

On September 5th, 2026, We Will Join Hands.

Celebrating 250 Years of The United States of America

On the 40th anniversary of an audacious American dream, we will once again reach across our country's great landscape. At noon, we will take a moment to hold hands and sing "America the Beautiful," reminding the world of our unity, and ourselves of our potential.



#handsacross2026

Our Inspiration: The Audacity of 1986.

On May 25, 1986, nearly six million Americans attempted the impossible: to form a continuous human chain across 4,125 miles of the United States. It was a logistical marathon, a pre-internet spectacle designed to raise awareness for hunger and homelessness. For fifteen minutes, a nation held its breath, and held hands.



A Monument Built by Hand.

The 1986 chain was an incredible feat of centralized coordination, representing the peak of “spectacle philanthropy.”

4,125 Miles

The route from New York City to Long Beach, CA.



16 States

The official route passed through major cities and vast deserts.



\$16M Cost

The operational budget to stage the event, underwritten by corporations like Coca-Cola and Citibank.

400 Staff

A dedicated team for nine months of planning.



1,320 People/Mile

The estimated density required to form an unbroken chain.

Lessons from a Pre-Digital World

The 1986 vision was pure, but the execution was limited by the technology of its time. The result was a powerful symbol that also revealed critical challenges.

- **Financial Inefficiency:** Staging costs of \$16-17M resulted in only \$15-20M for charity, drawing criticism that the “stunt” overshadowed the substance.
- **The “Missing Links”:** In sparsely populated regions like the Arizona desert, the chain was broken. Organizers used ropes, ribbons, and even cattle to symbolically fill hundred-mile voids.
- **Exclusivity:** A \$10 donation was required to “reserve” a spot, creating a barrier to entry.



From Spectacle to Grassroots: The Evolution of Unity.



1986 Spectacle Model



Driver: Corporate Underwriting & Celebrity Promoters



Coordination: Manual Phone/Radio & 400-Person Staff



Accessibility: \$10-\$35 Donation "Reservation"



Messaging: Multi-Million Dollar Anthem & TV Ads



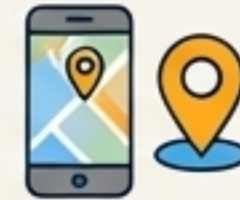
Filling Gaps: Ribbons, Ropes, and Cattle



2026 Grassroots Vision



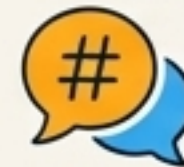
Driver: Everyday People & Local Social Networks



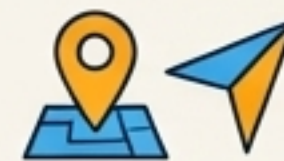
Coordination: Free GPS Links (Glympse/Google) & Real-Time Sharing



Accessibility: Free Participation; Come As You Are



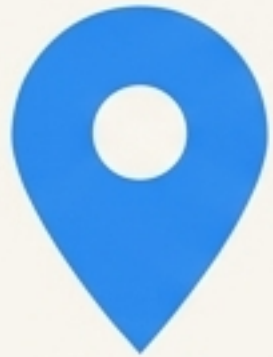
Messaging: Community Hashtags & Viral Personal Stories



Filling Gaps: Digital Pins & Live Map Redistribution

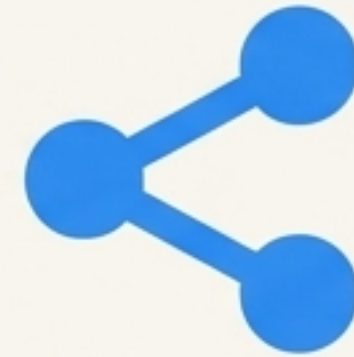
The 2026 Playbook: Simple Tools, Massive Impact

We are recreating the chain without the overhead. Our movement is decentralized, free, and powered by the technology you already have in your pocket. There are two core ways to participate. Both are essential.



Part 1: Join the Chain.

Be a physical link in the 4,000-mile chain.



Part 2: Spread the Word.

