



# Fundraising Toolkit



[www.johnritterfoundation.org](http://www.johnritterfoundation.org)

The pathway  
to aortic health  
awareness



# A letter from our Founder and Chairman

Dear Friends,

I created The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health with one goal in mind.

In John's honor, I pledged to do my part to keep other families from the pain of losing a loved one due to the unknown. My goal, to stop unnecessary suffering caused by lack of thoracic aortic dissection awareness, would take a village.

In the last twenty years, alongside our board, researchers, doctors, and our community of affected families – we have made enormous headway.

Our work, however, is not done. Every donation funds cutting-edge research, supports ongoing education on risk factors and prevention, and provides support for those impacted by thoracic aortic disease.

Your generosity allows John's memory to live on with purpose and passion. For this, and for all your kind words of encouragement, we hear you and we thank you.

The Ritter Family and I will be forever grateful.

*– Amy Yasbeck Ritter*



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The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health (JRF) is grateful for your contributions which fund our urgent mission to raise awareness of thoracic aortic aneurysm and dissection. We are always happy to offer support as you begin planning your fundraising event.

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With this support in mind, The JRF has created this toolkit to help you in the planning of your fundraising event.

This toolkit is available to download on our website at [www.johnritterfoundation.org](http://www.johnritterfoundation.org).

# 1

## Know The JRF Mission & Brand



### What is The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health?

In 2003, the world lost John Ritter to a tragically misdiagnosed thoracic aortic dissection. Although preventable, thousands of people die every year due to the lack of awareness of this critical medical emergency. To shine a much-needed light on thoracic aortic disease, John's widow, Amy Yasbeck, established The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health (JRF).

### How can I help?

The critical mission of the John Ritter Foundation cannot move forward without funding. Great advances in education, care, and medical research have been made, but there is still more to do. Every fundraiser helps. Whether it's a bowling party, Twitch event, holiday letter, or 5K- everyone can make a difference!

### What Does JRF Do?

The JRF raises awareness of thoracic aortic disease by sharing vital information with medical providers, at-risk families, and the wider aortic patient community.

With the support of its many generous donors and partners, The JRF will continue to make its life saving impact through scientific research, education, and advocacy.

### Where Do Donations Go?

Donations from your fundraiser support grants for research, family support programs like our Aorta Advocates, education services, publications, fundraising activities, and administrative expenses to keep the organization moving forward.

[Click here to view The JRF's Form 990 Filings](#)  
EIN: 26-0073309

## What We Believe



To raise awareness of thoracic aortic aneurysm and dissection through research, education, and advocacy.



To make aortic health a routine part of the patient and doctor conversation.



To prevent unnecessary suffering caused by aortic dissection.

# 1

## Know The JRF Mission & Brand

### Learn the Facts

**As a JRF fundraiser, you have the ability to inform your contacts about thoracic aortic disease, and how their donations make a difference.**

- About 20% of people with a thoracic aortic aneurysm or dissection will have a first-degree relative who also has aortic disease.
- There are currently no drugs that prevent thoracic aortic aneurysm or dissection.
- Aortic dissection is a deadly condition if misdiagnosed or not treated appropriately. Up to 40% of patients die before making it to the hospital.
- Thoracic aortic aneurysms typically have no symptoms and can grow undetected for years. Imaging of the aorta in individuals at risk along with proper management can prevent most dissections.
- Between 10–15 thousand people die each year from an aortic dissection in the U.S.
- 1–2% of the population is born with a bicuspid aortic valve, a congenital heart condition that increases the risk of dissection.

## Our Work Continues

### Awareness

- Increase understanding among healthcare providers that thoracic aortic dissections can be prevented when we identify those at risk.
- Enhance health equity to ensure that all communities can access life-saving knowledge about aortic dissection.

### Research

- Determine environmental risk factors.
- Identify the estimated 75% of genetic risk factors for dissection that remain unknown.
- Fund research addressing priorities by patient communities that increase quality and length of life after diagnosis.

### Education

- Continue to have expert-led webinars on a variety of topics in a patient friendly format.
- Create tools for clinicians to better diagnose and treat thoracic aortic dissection.
- Engage and communicate with different communities.

### Support

- Create a new standard of care that includes post-mortem genetic testing and family counseling.
- Provide mental health support to those dealing with sudden loss or life-changing diagnoses.

# 1

## Know The JRF Mission & Brand

Learn the Facts

### Some of the programs supported by your generosity

#### Research Projects

Last year, The JRF funded over \$400,000 in clinical and medical research programs.

