



Safe Routes Scoop

Promoting Safe and Healthy Walking and Biking to School in New Jersey

Vol. III, No. 1 Spring 2009

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- 'Alliance for a Healthier Generation Launches New Healthy Schools Program Network
- SRTS in Garfield: A Case Study
- UMDNJ Honored for Pedestrian Injury Prevention Work

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Teaching Children Personal Safety: Tips and Strategies

While "Stranger Danger" is a primary concern of many parents, the key to help keep children safe is not focusing too much on the "danger" and instead teaching children about safety in ways that are informative rather than scary. [More Details](#)



Welcome

to the Spring issue of New Jersey's Safe Routes Scoop, a newsletter for everyone interested in news, ideas and examples of Safe Routes to School projects going on around New Jersey and across the nation. [More Details](#)

SRTS Grants Awarded

On May 8, 2009, the NJ Department of Transportation awarded \$5.4 million in federal Safe Routes to School grants to... [More Details](#)

Concerned with Liability? SRTS Can Help

Schools often wonder whether SRTS programs may increase their liability exposure. Not only should SRTS not expose schools to any greater liability, but SRTS programs may have the potential to redistribute and even reduce liability. [More Details](#)



Overcoming Local Resistance in Brick

Building a strong local partnership and allowing support to grow naturally through school and public events helped SRTS champions in Brick to overcome local resistance to sidewalks. [More Details](#)



Bringing Friends Together With Bikes

Lake Nelson Bike Night has helped bring people together and turn a lonely neighborhood for children into a community filled with friends. [More Details](#)

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Vol. 3, Issue 1, Spring 2009

A Project of the NJ Department of Transportation Funded by the Federal Highway Administration
Produced by the Voorhees Transportation Center

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Welcome



Elise Bremer-Nei, NJDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator and Leigh Ann Von Hagen, Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University

Important Links:

- [NJ Department of Transportation](#)
- [National Center for Safe Routes To School](#)
- [NJ Bicycle & Pedestrian Resource Center](#)
- [NJ Walks and Bikes and Safe Routes Scoop Newsletter Archives](#)
- [NJ Transportation Management Associations \(TMAs\)](#)

Changing people's minds is never easy. Whether they are simply *uninformed* or completely *misinformed*, once convinced that it is impossible for their children to walk to school, it's a challenge to get people to accept an alternate point of view. One of the biggest challenges to changing the minds of Safe Routes to School opponents is the fact that the side saying "if children walk to school something bad will happen" has such a strong voice. It's the newspaper article that reports our neighborhood streets are scary places; the television newscaster announcing, "Are your children safe? Stay tuned!"

While liability and "stranger danger," are real issues, we cannot let these concerns deter us from doing what we know to be good and healthy. Promoting Safe Routes to School can be difficult, but with all the benefits of walking and biking to school - such as encouraging physical fitness, raising awareness of traffic and pedestrian safety, and improving air quality around schools - it's definitely worth the effort.

In this issue of Safe Routes to School, we explore how to deal with concerns such as liability, "stranger danger" and local resistance. In "Concerned with Liability? SRTS Can Help," we discuss how SRTS programs can redistribute and even reduce exposure to liability. "Teaching Children Personal Safety:

Tips and Strategies" focuses on teaching children about safety in ways that are informative rather than scary. In "Overcoming Local Resistance in Brick," we focus on how one community's efforts to build a strong partnership and allow support to grow naturally through school and public events helped to overcome local resistance to sidewalks. "Bringing Friends Together With Bikes" details how one mother's decision to bike her daughter to school transformed a lonely neighborhood into a community filled with friends.

Overcoming obstacles to positively affect change can seem a burdensome task to undertake. However, everything in life worth doing takes time and hard work. As Safe Routes to School proponents, the best thing we can do is confront obstacles head on and work with parents, teachers, friends and neighbors to find the answers we need. I hope that these stories will inspire you and show you that no matter who we are or where we live, we all face similar obstacles. Working together, I am confident we can work through the obstacles and make walking and bicycling to school safe and convenient for everyone.