Amplify the movement and inspire others to join.

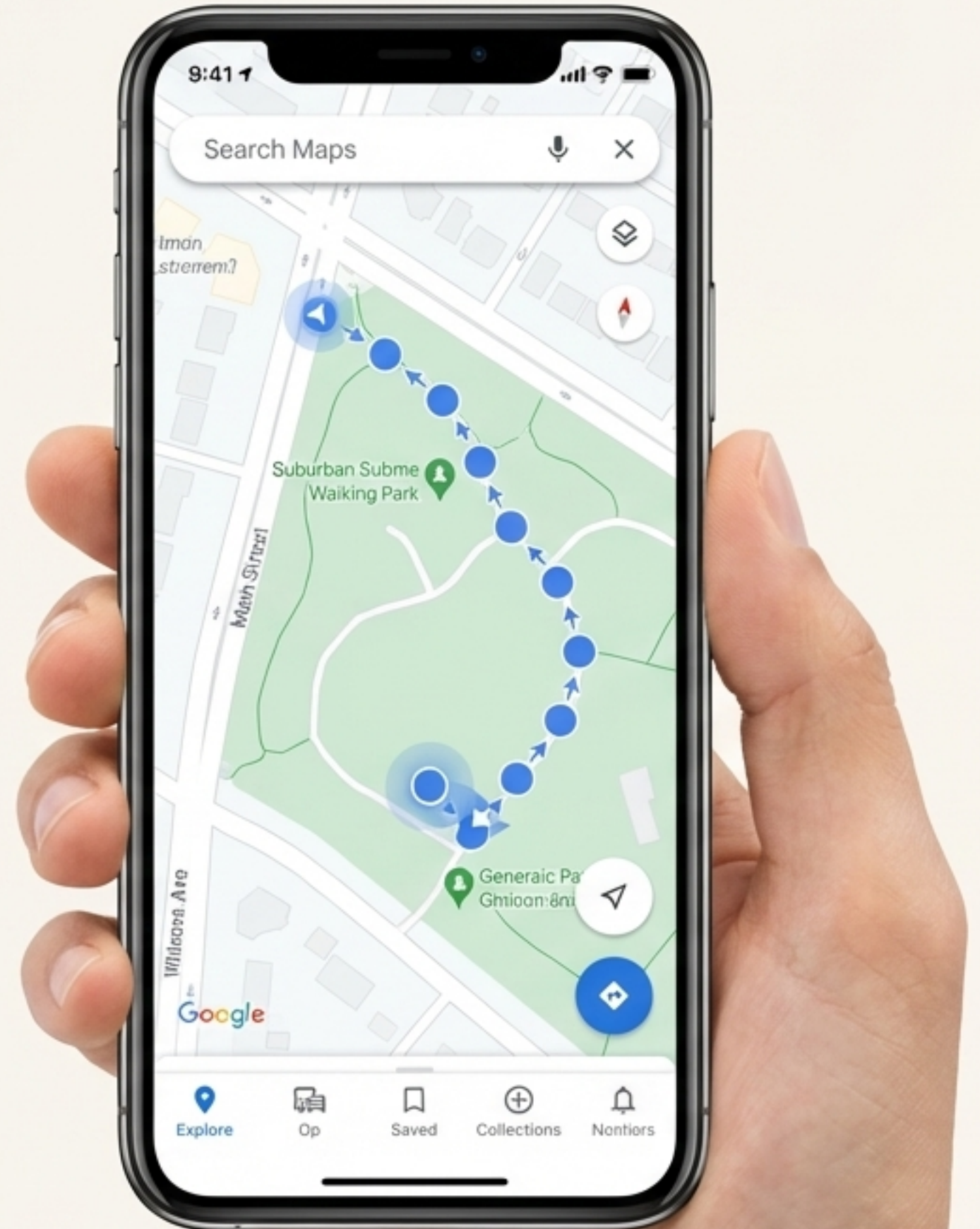
Part 1: Join the Chain // Find Your Place

****Step 1: The Goal****

Form a continuous human chain across your community. Unlike 1986, there is no single “official” route. We will create thousands of links in cities and towns across all 50 states.