- A Phase I clinical trial for Smooth Muscle Dysfunction Syndrome with The John Ritter Research Program received approval from the FDA. This has the potential to be the first therapy for this ultra-rare disease.
- Identification of novel genetic variants in genes associated with thoracic aortic dissection were identified by the John Ritter Research Program, providing answers and a path forward for multiple affected families.
- Multicenter clinical trial of exercise for patients who survived dissection. This trial will produce the first data to address this important patient priority.
- Mental Health Book & Guide for any patient, caregiver, or person who has lost a loved one to dissection.

#### Large Scale Partnerships

- We are working with The American College of Emergency Physicians to fund a risk stratification tool to identify aortic dissections accurately and quickly in the emergency room. Over \$400,000 is needed to complete this project.
- Mended Hearts curated resources for their visitor program and webinars focused on post-aortic dissection care through a \$20,000 grant from the JRF.
- We provided bridge funding of almost \$50,000 for the Aortic Dissection Collaborative: an infrastructure involving patients and other stakeholders to facilitate patient centered outcomes research training, support, and networking among those affected by aortic dissection.

#### Education/Resource Awareness

- The inaugural Aorta Advocates class of 20 gathered in Colorado for a weekend of fellowship and learning in July 2023. They will serve as the support and guidance for patients who contact the JRF to help them find the resources to continue their journey.
- The Aorta Academy provides direct access to aortic experts in cardiology, surgery, genetics, and more to patients all over the world.

# 1

# Know The JRF Mission & Brand

## JRF Milestones

### 2003

John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health founded by Amy Yasbeck after the death of her husband, John Ritter.



### 2010

**Ritter Rules** are published.

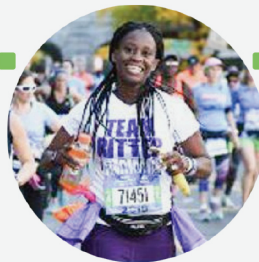
**Dr. Dianna Milewicz** creates the **John Ritter Research Program in Aortic and Vascular Diseases** at UTHealth. As of 2023, over 1,200 families are enrolled in this groundbreaking gene research.



### 2016

JRF funds research leading to the identification of the **LOX gene**, which can lead to aortic dissection.

Publication of **largest ever cohort of TGFBR1 and TGFBR2** patients working with partners in Europe, Australia, Asia and North America.



### 2012

## TEAM RITTER

**Team Ritter** runs the NYC Marathon for the 1st time which becomes a cornerstone event for years to come.

JRF begins funding a **patient navigator** for JRRP to help families on their journeys.

### 2018

JRF funds research leading to the identification of the **LTBP3 gene**, which can lead to aortic dissection.

**ACTA2 Smooth Muscle Dysfunction Syndrome (SMDS) Guidelines** are published with John Ritter Foundation funding. These are the first ever guidelines for this severe and early onset disease.

### 2021

Debuts **Purple Pinky Promise** social media campaign during Aortic Dissection Awareness Week.



### 2023

Created the Inaugural class of **Aorta Advocates**, 20 volunteers who are ready and prepared to guide and support others on their aortic health journey.



As a resource for aortic patients and caregivers, The JRF funded the development of the resource book **"Life With Aortic Disease: Caring For Your Mental Health."**

### 2022

Partners with American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) to establish the **"Ritter Score"** aiding ER physicians in the diagnosis of aortic dissection.

# 1

# Know The JRF Mission & Brand

## The JRF Brand

In any materials you create, please use our full name "The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health." Subsequent references can appear as "JRF."

### The JRF Logo

Maintaining the integrity of the logo requires that graphic standards be observed. For consistency sake, please do not alter or use inappropriately. Therefore, please do not distort, stretch, or change the scale of the elements when resizing the logo. In addition, please do not add effects or embellishments (like embossing or shadows).

It is preferred that the full purple color version of the JRF logo be used whenever possible. The black version should only be used when color printing is not available. In situations where the logo will be placed on a dark background, use the white logo for better legibility.