—Elise Bremer-Nei,
NJDOT Safe Routes to School
Coordinator

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NJ Department of Transportation



US Department of Transportation

RUTGERS



Safe Routes Scoop

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2009 SRTS Grants Awarded



For more information about the New Jersey SRTS program, contact SRTS Coordinator Elise Bremer-Nei at elise.bremer-nei@dot.state.nj.us or visit the NJDOT SRTS web site at: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/srts/>



Photo Credits: VTC

On May 8, 2009, the New Jersey Department of Transportation awarded \$5.4 million in Safe Routes to School grants to 37 communities. The grants will provide local governments funds ranging from \$10,000 to \$300,000 for pedestrian safety improvements near schools.

The Safe Routes to School program, created in 2006 as part of Governor Jon S. Corzine's \$74 million initiative to improve pedestrian safety throughout New Jersey, includes \$15 million over five years for the Safe Routes to Schools program. Fiscal year 2009 is the third round of Safe Routes to School funds. In 2008 NJDOT provided about \$4 million in grants to 33 municipalities. During the first round in 2007, 29 communities were awarded over \$4 million.

The amount awarded to some of the FY 2009 grant awardees is the combined total for infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects. Infrastructure improvement projects to be funded through the program include the construction of sidewalks, the improvement of existing sidewalks, and the installation of new crosswalks, school-zone markings, and speed-limit signs. The grants may also be used for educational and promotional pedestrian safety projects such as "Walk to School" days, public outreach and awareness programs, and bike rodeos.

To read the news release visit

<http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/about/press/2009/050809a.shtm>.

FY 2009 SRTS Grant Awardees:

- Atlantic Co, Linwood, \$160,000
- Atlantic Co, Northfield, \$41,000
- Bergen Co, Closter, \$275,000
- Bergen Co, Hasbrouck Heights, \$150,000
- Bergen Co, Garfield/YMCA, \$30,000
- Bergen Co, Ridgewood, \$175,000
- Burlington Co, Maple Shade, \$200,000
- Burlington Co, Mount Holly, \$125,000
- Cape May Co, Woodbine, \$275,000
- Cumberland Co, Bridgeton, \$220,000
- Essex Co, Newark/Meadowlink TMA, \$100,000
- Essex Co, Montclair (3), \$204,000, \$25,000, \$105,000
- Essex Co, Newark/NJ Trauma Center, \$150,000
- Essex Co, North Caldwell, \$48,000
- Essex Co, South Orange, \$10,000
- Gloucester Co, East Greenwich, \$20,000
- Gloucester Co, Clayton, \$130,000
- Hudson Co, West New York BOE, \$27,000
- Mercer Co, Hightstown, \$147,000
- Mercer Co, Pennington, \$220,000
- Middlesex Co, North Brunswick, \$118,000
- Middlesex Co, Piscataway, \$30,000
- Middlesex Co, Jamesburg, \$269,000
- Monmouth Co, Freehold (2), \$19,000, \$110,000
- Monmouth Co, Hazlet, \$300,000
- Morris Co, Parsippany-Troy Hills, \$26,900
- Morris Co, Mine Hill, \$242,000
- Morris Co, Madison, \$116,000
- Passaic Co, Clifton, \$263,000
- Passaic Co, Wayne, \$110,000
- Passaic Co, Bloomingdale, \$22,000
- Somerset Co, Bernardsville, \$300,000
- Union Co, Cranford, \$16,000
- Union Co, Roselle Park, \$100,000
- Warren Co, Greenwich, \$135,700
- Warren Co, Alpha, \$250,000
- Warren Co, Franklin, \$74,000
- Warren Co, Blirstown, \$65,500

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NJ Department of Transportation



US Department of Transportation





Teaching Children Personal Safety: Tips and Strategies



Photo Credits: VTC

Many parents worry about the safety of their children, whether on the way to or from school, in the park, or anywhere else where constant adult supervision is lacking. One of the biggest concerns for parents is teaching their children how to be properly wary of strangers when out in public places. Yet the possibility of harm to children from unknown people, usually called "stranger danger," can sometimes be overstated.

