



CALIFORNIA SAFE  
ROUTES TO SCHOOL  
CLEARINGHOUSE

**MISSION:**

The Clearinghouse exists to offer support to local activists and public agency staff in their quest to develop Safe Routes to School in their California Communities.

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# The Clearinghouse Courier

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Walk Brave, Walk Smart!

## NEW SR2S RESOURCE COLLECTION

by Valerie Villarta

Since The Clearinghouse was formed in 1999, we have been gathering and squirreling away notes and articles on Safe Routes to School around the world. This year, thanks to a grant from The California Endowment, we have created the *Safe Routes to School Resource Collection*.

As you already know, The Clearinghouse supports communities interested in developing Safe Routes to School (SR2S) programs, primarily within the state of California. From the information we have collected and stored in the database, we can offer you: printed information and electronic files on related topics and issues, contact numbers to other community advocates, and links to other organizations and resources.

For example, if you want to know if a SR2S program already exists in your community, then contact us and we will search the SR2S Resource Collection and give you information that will allow you to connect with other activists in your area. There are lots of us who believe in making our streets safer for children, although sometimes it seems like an uphill battle!

The Clearinghouse understands that community agencies—especially schools—are extremely busy year round with their own special projects, fund-raisers, and other activities. That is why the SR2S Resource Collection is here to make the process of creating a SR2S program easier and fun to do. My experience of working at an elementary school for the last three years has made me realize that because schools are extremely busy, they need sources of innovative ideas that are easily obtainable. I have seen the dangerous traffic congestion and double-parking problems that occur when parents drop off and pick up their children. By using the SR2S Resource Collection, my school, along with yours, can find references and curriculum guides to help teachers, faculty, and parents discover alternative transportation methods such as walking or bicycling. By encouraging parents and students to practice SR2S methods, you can overcome the ongoing traffic problem that may exist in your area.

If your school, agency, or advocacy group is interested in finding information about related SR2S issues and activities, you can simply make a request by contacting me, Valerie Villarta at The Clearinghouse by email:

(see "SR2S Resource Collection" on page 4)



Winter-Spring 2002

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# MOVING BEYOND WALK DAY

## ACTIVITIES THAT SUPPORT SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

by Valerie Villarta

The annual Walk To School Day (WTSD) event gathers more and more support from parents and community leaders every year. October 2, 2001, was the third statewide recognition of the international event. On that day, an estimated 220 participating schools had over 42,000 walkers in California alone! However, this event can and should be used as a stepping stone event that inspires and encourages children and parents to make Safe Routes to School every day.

At The Clearinghouse, we were eager to find out what schools and communities do the other 364 days of the year. We discovered that here in California there are several schools that have applied WTSD concepts in activities that go on throughout the year.

For example, Oak Avenue Elementary School in Los Altos designated December 4<sup>th</sup>, March 21<sup>st</sup>, and May 1<sup>st</sup> of this school year as “Walk to School Days.” Along with those special dates, the school established “Walking Wednesday” as a day to encourage the community to walk to school regularly. Bay Farm Elementary School in Alameda designated every Thursday as “Spirit Day and WTSD.”



Almond Elementary, also part of the Los Altos School District, has a program called “Almond Walks.” Parent volunteers serve as block monitors at key intersections around the school. Similar to crossing guards, parent monitors can help students cross streets and make it home with supervision along the way—



which tends to ease other parents’ worries about children walking home. Almond Elementary also raffles off bicycles to students who walk or bike to school frequently.

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Loyola Elementary, another school in the Los Altos School District, has a program called “Lions-A-Foot.” Every time a child walks or bikes to school, his/her name gets checked off and is placed into a large raffle. The more often a student walks or



bikes to school, the more chances he/she has to win a \$250 gift certificate to a local bike store. This gift certificate is paid for by the PTA and is given in September, October, April, and May—months that are ideal for walking and bicycling. Bill Crook, a coordinator of the activity, believes that this program, along with the other “Lions-A-Foot” activities, really cuts down the amount of traffic congestion that occurs around the school.

Some schools in the Los Altos district do not have paved sidewalks that lead into campus. However, this does not prevent schools like Bullis Elementary from encouraging their students to walk to school. Once every month, they designate a certain spot where parents can drop off their children, who then gather with other students to make a large walking school bus.

Wendi Kallins, Program Director for Marin County Safe Routes to School, told us that some Marin County schools have created “Frequent Rider Miles,” a concept similar to frequent flyer miles. Students acquire points for every time they ride their bike to school. After accumulating 20 points, their cards are placed in a raffle for a chance to win really cool prizes.

