

Ishmael Perry
3rd Grade
LeConte Elementary

Ishy Walks

Cesar Chavez and I are different in age, race and he was a farm worker and I am a student. However, we have much more in common. We are both male, he lived in California, was bullied at school, and he cared about people, which I do too.

One of the ways I care about people is through the San Francisco (SF) AIDS Walk. I have been participating in this event the whole of my life. My mother and I have been going for it when I was in her belly and when I was a baby in a stroller. This walk is six and half miles (10 Kilometers), is held at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco every year. More than 25,000 people come and walk to support those who have HIV AIDS by raising money.

HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus and AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. This disease destroys a person's immune system by killing health cells. The money we raise is used to buy medicine for those suffering from this disease in SF and around the Bay Area. It also goes to the scientists who are trying to find a cure.

I walk because my mom inspired me to do it for those suffering and because we could get it too. I also enjoy the walk because I am helping people; riding my bike around the park is fun; and having the food and treats. For example, last year my aunt, Margaret, came from Turlock, and my four cousins all in college: Norah, Brenda, Allen and Robbie joined us making it more fun. I was riding my bike while my family walked. Later we went to McDonald and my aunt bought me my favorite Burger. We took so many pictures to share with friends and family.

The most I have raised for AIDS Walk is 250 dollars in 2008, when mom helped me to register for the walk and created my own website where relatives and friends made donations. The same year, I joined a Multiple Sclerosis (MS) walk. MS is a disease that weakens a person's muscles. I walked to support our friend Mary, who works with mom and suffers from MS. The money we raised was to support people suffering from MS in Alameda County. Being involved in these community projects is empowering the people who are suffering by showing I care and buying them medicines helps them to lead comfortable and normal lives.

I invite you all to come and join me on July 15th, 2012 for the SF AIDS Walk!