Much of the fear surrounding "stranger danger" comes from second- or third-hand stories, media reports, and educational films. Understandably, this information causes us to worry about our children. Yet, despite all of the attention focused on "stranger danger," a closer look at child abductions doesn't necessarily justify our conclusions on the severity of the problem. In the majority of cases, the danger comes not from a stranger, but rather a perpetrator known to the parent or child. Of the approximately 69,000 abductions reported each year, 82 percent involve a family member, according to data from the U.S. Department of Justice. Non-family abductions account for the remaining 18 percent and, of those, only 37 percent involve a stranger, just 6.7% of the total.

Ignoring these significant distinctions between types of strangers when teaching "stranger danger" may do

do little to address the actual threats children can encounter, or even deny them an opportunity to get help when needed. This famously happened with a Cub Scout lost in the Utah wilderness in 2005 who initially avoided his rescuers, even after being lost for days, because of fear of approaching strangers. Since most children's encounters with adults do not involve actual strangers, it is important to teach children to be wary of people they have met only a few times as well as what is appropriate behavior with *any* adult.

Some organizations, including the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), believe that society needs to retire the "stranger danger" message, which that group views as incomplete and outdated. NCMEC has learned that children do not fully understand the concept and are confused by the concept of "good" and "bad" strangers. They will often describe a stranger as someone who is "ugly or mean" and don't perceive "nice-looking or friendly" people as strangers. All the same, making it clear to your child that most people would rather help than hurt a child can dispel some of the anxiety children face when being taught about safety.

Most importantly, perhaps, is teaching children in a way that allows them to understand the situation without scaring them. Going over simple rules





Teaching Children Personal Safety: Tips and Strategies



Photo Credits: VTC

of behavior for your child when out playing, whether or not they are being watched by a parent or some other responsible adult is one of the surest ways to avoid danger. Instruct children to always join a friend when going to and from school, and to never take short-cuts or go into isolated areas. Walk the route with your child pointing out landmarks and safe places to go if they need help. A safe place can be as straightforward as a police station, fire station, church or retail shop located along a walking route.

Teach children to trust their feelings if they feel uncomfortable, scared, or confused. Children need to know to get away from that person and tell a trusted adult. Teach your children that it is more important to get out of a threatening or uncomfortable situation than it is to be polite. If an adult approaches a child asking for help or directions, children need to know that it is not impolite to say "no". Adults, especially those they don't know, should not be asking children for help. Children also need to know that they should never go anywhere with someone they don't know and should never get into cars or go into houses of neighbors they don't know very well unless you say it is okay.

Parents need to be sure of their family's rules and procedures and set a good example when out with their

children. Greeting the local police officer, crossing guard, or mail carrier when walking with your child makes it clear that casual interaction with people they do not know well isn't always harmful. Similarly, making a game or teaching experience out of a safe situation can provide good practice in following basic precautions as well as giving you the chance to answer some of their questions, like "Do I need to check first with you if I am going to go somewhere with someone I know?," "What should I yell if someone tries to take me?," and "What should I do if I am lost?"

The most important thing for parents to remember when talking about personal safety and "stranger danger" is that it is both a very real problem and that it should be approached carefully so as to educate children rather than scare them. As with other life-skills, teaching your child how to interact with strangers they will meet every day can be a source of enrichment rather than just another set of rules for your child to follow. Teaching children to make their own good decisions about safety will help keep them out of harm's way and empower them to seek help when needed. Teaching personal safety skills can be a way of connecting children to the good parts of our community, rather than simply attempting to shield them from the bad.





