

2007 Report

Walk to School Day event highlights

Walk to School events provide an opportunity for families, schools and the broader community to join together in recognition of the benefits of walking. Communities are holding Walk to School events to celebrate, inspire and often kick off larger health or safety initiatives. In its 11th year, the event has taken on new meaning for many communities. Long-standing interests in issues like physical activity promotion, pedestrian safety and community-building have been joined by a growing interest in Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs. These comprehensive, year-round programs aim to improve conditions so that safe walking and bicycling are options and to encourage more children to safely walk and bike to school every day. The rise in SRTS programs affirms all of the reasons communities traditionally have cared about walking to school while adding a new level of sustainability so that children and adults can enjoy the benefits of walking for years to come.



- ➔ Participation grew tremendously this year: There was a 35% increase in Walk to School events registered on the USA Walk to School site (www.walktoschool.org) compared to 2006.
- ➔ Schools from **all 50 states** and Washington, DC held events **and a record 42 countries participated.**

“Students had fun walking with their friends. Many of the parents liked the idea of meeting up with other students and parents. Traffic congestion in front of our school was significantly reduced. Our mayor and superintendent led the procession of walkers and bikers to the school...”

—Walk to School Organizer



- ➔ More than **one-half (52%)** of registered events hold walking and/or bicycling promotional activities throughout the year.
- ➔ Nearly **one-half (47%)** of registered events are part of a Safe Routes to School program and awareness of SRTS programs is growing.

“Walk to School Day kicked off the beginning of our Walking Wednesdays and Fitness Fridays program—we encourage the students to walk to school on Wednesday and ride their bikes on Fridays.”

—Walk to School Organizer

- ➔ Walk to School events were featured in over 900 local print and broadcast media outlets across the US.
- ➔ Major media outlets that covered Walk to School Day included the Washington Post, Newsday, Yahoo, Chicago Tribune, Boston Globe, the New York Times and Arizona Republic.
- ➔ About one-half (51%) of events had media coverage as part of their event.

“It was a fabulous event for a variety of reasons! Good, old fashioned fun...good old fashioned teaching... it was an incredibly powerful community building event.”

–Walk to School Organizer

Primary reasons for holding a Walk to School event:*

- #1 Promotion of physical activity/ prevention of obesity
- #2 Pedestrian safety
- #3 Support for a SRTS Program

*based on a survey of Walk to School organizers



Monterey, CA

- ➔ Walk to School events led to policy or engineering changes to improve walking conditions, such as increased traffic enforcement near the school or the addition of walkways in 62% of events.
- ➔ To include families who lived too far from the school to walk or could not walk from home for other reasons, 57% of events offered off-site locations to park and walk.
- ➔ Children bicycled from their neighborhoods to the school in 54% of events.

“This school was participating in its sixth Walk to School event and every year it grows with more participation...For a semi-rural community the participation of walkers is unbelievable.”

–Walk to School Organizer



Spartanburg, SC



Boulder, CO



Bozeman, MT

For additional information, please visit www.walktoschool.org



The National Center for Safe Routes to School (NCSRTS) acts as the National Coordinator for Walk to School events in the US and is one of the leaders of the International Walk to School Committee. The Walk to School web site (www.walktoschool.org), administered by NCSRTS, offers planning guidance, resources and a registration system for US events.