****Step 2: The Tool****

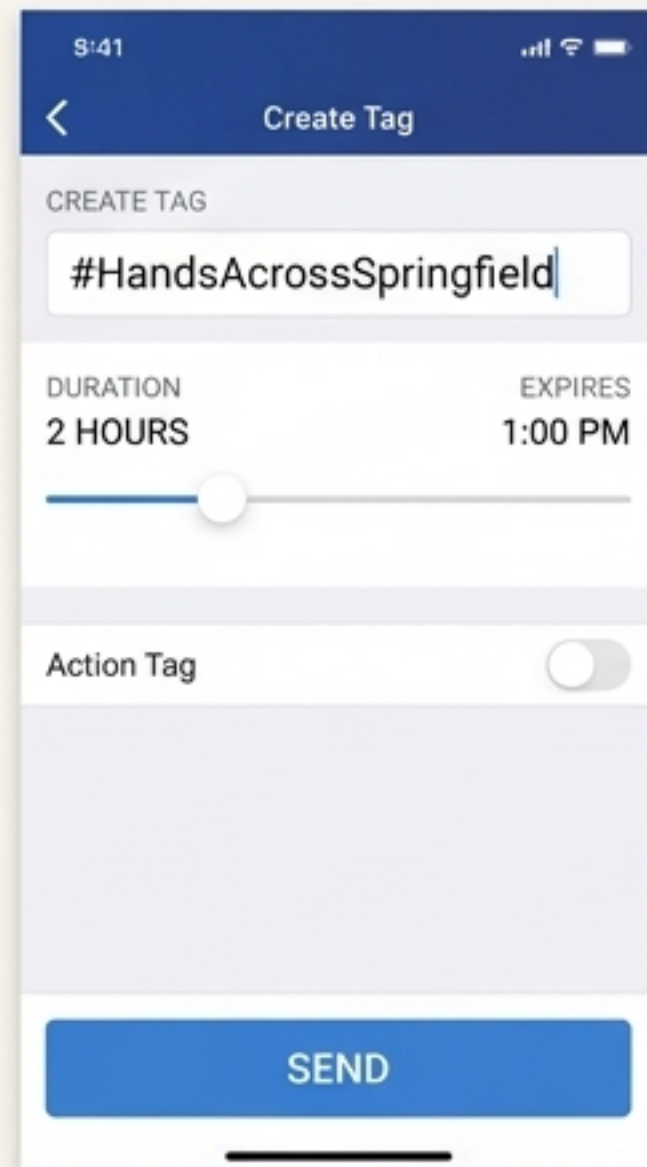
Use free, real-time location sharing apps on your smartphone to see where others are and organize your local segment of the chain. No central planners needed.



Part 1: Join the Chain // Your Coordination Toolkit.

These free, familiar apps are all you need to create a seamless line.