Teaching Children Personal Safety: Tips and Strategies



Photo Credits: VTC

Safety Tips for Parents:

- Know your child's route to and from school.
- Designate "safe" houses in your neighborhood where your child may go if they are in danger.
- Know your child's after school activities.
- Know your child's friends and their parents and have a list of their phone numbers and addresses.
- Know what your child is wearing each day.
- Never put your child's name on the outside of their clothing.
- Keep a current photo and video of your child handy.
- Keep a copy of your child's fingerprints.
- If your child doesn't want to be with someone, ask them why, and pursue the topic until you find a reason.
- Make sure your child knows that adults shouldn't ask children for help and that adults shouldn't ask children to keep secrets.

*Safety tips were adapted from The National Center for Safe Routes to School as well as from national missing children's organizations such as The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and McGruff.org.

Safety Tips for Kids:

- Make sure you know important information (your full name, parent's full name, address, and phone number).
- Never go anywhere with someone you don't know, even if they offer you candy or ask for help.
- Don't get into cars or go into houses of neighbors you don't know very well unless Mom or Dad says it is okay.
- Have a secret code word that you and only your parents know. If someone doesn't know the secret code word, don't go with them.
- Even trusted people shouldn't ask you to do something that makes you uncomfortable.
- It's okay to say "No" to adults.
- Shout "No" or "Stop" if someone touches you inappropriately, then tell your mom or dad.
- Be as loud as possible if you are in danger. Yell 'Help!' if you are able to.
- If you are lost or in danger, know how to locate a pay phone or a public phone and dial 9-1-1 for free.





Concerned with Liability? SRTS Can Help

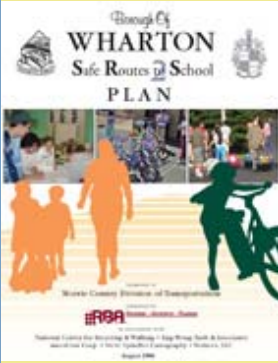


Photo Credits: The RBA Group, VTC

A common question when considering Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs and events is whether walking and bicycling to school may increase a school's liability exposure. According to information from the National Center for Safe Routes to School, SRTS programs should not expose schools to any greater liability. In fact, SRTS programs have the potential to redistribute and even reduce liability.

Liability is a legal obligation, or responsibility, that one party (e.g., a defendant) owes to another party (e.g., a plaintiff.) Liability exists for schools with virtually all student activities and modes of transport. A SRTS program can help address liability by incorporating the guiding principles behind SRTS into the school's risk management process. The "5 E's" of SRTS – education, encouragement, enforcement, engineering, and evaluation – should be used to assess all modes of travel.

Developing a school travel plan that addresses the 5E's is one way to help identify problem areas and propose remedies to make school travel safer. Once problems have been identified, the school travel plan should detail solutions and create a plan of action with realistic goals and an implementation timeline to sort out short- and long-term projects.

Using SRTS principles to assess travel modes can also help to redistribute

liability between modes. This was the case at Wauconda Elementary School outside Chicago. The district school superintendent banned biking to school after a boy who had been walking his bike near the school grounds was hit, but not seriously injured, by a car driven by a teacher. Community members along with the Chicagoland Bike Federation (now the Active Transportation Alliance) evaluated school transportation using the 5E's and found that the greater risk to students was caused by drivers during drop-off and pick-up times. Based on these observations, they were able to persuade the school to address drop-off and pick-up procedures, effectively shifting the liability focus from bikes to cars.

Liability must be regularly addressed by schools for a variety of programs and school-sponsored activities. A school's responsibility for safety and the extent to which a school can be held legally responsible for its actions varies according to the local legal context, the school's policies and the individual elements of the SRTS program. Organized events tend to entail a higher degree of liability than informal activities. If walking school buses are formally organized, the school may want to take precautions, such as conducting background checks of participating adults, and training staff and volunteers - just as they would for other school-sponsored programs.





