



SäJai® Insights

Volume 3, Issue 3

November 2011

Upcoming Events:

NRPA Congress

Nov. 3, 2011

Carrie will speak.

Early Childhood Provider Conference

Nov. 12, 2011

Melissa will speak

Give to the Max Day:

Nov. 16, 2011

Melissa will tackle her own Amazing Walk! See front page story for details.

MNSACA Feb. 10-12, 2012

Melissa will speak.

Inside this issue:

From the President 2

How You Can Help 2

Notes from the Field 3

The Amazing Walk! 3

Who We Are 4

The Amazing Walk!—Part 2

The first annual Amazing Walk! held in September was exactly as promised—amazing. (To learn more about the event, see the inside of this newsletter, or visit our website to see the video!)

But we're not done with amazing walks in 2011 just yet.

Give MN, a Minnesota-based online group promoting the work of Minnesota nonprofits, will have its third annual Give to the Max Day on Nov. 16. We started to think about what we could do that day—how could we raise awareness?

Someone threw out an idea: “What about having Melissa [SäJai’s CEO/President] walk to illustrate the fight against childhood obesity?”

It wasn’t too long before that idea grew: “What if Melissa

walks from her home in Maple Grove to the Mall of America?”



You know how when you brainstorm, no idea is a bad idea? That’s a good thing, since otherwise a 30-mile walk might have been crossed off the list immediately. But instead, the idea—pardon the pun—had legs, and it became our Give to the Max Day theme.

So, on Nov. 16, Melissa will walk 30 miles to raise awareness about the dangers of childhood obesity

and the need to get our kids back outdoors again. Rain or shine, sleet or snow (although obviously we’re hoping against that!), she’ll make the trek to the Mall of America, where Give MN will have its Give to the Max Day headquarters set up.

Here’s the thing: 30 miles is a Herculean task on foot. Even more so when you realize Melissa had major back surgery less than a year ago! There’s a way you can help her on that day so that she can take an occasional break and have someone else walk a mile for her, or get to ride her bike, thereby getting a few miles in more quickly. She needs your help for this, and you can only do it on Nov. 16.

Turn to page 2 of this newsletter for details!

giveMN.org
Click. Contribute. Change Your World.

From the President



When you're involved in a nonprofit, you take on a passion-filled job. The cause has to really be important to you personally in order to keep you going strong. So, when you see me signing up to walk 30 miles, you shouldn't be surprised. Childhood obesity is a serious issue, one that no child should have to face or deal with for the rest of their lives, and one I care deeply about. I have three boys

myself so the odds would say one of them will be overweight or obese and suffer from serious health issues. I have walked or biked for other causes and will gladly walk for this one because I know we can make a difference. Childhood obesity doesn't have to be an issue. It's preventable through education and opportunities that form healthy habits. Leading by example is important

to me; that's why I'm willing to go the extra mile, or miles in this case. We hope you'll help us lead by example too. Live healthy yourself. Help the kids in your life to experience healthy living every day. And, if you can, give support to our work so all children can learn to make smart nutrition choices, to be active and to enjoy the world around them.

—Melissa Hanson

Participants in the September Amazing Walk! had a great time! Above, learning to dance; below, taking time for some yoga.

How You Can Help on Give to the Max Day (Not Just for Minnesotans!)

We're asking our donors and friends—anywhere in the U.S.—to help make this 30-mile journey possible in a number of ways:

Visit our page on www.givemn.org on Nov. 16 and make a donation. Any amount will be hugely appreciated. Cumulatively, once the following donation levels are met, Melissa will get the opportunity to take a break, ride a mile in a van while someone else walks, or ride her bike.

Here's another thing that helps: we have a generous donor who has committed \$10,000 in matching funds.

So if you donate \$10, it's matched, automatically creating a \$20 donation. But only when donated on Give to the Max Day!

We also need volunteers to walk a mile when Melissa earns a break. We'd love to set up volunteers to meet her at various points along the route, to cheer her on, and to have people at the Mall of America for the end of the route, to applaud the crazy success of this wild adventure.