Trace Elementary School in San Jose has recently developed a “Walking Club” for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students that meet once a week during lunch. When the children go out for lunch, they can get their walking exercise from a quarter mile path that is set up by plastic cones. The students are given cards with pictures of feet on them. Every time they finish a lap, the cards are hole punched to indicate they finished a ¼ mile. The card has a total of 12 feet on it and for every fourth foot (1 mile) punched, the student receives a “toe token” to wear on his/her shoelaces. The more cards completed, the better the prize gets every time.

In southern California, Del Mar Heights Elementary designated every Thursday as WTSD to get students and parents used to walking to and from school. As an incentive, every month the principal counts how many students walked to school per classroom. Whichever class had the most walkers for that month will have the honor of keeping the “Big Blue Shoe” inside their classroom. The class with the most walkers gets to sign and keep the shoe in their class until another classroom has more students than they do walking to school. These activities have cut down the number of cars that congest the small area where parents drop their students off. An average of 50-60 cars have been eliminated from the daily drive as a result of these ongoing activities and events.

(see “Moving Beyond Walk Day” on page 6)

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# Upcoming Events

- **Earth CarFree Day**  
**April 25**  
[www.ecoplan.org/carfreeday](http://www.ecoplan.org/carfreeday)
- **Bike To Work Day**  
**May 17**  
[www.bikeleague.org](http://www.bikeleague.org)
- **Lifesavers 2002:  
National Conference  
on Highway Safety  
Priorities**  
**June 9 - 11**  
**Orlando, FL**  
[www.lifesaversconference.org](http://www.lifesaversconference.org)
- **16th Annual Calif.  
Conference on  
Childhood Injury  
Control**  
**September 23 - 25**  
**San Diego, CA**  
[www.cccip.org](http://www.cccip.org)
- **International  
Walk To School Day**  
**October 2**  
[www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org)

## SR2S Resource Collection

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[SafeRt@jba-cht.com](mailto:SafeRt@jba-cht.com); visiting the web site [www.4saferoutes.org](http://www.4saferoutes.org); or by calling toll-free (877) 4-Safe-Rt (877-472-3378).

The SR2S Resource Collection has an array of sources that we can pull information from. We have news articles, books, manuals, videos, reports, brochures, curriculum, and tool kits—just to name a few. The system is divided into the following themes:

**ADVOCACY GROUPS:** General information, including contact numbers and emails, on advocacy groups such as professional organizations, bicycle groups, and pedestrian advocacy associations working on related causes.

**BICYCLIST—GENERAL:** Brochures, articles, handouts, and books related to bicyclists. This collection includes general information on how to make roads, sidewalks, and cities safer for bicyclists. There are also other articles related to street use on various biking designs, operations, and plans implemented to achieve safer streets.

**CHILDREN AS PEDESTRIANS:** Articles related to children and their development. Also, information about children walking to school and ways to make the overall experience of walking and biking to school more enjoyable for children.

**DRIVING BEHAVIOR & TRAFFIC CALMING:** Articles related to transportation/driving safety, aggressive driving, cell phone use, and distracted driving. Also, traffic calming articles related to the reduction of accidents and innovative ideas for road/sidewalk improvements; articles that feature schools and cities with model traffic calming programs.

**ENVIRONMENTAL:** Handouts and brochures about air quality and other environmental issues related to healthy walking and bicycling.

**EVENTS:** Up to date information on events sponsored by schools, local agencies, state governments, national organizations—and even international efforts that promote walking and bicycling.

**FUNDING:** Sources of possible funding from programs and organizations that support SR2S programs and their related activities.

**HEALTH:** A wide variety of health related articles including: walking benefits, exercise, activity/fitness, health problems such as asthma, obesity, and much more. We also have a collection of articles related to nutrition.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT:** A collection of law enforcement actions (e.g., pedestrian stings) that promote pedestrian and bicycling safety, and contact information of law enforcement agencies supportive of SR2S programs.

**LEGISLATION & POLICY MAKING:** New laws related to pedestrian safety within school environments, local communities, state, and federal levels. Also, advocacy information about walking, bicycling, and safe driving with regards to legislation and policymaking.

*(continued on page 5)*

**LIVABLE COMMUNITIES:** A large collection of articles, brochures and books about model livable communities and tips on how to achieve them. Also, information about community planning, sprawl prevention, walkable and bikeable communities, school siting, housing density, equity, and diversity.

**MEDIA:** Mass media campaign tools in TV, music, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, etc. Also, articles that address approaches to working with the media, talking points, and sample press releases related to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

**PEDESTRIAN/BICYCLIST INJURY:** A grim collection of pedestrian and bicyclist accidents and fatalities: published reports, general statistics, fatality rates, and traffic/driving deaths for both children and adults.

