



## Here's a Free Program You Don't Want to Miss!

*By Susan Saldibar*

After reading more about [Aegis Therapies'](#) tenth WALK! event, I can't help but think that the name doesn't do the program justice. WALK!, held in conjunction with Active Aging Week (September 23-29, this year), is about so much more than walking! And participation is free.

I caught up with Kathryn Abrahamson, Director of Communications and PR for Aegis (a Senior Housing Forum partner) to get more details. WALK! was created to serve communities, businesses, and individuals, with a spate of activities that fit all ages and abilities. That makes it an attractive program for senior living communities to add to existing wellness programs.

### **Even if you can't walk you can "WALK!"**

When Aegis created the WALK! program, they built around it a wellness regimen that covers other types of exercises in addition to walking. So, even those residents who are unable to walk can participate. The purpose is to get communities thinking about what they are doing to keep residents as healthy as possible. "Our goal for the program is to jumpstart a mindset that gets residents into a wellness frame of mind, not just for one week, but all year long," says Kathryn.

Now in its tenth year, the program pulls in hundreds of communities and organizations throughout the U.S. As you can see below, “walking” is but one piece of a mosaic of Aegis’ seven dimensions of wellness:

1. **Physical Wellness:** Daily exercise routines that cover a full range of abilities.
2. **Intellectual Wellness:** A trove of trivia questions, puzzles, and brain teasers.
3. **Emotional Wellness:** Regimens for muscle relaxation and self-massage.
4. **Spiritual Wellness:** 15-minute guided meditation and deep breathing exercise techniques.
5. **Occupational Wellness:** A fun series of “name the occupation,” matching famous people with occupations and discussion of favorite activities associated with wellness dimensions.
6. **Social Wellness:** Focus on the importance of socializing with others. Covers relationships, self-respect and support systems.
7. **Environmental Wellness:** Actions and activities designed to encourage participants to enjoy and take care of their surroundings.

Now you can see why I consider the name WALK! as an understatement for this holistic program. My personal favorites, by the way, are items 2 through 7. Why, after all, should wellness stop at our muscles?

The WALK! portfolio of wellness programs guide senior living communities through the process of putting together a full week of events, with tips on how to organize and execute each one.

### **But you have to keep these programs going more than one week!**

As with all special weeks and months that focus on particular topics, Active Aging Week will come and go. But here is an opportunity for senior living communities to really grab hold of something that can provide benefits to residents all year long. Those of you with wellness programs already in place should use WALK! as a benchmark against which to evaluate your own programs. As Kathryn notes, “Really the purpose of WALK! is to give communities, groups, and individuals a jumping off point to help them understand how easy it is to incorporate physical activity and wellness into their daily lives.”

And what’s cool about these kinds of programs is that they check a couple of important boxes. Not only do they check the “health” box, they provide communities with an important differentiator against competitors that acknowledges the needs of today’s consumers who are looking at wellness as a key factor as they evaluate different communities for their loved ones.

So, is your community participating in WALK! this year? Or are you leaving your competitors to check that box?

You can get more details about the WALK! program, including how to register, [here](#).



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