Most of all, besides donations, we're asking our friends and donors to pass this story on—tell everyone you know about Melissa's Amazing Walk and how she believes so strongly in

fighting childhood obesity that she's willing to undertake such a journey. Their donations will help us get our programs out to more kids, to teach them how to develop healthy habits that can last them a lifetime, and to get them back outdoors again. 30 miles is a long day—but well worth the extra distance we can go for the future of our kids.

Smartphone users: Here's the QR code to get you do our Give MN page.



News from the Field



Save the Children students learn about the wonders of nature through Wise Kids Outdoors!

In the summer of 2011, several Save the Children (www.savechildren.org) sites around the U.S. implemented the Wise Kids Outdoors program for more than 200 children. The sites encompassed a diverse group of kids, and evaluations conducted illustrated great results.

There were strong increases in the number of kids who said they felt nature and being outdoors was important to them, and in the number of participants who sought out nature areas near their homes.

After taking the program, participants had a stronger grasp on how to recycle, and integrating the Energy Balance concept into their daily lives.

Perhaps most importantly, more than 90% of the children surveyed after the program said they liked the program (most liked it a lot) and they wanted to learn more about wellness and the outdoors!

Congrats to Save the Children for being a leader in teaching kids about health and nature!

“This is better than other walks. There’s things to do here. Other walks are just walking.”

—a young participant in the Amazing Walk!

The Amazing Walk! Part 1

Saturday, Sept. 24 was a beautiful cool fall day, perfect for the inaugural Amazing Walk! Under bright blue skies, the Walk participants and volunteers set out on the nearly 5K walk through beautiful North Mississippi Regional Park in Minneapolis.

But as promised, it was more than a walk. Along the way, people had the choice of trying a few yoga poses; learning to dance the two-step to a bluegrass band; learning about water safety and trying on “drunk goggles” before running a relay to find life jackets; making their own trail mix; trying their hand at

geocaching; learning how to prepare for a training run; trying a variety of fresh, locally grown organic foods; identifying trees and getting a look at some very old trees on the inside; and getting up close and personal with raptors and reptiles. At the end of the Walk, some of the more energetic participants got their groove on with a DJ and dance leader, while others explored the expo and learned about parkour and received healthy treats.

It was a blast, and everyone had a great time. We’ll be back next year—watch for details in upcoming mailings!

Thanks to our challenge partners: Twin Cities in Motion, eQuality, Abbey’s Hope, TC Volkssport, Light of the Moon, Lisa Dickinson, REI, Army Corps, Minneapolis Park Board, Cort Hanson, the Lee and Rose Warner Nature Center, RADzoo, Whole Foods, and KidsDance.



North Mississippi Regional Park



The Säjai® Foundation

P.O. Box 320
Hamel, MN 55340

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
CHASKA MN
PERMIT NO. 164

Or Current Resident

Who We Are

The Säjai® Foundation's staff:

President: Melissa Hanson

*Program Development
Manager:* Carrie Stolar

*Communications Coordina-
tor:* Amy Rea

Accountant: Joan TerMaat

Board of Directors:

Robert Ashcraft, Ph.D.

Bob Bierscheid, M.Ed, CPRP

Corly Brooke, Ph.D.

Noreen Buhmann, MA EDLD

Melissa Hanson, MBA

Erin King, M.Ac., L.Ac.

Steve King, FASLA

Rob Schweitzer, MBA

Jody Ward-Rannow, Esq.

Joseph Wynns, MS, CPRP

Contact Us

Phone: 952-288-3364

Fax: 952-934-6287

Email:
amy@sajaifoundation.org

Website:
www.sajaifoundation.org

Twitter: [twitter.com/
sajaifoundation](https://twitter.com/sajaifoundation)

Facebook: [facebook.com/
sajaifoundation](https://facebook.com/sajaifoundation)

YouTube: [youtube.com/
sajaifoundation](https://youtube.com/sajaifoundation)