**PEDESTRIAN–GENERAL:** All general pedestrian issues. Many brochures, articles, handouts, and books related to the pedestrian population for adults and seniors. Also, articles related to safer streets, walking designs, operations, and planning. Also included: supplemental materials that can help make roads, sidewalks, and cities safer for all pedestrians.

**PHILOSOPHY:** The philosophy of Safe Routes to School—everyone in a community, especially children, should be able reap the health benefits of being able to walk and bike to school in a safe and pleasant environment—is embraced by open discourse in general arguments from community agencies and leaders, schools, parents, and students. Within this section we have various articles that support public advocacy for walking, biking, and road safety.

**SR2S PROJECTS & CONTACTS:** A large collection of contact information to people, programs, and organizations that are specifically related to SR2S. Also, a collection of fliers, brochures, newsletters, articles, booklets, etc., specifically related to SR2S programs and projects.

**TEACHING IDEAS & CURRICULA:** Educational and instructional materials, handouts, tips, classroom plans, and other ideas that help teachers promote and teach about walking, bicycling, and traffic safety for students.

**VIOLENCE:** Different from pedestrian and bicyclist injuries, this section addresses pedestrian and cyclists fatalities as a result of violent driving. Also, related articles about unsafe communities and kidnapping (also known as “stranger danger”).

**WALK TO SCHOOL DAY:** A general collection of brochures, fliers, planning information, and other articles specifically related to WTSD. Popular requests for information are: new ideas for getting started, finding local contacts, pedestrian activities/curriculum for elementary and middle school children, and WTSD ideas from other states and countries.

We hope that the SR2S Resource Collection will be a tool that will help you in creating or improving a Safe Routes to School campaign in your community. Contact us—we’ll be more than happy to help find the information you are looking for. ❖

## Benefits of Regular Physical Activity

- Helps build and maintain healthy bones and muscles
- Helps control weight, build lean muscle, and reduce fat
- Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety and promotes physical well-being
- Prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure & helps reduce blood pressure in some adolescents with hypertension

For more facts on the benefits of physical activity and the health of young people visit the Center for Disease Control & Prevention web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or contact The Clearinghouse.

# Clearinghouse Web Site

We are very happy to let you all know that our web site [www.4saferoutes.org](http://www.4saferoutes.org) was launched in November 2001. We want to express our gratitude to The California Endowment for the funding that has enabled us to develop this web site, and to continue our other Safe Routes To School (SR2S) support efforts.

Please take a moment to visit the site. We have listed information about upcoming conferences and events. You can also download the most recent editions of our newsletters: *The Clearinghouse Courier* and *Clearinghouse Clippings*. We have also listed many links to programs, projects, and organizations from around the world working on SR2S and walking and bicycling issues.

If you do not find the information you are looking for on the web site, please email us a request for the information. You can also send us submissions of articles or announcements for posting on the site.

We hope that you find this web site useful in your quest to promote and advocate for the safety of our children as they make their way to and from school. Your feedback is welcomed and appreciated.

We look forward to your comments and input on our new web site: [www.4saferoutes.org](http://www.4saferoutes.org).

The Clearinghouse Staff,  
Peggy, Gracie, and Valerie

## Moving Beyond Walk Day —cont. from pg. 3

Many schools agree that WTSD ignites a spark of attention that is necessary to educate the community and have them realize the benefits of walking or bicycling to school. In Oakland, pedestrians and bicyclists have realized that none of the schools were designed for the morning and afternoon swarms of parents that come to pick up and drop off their kids. To fix this problem, volunteers pass out flyers to parents and drivers with information about safe driving tips and helpful maps that show safe routes kids can use to walk and bike to school. By raising awareness and utilizing the walkability checklists, Oakland safety representatives and school officials can concentrate on local pedestrian and traffic safety issues.

As schools work to establishing year-round Safe Routes to School, they realize that the participation of community and government agencies are essential. This year, the Walk Day Headquarters at the Department of Health Services, informed several California Highway Patrol units about the event.

Sergeant Peggy Frailey of Lemon Grove agrees that community participation is helpful in order to enforce walking safety throughout the school year. In her community, everyone is given walkability checklists so that the city receives feedback from members of the community other than students and parents. A newsletter with traffic education tips is also available for all members of the community. The parent-walking program at Mount Vernon Elementary School in Lemon Grove shows how the community can come together to encourage walking and bicycling to school.