### Colors



**Printed Materials**  
**CMYK:** C80 M90 Y16 K4

**Digital Applications**  
**RGB:** R82 G63 B126  
**HEX:** #523F7E



**Printed Materials**  
**CMYK:** C50 M0 Y80 K0

**Digital Applications**  
**RGB:** R165 G219 B109  
**HEX:** #A5DB6D

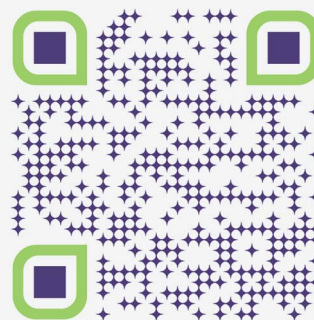


**Printed Materials**  
**CMYK:** C28 M24 Y0 K0

**Digital Applications**  
**RGB:** R181 G182 B218  
**HEX:** #B5B6DA

### Downloads

Scan the QR code below to download current versions of our logos, brochure, and Ritter Rules.



SCAN OR CLICK ME

Prior to the distribution of any event collateral using our charity name and/or logo, please contact The JRF at [info@johnritterfoundation.org](mailto:info@johnritterfoundation.org) for approval.



# 2

## Plan Your Fundraising Event

### 10 Steps to Getting Started

1

#### Brainstorm

Gather your friends for a coffee or simply sit down by yourself and start brainstorming fun ideas.

2

#### Identify an Audience

Think about who is likely to attend and/or support your type of fundraiser.

3

#### Choose an Idea

Your fundraiser should fit your interests, talents, and time availability. See the next page for a list of event ideas.

4

#### Tell Us About It

Notify the JRF team by completing your Event Application, so we can set you up with a donate page and JRF fundraising materials.

5

#### Get Specific

Determine and confirm the date, location, and other specifics of your fundraiser. Start building your contact/invite list.

6

#### Set a Goal

Setting a goal allows you to update your audience and encourages participation and donations.

7

#### Make a Plan

Create a timeline to maximize publicity, attendance, sponsorship, and fundraising. See Timeline Tips to assist in launching your campaign.

8

#### Keep Track

Keep a contact list and budget sheet. If you use JRF's website to make your fundraising page, you'll be able to see all of your online donations in real time and thank your donors personally, all from your page.

9

#### Spread the Word

Tell everyone about your fundraiser. Creating an online and social media presence helps increase visibility and donations.

10

#### Get Going

Begin the planning process with energy and excitement!

# 2

## Plan Your Fundraising Event

### Put the "FUN" in FUNdraising

Which activities do you have FUN doing?

Adding a FUNdraising component to your favorite activity is a great place to start. Here are some event ideas to get you thinking.

### Event Ideas

- 5K run/walk
- All-night video game tournament
- Baking/cooking competition
- BBQ/Block party/Potluck
- Billiards tournament
- Birthday fundraiser
- Board game tournament
- Bowling tournament
- Car wash
- Casino night
- Chili cook-off
- Dance party
- "Day off" raffle
- Dodgeball tournament
- Golf tournament
- Lemonade stand
- March Madness bracket
- Movie night
- Mystery dinner theater
- Obstacle race/mud run
- Polar Plunge
- Raise money in honor of someone
- Recognize a major life milestone
- Talent show
- Trivia night
- Workout challenge

### Important Dates to Remember






- Beyond The Heart Day (February 15)
- Aortic Dissection Awareness Week (September)
- Giving Tuesday (the Tuesday after Thanksgiving)
- Aorta Angel (November and December)

# 2



## Plan Your Fundraising Event

### Timeline Tips

#### 3–6 Months Before Your Event




-  Set your fundraising goal.
-  Contact JRF by completing the Event Application Form.
-  Ask JRF to set up your personalized fundraising page on our secure website.
-  Personalize your page with pictures and text to tell your story. Why are you doing this?
-  Connect with JRF for help reaching out to sponsors.

#### 2–3 Months Before Your Event

-  Make a list and send invites to all the people in your inner circle, such as family members and close friends.
-  Identify all of the social media networks on which you can promote your campaign.
-  Think of a few groups of people in your life to appeal to, including coworkers, teammates, church, and community groups.

*Events may require mailings. Be sure to connect with The JRF team to get these scheduled.*

#### A Week Before Your Event

-  Write an email to all those attending with last minute details about your event.
-  Post multiple times to each social media platform, adding updates and details about your event.
-  Write an email to all those unable to attend asking them to donate to the event.

# 3

## Get Your Questions Answered

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### How do I get JRF's approval for my event?

Contact JRF by completing the Event Application Form. The form can be downloaded in **Step 4 – Forms & Templates** of this Toolkit.

#### How should I collect donations?

There are many ways to collect donations. Accepting donations through JRF's website is the best way. We are happy to set up a customized fundraising page for your event. This will allow you to add photos and your story, and you will be notified any time a donation is made, or someone signs up for your event. You can also collect checks and mail them to our office.

