 6. If you do have any questions your events manager is available and happy to help provide answers and all of us in the foundation family are here to support you as well. With that I will say thank you very much and thank you and have a good evening. We will send a notice out with all the information we have been talking about. Everyone has a wonderful day. Okay --

Donna Cohen: Sorry to interrupt you we have one last question that slipped in. It's the timeline you gave stated that we start walking at 12:20. I am assuming this is eastern time. So yes you would start walking 12:20 eastern time or if you are on the west coast like me that would be 9:20 Pacific time or whatever time you zone it would be 20 after the hour is when we are going to have about 15 minutes for you to go for a quick walk or do one of our activities or if you just want to hang around. You don't have to walk at 12:20 you can walk any time during the day. We hope that regardless of what you do during about the 15 minute time that you will

come back watch our closing comments from Ben. That will definitely be at 45 minutes after the hour. Excellent question. Thank you.

Katie Van Benschoten: So thank you all again --

Donna Cohen: Katie another question on the phone.

Speaker on Phone: Hello. I thought that the walk started at eight thirty in the morning?

Donna Cohen: Well maybe if it was under normal circumstances your local walk might have started at eight thirty if you all gathering this year, but this year because we are doing one virtual walk on June 6th that's for everybody at the same time we will start the actual ceremony with the national anthem at around noon eastern time or nine o'clock Pacific and then the first hour will be when we are all engaged in our ceremony an opening statements an everything but this year we are just doing it a little differently for obvious reasons.

Speaker on Phone: Is it okay if I do it at eight thirty?

Donna Cohen: You are welcome to walk at eight thirty we hope that you are back at nine o'clock. What time zone are you in? Eastern, so eight thirty you are welcome to go and walk at eight thirty if you want but ceremony will actually start at noon your time. Okay. All right. Thank you.

It looks like there's I don't know if that was heard was there another question on the phone? All right. Katie I think I interrupted you for the last time.

Katie Van Benschoten: No problem. Please continue sending questions and we will continue answering them over e-mail and over text and if then if there's anything that we can do to help make your vision walk experience happier, better or more successful let us know and we look forward to celebrating with you guys all on June 6th. Thank you all so much and I hope you have a wonderful evening.