Concerned with Liability? SRTS Can Help



Photo Credits: VTC

According to the National Center for Safe Routes to School, to establish liability for negligence an injured party must show that a school owed a legal duty of care to the victim, that the school breached that duty, and that the breach was the proximate cause of the damage or injury. A school will not ordinarily be held liable for injuries sustained by children while they are walking or bicycling to school simply because the school encourages children to walk and bike. However, according to Tammy Sufi of the Toole Design Group, where schools do get into trouble is when they break their own policies. For example, Walk to School Day events with school staff acting as chaperones should be treated like other school-sponsored activities occurring off of school property, and all rules, policies, or protocols should be followed. If it is school policy to require permission slips from guardians for field trips, they should be required for Walk to School events occurring off school property as well.

Questions of liability are situational and can rarely be answered in absolute terms. All entities involved should consult with an attorney before implementing an organized program. Nevertheless, encouraging and promoting walking and biking alone should not expose schools to additional liability. All parties also need to be reminded that many students are already walking and biking to school without any formal policy or

program, and that liability exists in some form for virtually all student activities and modes of transport. Schools have a duty of care at the start, during, and end of school. Schools may not be able to eliminate liability, but they can reduce it by incorporating the recommended procedures of the SRTS program into a school's risk management process.

* The information in this article is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as such. For more information on liability, see the National Center for Safe Routes to School's "10 Tips for Safe Routes to School Programs and Liability" tip sheet at http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/program-development_tip-sheets.cfm

i For more information about developing a School Travel Plan see "Develop a Basic Travel Plan For Your School" and "Travel Plan Guide" at <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/community/srts/started.shtml>

ii <http://www.saferoutestoschools.org/Pressroom/WalkWLawyer.shtml>





Overcoming Local Resistance in Brick



Photo Credits: Brick Township

Always proactive when it comes to child safety, Brick Township municipal officials teamed up with the Midstreams Elementary School to win a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) grant to install sidewalks along a school walking route that had become hazardous not just for students but also for local residents.

Safety issues arose at the Midstreams School when parents started using Orion Drive, a dead-end street bordering the school, as an informal drop-off/pick-up area. While normally a quiet street with little traffic, during drop-off and pick-up times Orion Drive had become a hazard to both vehicles and pedestrians. In the mornings, parents sped in and out of the street, trying to get their children to school and themselves to work. In the afternoons, cars were routinely double, or even triple, parked as parents congregated to wait for their children to exit the school.

The use of Orion Drive led to daily traffic and pedestrian conflicts as students attempted to exit their parents' cars on their way to school. Other children attempting to walk to or from school via Orion Drive further complicated the situation, because the street did not have sidewalks and students were often forced into dangerous situations, weaving between idling cars. The traffic congestion grew so bad on Orion Drive that Midstreams Principal Trudie Davis-Rebelo and the Brick Police

Department began fielding complaints from the parents of Midstreams students, as well as from local residents. Orion Drive residents and others in the surrounding neighborhood complained they often found it very difficult to pull out of their own driveways during the morning rush.

Recognizing they had a problem, Davis-Rebelo with Sergeant Donald Ling and Patrolman Christopher Getsky of the Brick police approached the township planning office and involved Assistant Planner Tara Paxton. Working together, local officials, school administrators, and police officers concluded that a Safe Routes to School program could address the Orion Drive problems, as well as encourage children to walk to school, and make the entire neighborhood around Midstreams Elementary School safer for all pedestrians.

The group knew that for children to walk safely to the Midstreams School, changes would be needed on Orion Drive. As Paxton noted, Orion Drive became "a parking lot during arrival and dismissal." The wide dead end of the street almost seemed to invite parents to park their idling cars while they dropped off or waited for their children after school. "As more parents drove, the street became increasingly hectic during arrival and dismissal and walking became even more challenging," said Paxton.





Overcoming Local Resistance in Brick



Before Sidewalks



After Sidewalks

Photo Credits: Brick Township, VTC

To make the street less appealing for parking and to make walking a more inviting option, the Brick Township team developed a SRTS proposal to modify the dead end and add sidewalks on key streets throughout the neighborhood.