Glympse

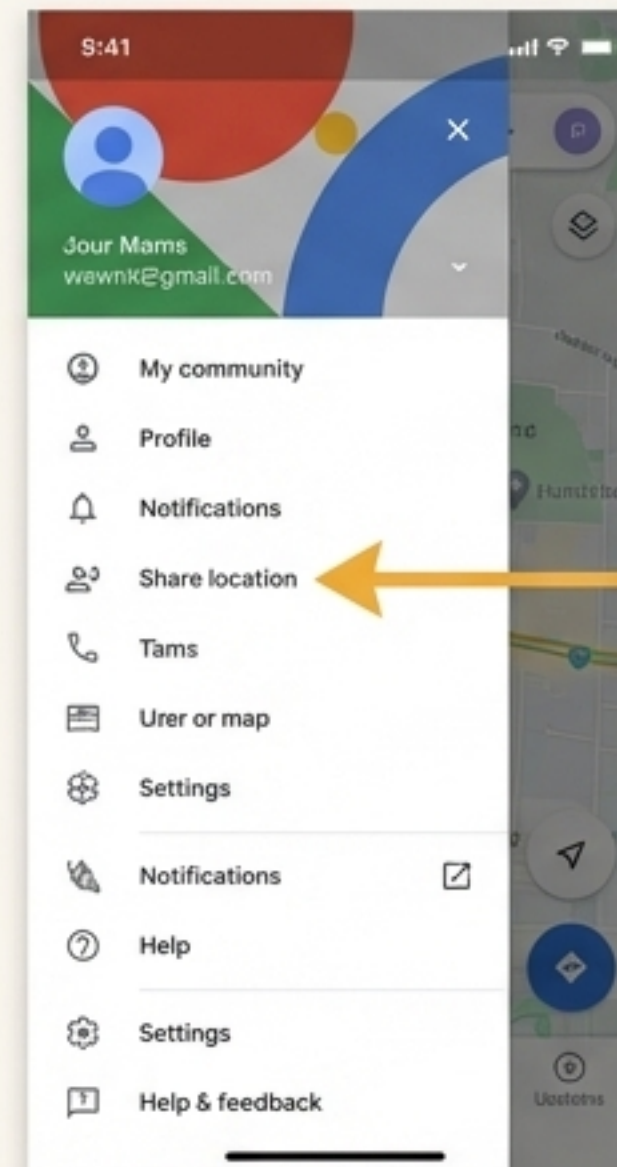


Share a temporary, real-time location link.

Key Feature

Viewers don't need the app or an account to see your location on a map, making it perfect for sharing with family, friends, and community groups of all tech levels.

Google Maps



Use the built-in “Share location” feature you already have.

Key Feature

Most Americans have it installed. Neighborhood groups can create a live, shared map to coordinate their link in real-time.

Part 1: Join the Chain // Bridge the Gap, Live.

In 1986, gaps in the line were a point of failure. In 2026, they are an opportunity for connection.

How it Works:

1. See a Gap?

If you see an empty space in the line near you, take a photo.

2. Post It Live

Share the photo on social media with the hashtag **#BridgeTheGap** and your specific location (e.g., 'Main St. & 4th Ave, Springfield').

3. "Fill the Link"

Nearby participants monitoring the hashtag can see where they are needed most and move to close the gap in real-time.



Part 2: Spread the Word // Your Story is the Movement.

The 1986 event was promoted with a Super Bowl ad and a celebrity anthem. Our anthem is the collection of your voices. We grow not through expensive marketing, but through authentic stories shared by participants across the country. Your photos, videos, and posts are the message.



Part 2: Spread the Word // Your Digital Toolkit.



Action 1: Use the Hashtag

#handsacross2026 is our digital rallying cry. It connects every individual post into a single, unified national conversation.



Action 2: Create a 'Photo Zone'

You don't need a corporate budget. Local organizers can simply designate a spot with good light and a simple sign. This encourages attendees to capture and share high-quality images of their experience.



Action 3: Mobilize Your Network

Use peer-to-peer texting and existing community groups (Facebook, etc.) to recruit friends and neighbors. A personal invitation is more powerful than any advertisement.



The Moment We Connect.

Noon. September 5th, 2026.

For a few minutes, we will hold hands with our neighbors and sing the first verse of “America the Beautiful.”

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties,
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

This Is a Movement for Everyone.

To be part of Hands Across 2026 is to simply be present. We have removed the barriers of the past to build a truly bottom-up expression of unity.



No Donation Required.

Your presence is the contribution.

No Central Sign-Up.

No forms, no accounts, no data harvesting.

No Official Route.

Your community is the route.


No Corporate Agenda.

This movement belongs to the people.

The Legacy We Create Together.

The 1986 chain existed for only 15 minutes, leaving behind photographs and memories. The 2026 chain will create something new: a lasting, living digital record of our connection. Every GPS pin dropped, every photo shared with #handsacross2026, becomes a permanent part of a new American monument—a map of our shared commitment to one another.





September 5th, 2026.
Let's crown thy good with brotherhood.
From sea to shining sea.

#handsacross2026