#### Collecting checks

If attendees/donors are anticipating a tax deduction for their support, checks should be made out to The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health. Please include a note that the check is in support of your fundraiser. Send checks to:

#### The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health

11901 Santa Monica Blvd #410  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

#### When should I send in donations from my fundraiser/event?

We encourage fundraisers to send donations as soon as they are collected, but no later than 30 days after your event.

#### Can I accept the donations on behalf of JRF and send one check?

Checks should be made out to The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health with your fundraiser written in the memo line. If you write the check, you will receive the tax receipt and not your donors. If donors are expecting to make a tax-deductible donation, for any amount over the cost of goods and services, they will not receive it if you write one check.

#### What if a check is made out to me and not to JRF?

Simply endorse the check with your signature and add "payable to The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health" underneath your signature, then submit it with the other checks. The donor will receive a tax receipt from JRF.

# 3

## Get Your Questions Answered

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What should I do if I have expenses that need to be paid?

If you plan to deduct expenses before sending the total funds raised to The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health, you will need to have your guests make checks out directly to you/your organization, not The John Ritter Foundation, and then convert those funds, minus your expense, into one check made out to The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health. Please Note: If you write the check, you will receive the tax receipt and not your donors. If donors are expecting to make a tax-deductible donation, they will not receive it if you write one check.

#### Can I mail cash?

Please do not send cash. Please convert the cash to a cashier's check or money order.

#### Can I use JRF's Tax ID number to get tax free items?

The JRF tax ID number cannot be used to get tax free items. Only checks payable to The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health labeled with the donor's contact information will be provided with a tax-deductible acknowledgement letter.

#### I would like to accept donations by credit card at my event. Does JRF have a card swiper?

No. JRF does not have access to a card swiper.

#### What if a business donates goods or services for my event, such as auction items, or a band who donates their time?

Non-cash gifts are tax-deductible, as long as the gift benefits JRF 100%. You or the donor should fill out the "In-Kind Donation" Form, which is available for download in **Step 4 – Forms & Templates** of this Toolkit. We will send our IRS 501c3 determination if the company donating the gift requests. We will also acknowledge the in-kind gift as long as the form is filled out and returned to the JRF office.

#### Can we use JRF materials like brochures?

Yes! JRF materials, such as brochures and Ritter Rules cards can be mailed to you for your use. Let us know at least two months in advance so we can ensure the items arrive in time for your event. The JRF brochure and Ritter Rules can be downloaded under **Step 1 – Mission and Branding** of this Toolkit.

#### Can JRF provide volunteers for the fundraising event?

It is the responsibility of the event organizers to recruit, train, and manage all volunteers. A JRF representative may attend only if schedules permit.

# 3

## Get Your Questions Answered

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### How are donors acknowledged?

Donors who give any amount online automatically get a thank you and tax receipt emailed to them. JRF will recognize all tax-deductible donations and will track all donations for which we receive complete information.

#### Can we tag The JRF in our social media posts?

Yes. We prefer that you do. Please use the handles below.

**@JohnRitterFoundation** (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Threads)

**@JohnRitterFdn** (X, formerly known as Twitter)

#### What about accepting donations on Facebook?

The benefits of raising funds through Facebook are convenience and waived transaction fees. The downside is that JRF does not receive any donor information once the money is processed, meaning your donors will not get a thank you letter or tax receipt. This also means we have no way of connecting money that comes through Facebook to your family. You may consider using JRF to assist you in developing an events fundraising page as an alternative place to send donors, and you can share the link easily on Facebook.

#### We want to make items for our fundraiser. Can we use the JRF logo?

JRF logos are available for download in **Step 1 – Mission and Branding** of this Toolkit. We ask that you send us the proof of any materials before using so that we may approve.

#### I want to have an event that carries some risk; do I need waivers?

If you are planning a 'high-risk' event (where alcohol is present or a sporting event where injuries may occur), your insurance company can advise what permits and waivers might be needed.

As the host, you are responsible and liable for all aspects of the fundraising activity, including adhering to your state's laws regarding alcohol.

JRF will not be responsible for any damage or accidents to any persons or property; we will not assume any legal or financial liability caused before, during or after the event.

#### I have more questions. Who should I call?

The JRF team is here to help you through every step of your event. Call us at **213-218-3329** or email **info@johnritterfoundation.org** We look forward to helping you!

# 3

## Get Your Questions Answered

### Expenses & Insurance

#### Covering Costs

If you host an event, you are responsible for any costs associated with your event. Create a budget and manage it accordingly for all expenses. Make sure you keep it simple.