The SRTS proposal won support from the school, board of education, police department, and township, but ran into stiff opposition within the community, as many local residents questioned the benefits and costs of adding new sidewalks. Even some of those living on Orion Drive, despite their repeated calls for a solution, thought that new sidewalks would prove to be a greater burden than benefit. In particular, some residents were concerned about the costs of maintaining the sidewalks, as well as possible liability. They favored strong traffic enforcement measures, said Paxton, "wanting to solve the traffic problems without addressing the difficulties in walking to school that caused so much of the traffic."

SRTS supporters in the community refused to allow this resistance to deter them from their goals. Knowing that the support of parents was key to success, the SRTS proponents engaged the Midstreams School's active PTO. A powerful demonstration of how parents can be educated about their role in causing traffic congestion arose at an early PTO meeting when a series of photographs showing the intense

traffic around the school during drop-off time was presented. "Parents were shocked to see the traffic conditions they had caused and the consequences of their own actions," said Paxton. Understanding the need for change, the PTO responded to the appeal for SRTS improvements.

Through a variety of small events, SRTS supporters drew wider public recognition of the safety problems at Midstreams. For instance, on International Walk to School Day, the SRTS team with the support of the PTO persuaded students and their parents to get out of their cars and discover the benefits and obstacles of walking in the community. With the aid of second grade teacher Joseph Sulock, students filled out a "Walkability Survey" provided by the National Center for Safe Routes to School to help both the SRTS team and Brick residents better understand the problems they face when walking to Midstreams School. The survey asked students to use five rankings to rate their walk based on space available for walking, the safety of drivers, desirability of walking, and street crossings. The resulting ratings indicated which areas needed some work.

Working again with the PTO, the SRTS team hosted a training event to teach parents how to plan and organize an effective Walking School Bus Program. This event heightened public awareness of walking as a





Overcoming Local Resistance in Brick



Photo Credits: Brick Township

viable way for students to get to and from school, as well as demonstrating strong public support for such programs.

Eventually, township officials, concerned parents, and other local supporters were able to prevail in gaining acceptance for the plan. Through local meetings and support from Mayor Stephen C. Acropolis, the true costs and benefits of the SRTS improvements both for individuals and the larger community became clear and understandable. "Mayor Acropolis pushed for support of the sidewalks despite public opposition because he felt it was the right thing to do," Paxton said. In a letter to Orion Drive residents who opposed the plan, Mayor Acropolis wrote, "the benefits of this project, providing children with safe modes of travel to school, outweigh any inconvenience to the residents in the area of the project area. My administration and the Township Council are committed to addressing what is best for the residents of Brick Township, especially our youngest citizens."

With the mayor's support, the SRTS team enabled local support to build naturally through school and public events, eroding resistance and gradually gaining acceptance for new sidewalks and the overall Safe Routes to School program.

As Brick's SRTS program continues, the students at Midstreams should

notice big changes in their travels to and from school. In addition to the sidewalk improvements and modifications to Orion Drive, several worn crosswalks will be restriped. The official school drop-off area will be redesigned to redirect traffic, making the morning trip to school both easier and safer for all students. According to Paxton, the SRTS team will follow up the sidewalk construction with a non-infrastructure grant to integrate SRTS curriculum and incentive programs for the students. "Most importantly," she added, "local officials and school leaders will continue to reach out to the community, focusing on educating the public about the benefits of continued improvements to both public safety and to student health."