If you need ideas or assistance with taking walking or bicycling to school beyond a one day event, then please give us a call. We have materials and resources that can encourage children, parents, faculty and staff members to walk and bike to school. The Clearinghouse will be more than happy to

help you continue your efforts throughout the school year.



Likewise, if you have used WTSD activities to increase walking and biking to school or know of a community or school that has done walking and biking activities beyond once a year, we would appreciate it if you would share the

information with us so that we can let others know of the excellent activities that are being done to create and support Safe Routes To School. ❖

# SPEAK UP FOR SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

by Peggy da Silva

In California, there are a large number of people who believe that Safe Routes to School are important. Our state government has funded education and engineering programs that further SR2S efforts; while many of us work as school level volunteers to make the streets safer for our children. However, we know it's not enough. There are many in our state who do not make SR2S a priority—and the level of support is even lower in other states. Over the past few months I have been invited to three national meetings that made it abundantly clear to me that those of us who believe safe routes to school are important must speak up. I presented our work at the SAFE USA (in Atlanta, GA) and Transportation Research Board (in Washington, DC) conferences. However, at each conference, SR2S was a very small part of the transportation, safety, and health picture.

SR2S efforts cross over many program areas—they don't fit neatly into a specific box such as driver safety or violence prevention. If someone only understands one small piece of SR2S (for example, a mapped route), he or she may be dismissive of the overall importance of what's being done. To achieve our overall goals, we must achieve changes and improvements in many areas of community life. We must be sure that decision-makers understand that high-density housing, traffic calming, driver responsibility, and pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly roadways are worth studying, funding, legislating, promoting, and enforcing. We must help educate and inform our leaders that part of children's healthy development depends on their ability to safely get about their neighborhoods on foot and on bicycle.

My third meeting was with Congressman Oberstar from Minnesota, at which he gathered SR2S activists in DC to hear about our efforts. He is fully supportive, but there are over 400 representatives and 100 senators in Congress. For contact information for State and Federal Elected Officials, visit: [www.sen.ca.gov](http://www.sen.ca.gov) and [www.cdt.org/action/contactcongress.shtml](http://www.cdt.org/action/contactcongress.shtml)

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have done a great deal to support SR2S efforts. Two leaders who might enjoy hearing about your efforts and understanding your passion for SR2S are:

- Dr. Jeffrey W. Runge, Administrator, NHTSA  
400 7th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590
- Suzzane Binder, MD, Director  
National Center for Injury Prevention & Control  
4770 Buford Hwy, N.E. (MS-K02), Atlanta, GA 30341

The more elected and appointed officials know about Safe Routes to School, the more they will realize what an important issue it is. Speak up today! ❖



## Now Available

### *Getting To School Safely Community Action Kit*

Launched by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in 2000 the **Getting to School Safely Community Action Kit** is a planner designed to help teachers, administrators, school transportation directors, parents, and concerned citizens plan activities at the community level to ensure that all students get to school safely.

The newly updated planner has a variety of tools and materials to help you plan and implement activities for your school transportation safety program and participate in annual safety events, such as International Walk to School Day and National Bike Month.

The planner includes helpful items such as:

- state and regional contacts
- national organizations
- fact sheets
- talking points
- a calendar of events
- success stories
- sample proclamations
- an activities guide
- handouts and flyers

To request a free copy of the **Getting to School Safely Community Action Kit**, contact Gracie Askew at The Clearinghouse, toll-free at (877) 4-Safe-Rt or email [SafeRt@jba-cht.com](mailto:SafeRt@jba-cht.com).



## SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL WHAT IS A BEST PRACTICE?

Safe Routes to School projects have been popping up all over the place. They look different in different communities, as would be expected of a grassroots movement. This is wonderful! But, with all the variety, there arises the question: what works and what doesn't? We at The Clearinghouse have gathered lots of information about the different ways people approach our common goal. Our project with NHTSA asks the next question – beyond describing the various efforts. It asks us to analyze: what was the situation like when the SR2S efforts began; what changes took place and what is the situation now? For example, NHTSA is very interested in hard data about numbers of children walking and bicycling and rates of injuries. We have recently explored several projects in some detail, and see in them elements of “best practices.” The projects are located in Toronto (Ontario), Portland (OR), the Bronx (NY), and Palo Alto, Santa Ana and Marin County (CA).

We are looking for input from activists in the field. What do you think are the most important measures of success for safe routes to school projects? We have a survey form that we would like you to fill out. It is included in the middle of this newsletter. Please take a few moments to fill it out and send it back to us. Please be sure to respond by February 28, although we are happy to talk with you anytime. We will keep you posted on the progress of our efforts to shine a light on SR2S efforts and analyze what works.