#### In-Kind Donations

Please know if you advertise your event as a fundraiser for JRF, proceeds for the event must go to JRF. In-kind donations should be tracked using the in-kind form so that donors receive acknowledgement of their generosity (donations of auction items; donation of time, such as a DJ, chef, photographer who doesn't charge for their services). The in-kind form template can be downloaded in **Step 4 – Forms & Templates** of this Toolkit.

#### Insurance & Liability

As the host, you are responsible and liable for all aspects of the fundraising activity, including adhering to your state's laws regarding alcohol.

JRF will not be responsible for any damage or accidents to any persons or property; we will not assume any legal or financial liability caused before, during or after the event.

#### Percentage of Sales

JRF is unable to support or sponsor any Fundraising Activity that consists of a sales campaign (for example, "buy this product/service and X% of the sales price will be donated to JRF").

# 4

## Review & Complete Needed Forms

### Forms & Templates

To help you simplify your planning, we've provided the following forms and templates available for your use.

#### Event Application

Submit event details and fundraising goals to JRF for approval.

#### Contact List

Keep track of your invitees, participants, sponsors, donors & volunteers in one document.

#### Budget Tracker

Record your income & expenses as they come in.

#### In-Kind Donation Form

Use this form to keep track of in-kind donations to your fundraiser.

#### Sponsorship Form

How to ask businesses to support your fundraiser.



SCAN OR CLICK ME

### Form & Template Downloads

Scan the QR code to download current versions of important forms and templates.



# 5

## Launch Your Fundraising Event

### 10 Things to Do During Your Fundraiser

1

#### Donate

Inspire others to donate by being the first to give. The size of your gift may encourage others to support!

2

#### Ask, Ask, Ask

Don't feel guilty about asking for donations – that's the purpose of the fundraiser.

3

#### Be Transparent

If you're donating all or a portion of the proceeds to JRF, let people know. Tell them what their donations support.

4

#### Share

Share updates on social media throughout your event.

5

#### Encourage

Encourage people to share their stories and why they support the cause.

6

#### Take Photos

Keep those phones and cameras out to make sure you have lots of photos to share on social media and to use to publicize next year's fundraiser.

7

#### Take Notes

Keep a notepad handy to jot down ideas for your next fundraiser.

8

#### Rely on Your Team

As a host, you might be engaged doing one thing while another needs attention. It's always great to have go-to helpers.

9

#### Get Feedback

Be sure to get feedback from your guests to help with future fundraisers.

10

#### Have Fun!

While having a fundraiser can be stressful, you are doing good work and should be having a good time. Relax and enjoy!

### Timeline Tips

#### Throughout Your Event



Thank everyone for attending, and remind them of what their contributions will be supporting.



Continuously highlight your overall fundraising goal to motivate donors to give.



Give live updates on social media during the event. Be sure to include a link to your donation page with every post.

# 6

## Complete Post-Event Checklists

### Congratulations!

The proceeds from your fundraiser will make a real difference in The JRF mission and will help give support to individuals and families affected by thoracic aortic disease. THANK YOU! After your fundraiser, don't forget to complete the following post-event checklist.



Submit your donations and any post-event paperwork to JRF within 30 days. Please include a note about your fundraiser so we know to credit donations to your event.



Thank your donors. While JRF will acknowledge donations received in the office, you should also thank your donors directly.



Follow-up on social media to share your story and success. Don't forget the photos and to tag The JRF.  
**@JohnRitterFoundation** (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Threads)  
**@JohnRitterFdn** (X, formerly known as Twitter)



Start planning your next event! Reflect on your event and look at what went well, what you would do differently, and how JRF can help.



Encourage others to fundraise by sharing your experience with others.

### Please send donations to:

#### The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health

11901 Santa Monica Blvd #410  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Phone number: 213.218.3329

EIN: 26-0073309

*\*Checks should be made payable to  
The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health.*

### Timeline Tips

#### Within 2 Weeks After Your Event



Say "thank you" to all that supported your fundraising event.



Give an update on social media with the end results of your fundraising event.



Celebrate!

## THANK YOU!

Thank you so much for your effort in raising funds to support the mission of The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health. Together, we will raise awareness of thoracic aortic aneurysm and dissection through research, education, and advocacy.



**The John Ritter Foundation for Aortic Health**  
11901 Santa Monica Blvd #410  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

**Phone number: 213.218.3329**  
**Web: [www.johnritterfoundation.org](http://www.johnritterfoundation.org)**