Bringing Friends Together With Bikes



Photo Credits: VTC

Having never seen any children playing outside, Theresa Sternig did not know if there were any other children in her Piscataway neighborhood besides her own. The neighborhood was established in the 1960's, many of the families there had transitioned into retirement. As the school year drew near, Sternig learned that because her family lived within a mile of the elementary school, she would have to pay \$340 a year to have her daughter bused to class. Since driving every day was not economical when gas prices rose to \$4/gallon, the circumstances challenged her to look for a greener alternative to using gasoline. Instead of putting her daughter on the bus, she bought a bicycle and a trailer and started biking her daughter to school instead. Not only did Sternig and her daughter enjoy their bike to school, her classmates loved it. The children at school were very interested in her bike and thought it was very cool that Theresa's daughter traveled to school by bicycle.

The transition to Kindergarten had been stressful for Ms. Sternig's oldest daughter. Most of her daughter's friends had been from her day care and she didn't know any of her new classmates. Theresa realized that biking could be a good way for both of her daughters to socialize with other kids in their neighborhood while also getting some exercise. She decided to organize an event where all the neighborhood kids could bring

their bikes, ride around together, and make friends. She printed up flyers advertising Lake Nelson's Bike Night and handed them out to neighborhood parents. When a couple of families showed up for the first bike night last fall, Theresa and her daughters were ecstatic. Bike Night's success continued throughout September and October as more families began attending and the children and parents started to get to know each other better.

The children who regularly attend Lake Nelson Bike Night range in age from 2 to 11. The children and their parents come to Bike Night together, bringing their bicycles and meeting at each other's homes on a weekly rotation. The children enjoy riding and playing with one another while their parents enjoy meeting their neighbors. Bike Night also has been a great way for the children to improve their biking skills and physical abilities. With their parents' guidance, the children are learning that safe bicycling is important and that a helmet must be worn every time they ride.

While Lake Nelson Bike Night is open to all neighborhood children, the majority are under five years old and therefore too young to ride alone or bike themselves to school. As they get older, Ms. Sternig hopes the children's enjoyment of biking will continue to grow. Ultimately, she would like to see groups of kids from





Bringing Friends Together With Bikes



Photo Credits: VTC

throughout Piscataway biking to school together. However, there is currently a lack of safe routes and bike paths to the schools and other neighborhood destinations. Ms. Sternig believes that a Safe Routes to School program in Piscataway would be a great way to help make her biking vision a reality. She is interested in what SRTS has to offer and plans to organize a bike ride to school with her daughter's new friends and neighbors on International Walk to School Day next fall.

After a winter break, Lake Nelson Bike Night started up again this April. The kids excitedly rode their bikes up and down the street with their friends as their parents happily watched, knowing that the kids would sleep well that night. New families continue to join and the group keeps getting larger. Sternig hopes that Bike Night keeps expanding until the day it involves organized rides for entire families. In the meantime, she's happy to enjoy the success of Bike Night and the new friends she and her daughters have made.





Safe Routes Scoop News Briefs



"Keep Kids Alive, Drive 25 - Ridgewood, NJ"

Students from Ridgewood High School have created a powerful video that effectively demonstrates the importance of driving 25 miles per hour, especially through neighborhood streets. The 1½-minute video opens with three high school students driving in a car. It is a bright sunny day and they are happily singing along to music. Meanwhile, three younger children are standing along the side of the road. They wear signs reminding drivers there is "No Need to Speed" and to "Be Aware! Dive with Care." The music in the car builds as it nears the location of the small children. At the same time, one of the children steps off the curb and runs into the street. As the car is about to hit the child, the screen goes black and a sign fades saying: "Keep Kids Alive, Drive 25."

The video is intended to air on Ridgewood's public access television channel, on closed circuit televisions at the high school, and in the driver education classes. The video has also been posted on YouTube for all to see. It can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djH5p6RwVG0>.

Alliance for a Healthier Generation Launches New Healthy Schools Program Network

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation has launched a new Healthy Schools Program Network that enables parents, community members and other stakeholders to join in the

effort to make schools healthier places for students to learn. The Alliance is a joint partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation dedicated to combating childhood obesity across the United States. The Alliance sees schools as places where students can learn academic skills but also where they can learn healthy habits for life. What makes the new Healthy Schools Program Network unique is that it allows anyone to join with school officials in the effort. Signing up is quick and easy; simply enroll online by visiting the Healthy Schools Program's Network at HealthierGeneration.org/schools Network members receive access to a wealth of resources, toolkits and materials at no cost to help schools in their communities become better places for students and staff to learn and work. For more information about the Alliance, email Info@HealthierGeneration.org

SRTS in Garfield: A Case Study

A case study about Garfield's Safe Routes to School program has been added as a resource to the Active Living Resource Center. Supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Center provides resources and tools to help make neighborhoods more physically active places through bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Entitled "How Garfield, NJ, Got Its Kids Moving and Eating Better," the case study details how the Garfield Health Department has



Photo Credits: VTC





Safe Routes Scoop News Briefs



Photo Credits: VTC, UMDNJ - Newark

been coordinating local efforts since 2005 to help the city's children and families become more physically active and adopt healthier eating habits. The collaboration involved the Garfield schools, the local YMCA, the Parks and Recreation Department and area institutions of higher education.

The case study provides readers insight into how this small city was able to take such big steps towards creating an active and healthy community. The full case study can be viewed on the Active Living Resource Center's website at: <http://www.activelivingresources.org>.

UMDNJ Honored For Pedestrian Injury Prevention Work

The Pedestrian Injury Prevention Partnership (PIPP) developed by The Trauma Center at UMDNJ - University Hospital in Newark was honored at the 90th Annual Meeting of the New Jersey Hospital Association. The PIPP program received the Community Outreach Award for Programs with Budgets Less Than \$50,000. PIPP is a community coalition formed to tackle a significant public health issue in urban areas: pedestrian injuries and fatalities due to collisions with motor vehicles.

One of Newark PIPP's primary objectives is increasing awareness and knowledge of street safety among urban children. The Newark PIPP program has included mapping

injury "hot spots" throughout the city; installing safety cameras on city streets; implementing a school-based pedestrian education initiative; and conducting pedestrian safety-focused special events, including participation in International Walk to School Day.





Steal This Idea

Looking for something to add to your school or community newsletter? Copy and paste this article into your newsletter, and help spread the word about Safe Routes to School.

Walking for Health and Happiness

Dorothy followed the yellow brick road where she encountered all sorts of characters and learned about herself along the way. Johnny Cash “walked the line”. To protest British Imperial rule in 1930, Mohandas Gandhi walked 240 miles across India, helping advance the cause of independence. Martin Luther King marched on Washington in 1963 to deliver his inspiring “I have a dream” speech, creating a new spirit of hope across the country.

Walks exist for cancer, hunger, and peace. What is it about walking that makes such a statement?

Did you know?

- Walkers have less incidence of cancer, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and other killer diseases.
- Walking increases concentration levels and brain function and can improve test scores.
- Walking releases the body’s natural happy drugs – endorphins – so you’ll feel more upbeat.
- A brisk one-mile walk to school and back burns 150 calories. Walking one mile to and from school each day generates two-thirds of the recommended level of physical activity per day.
- If we returned to 1969 levels of walking and bicycling to school, when 85 percent of children living within one mile and 50 percent of those living within one to two miles of schools walked or bicycled, we would save 3.2 billion vehicle miles of travel, 1.5 million tons of carbon dioxide and 89,000 tons of other pollutants— the equivalent to keeping 250,000 cars off the road for a year.

Find out about the many benefits of walking by visiting www.walktoschool.org and find out where walking will take YOU.



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Safe Routes Scoop

Promoting Safe and Healthy Walking and Biking to School in New Jersey

Vol. III, No. 1 Spring 2009

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Safe Routes Scoop is funded through the NJ Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration and is produced by **Leigh Ann Von Hagen, AICP/PP, Peter Bilton AICP, Sean Meehan, Rebecca Hersh, AICP, Elizabeth Cox** and **Brian Staples** at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, a part of the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

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Feel free to forward this newsletter to other interested parties.



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