



Sound Steps

Education Engineering Enforcement for Montgomery County Communities

Montgomery County Department of Transportation
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/walk

Safe Routes to School News

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Another Successful Walk to School Day!

Over forty Montgomery County schools participated in the 2015 International Walk to School Day!

Students, parents and school staff across Montgomery County walked and biked to school on October 7th for Walk to School Day. Elected officials joined students and parents as they walked at Bells Mill Elementary. Dignitaries spoke about the importance of physical activity and being safe when walking and biking to/from school. Principal Oglesby also talked about the school starting their Fire Up Your Feet program as a way to get more students healthy and active. Students also participated in an assembly sponsored by AAA Mid-Atlantic featuring Otto the Auto. He proved to be a big hit as he taught students about the importance of practicing safe pedestrian and bicycle behaviors! Many schools had impressive turn-outs and creative celebrations. Congratulations to all those who participated! Also, congratulations to the students who won prizes as part of our Walk to School Day Contest and to Westbrook Elementary School for having the most entries in the contest!

[More inside!](#)



Walk to School Day 2015 at Bells Mill Elementary School



Westbrook Elementary School had the most number of entries in the Walk to School Day contest!

Reminders

It's that time of the year again, when the sun rises a little later and the night approaches a little sooner. As more children are walking, biking and rolling in the early morning dusk or evenings, Safe Routes to School strongly encourages families to think about how to travel safely in the dark. Here are some tips on how you can be safe and be seen.

- » Be visible by carrying a flashlight or flashing pedestrian safety light, apply reflective stickers to your rain coat and backpack, and/or sew-on retro-reflective tape on your jacket and coat.
- » Be alert by taking out your ear buds and putting away your phone or other distractions while you cross.
- » Cross busy streets at a signal or marked mid-block crossing - drivers anticipate pedestrians at these locations more than unmarked crossings.
- » Look in all directions before crossing the street and cross after all the cars have stopped or passed.
- » Make eye contact with drivers before you cross to help communicate that drivers see you.
- » Stop and look to make sure cars have stopped for you before crossing the next lane of traffic.

Thanks for doing your part to Be Safe and Be Seen!



Park, Walk and Talk

Improving safety around school drop-off and pick-up times, reducing harmful car emissions in the parking lot and getting a little exercise before class are all benefits of starting a Park, Walk and Talk day with your family.

Find a park or other convenient spot to leave your car about a half mile or less from school, then walk and talk the rest of the way. Try it a few times a month until you find a route and parking spot that works best. To add even more benefits (and fun!), consider inviting other families to join in. Nearby churches or buildings with larger parking lots are good places to ask about morning parking space availability. Neighborhood coffee shops and businesses might be interested in hosting or providing a discount on coffee or treats to help support your school. Most importantly, remember to relax and enjoy the short walk to school with your family.

For more information contact Nadji Kirby, SRTS Coordinator at 240-777-7169 or at nadji.kirby@montgomerycountymd.gov.



Welcome!

This newsletter will contain information regarding the Safe Routes to School program, pedestrian and bicycle safety topics, engineering highlights, enforcement, etc. This newsletter will be sent to school administrators, teachers, parents, volunteers, and other interested parties. Please feel free to forward this newsletter to anyone you feel would be interested or email me their address and I can add them to the list, nadji.kirby@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Nadji Kirby, Editor
MCDOT Division of Traffic Engineering & Operations

Safer Crossings at Galway!

At Galway Elementary School, the crossing guard was posted at a four-way stop controlled intersection south of the school. However, a significant number of parents were parking in a lot across from the school and on the street and walking their children at mid-block locations across Galway Drive (without the benefit of a crossing guard or stop controls). Additionally, parents were also stopping their vehicles in “No Stopping Any Time” zones on both sides of the street which negatively impacted both vehicular and pedestrian traffic safety.

To improve pedestrian safety, MCDOT installed a marked school crosswalk on Galway Drive at the bus loop entrance driveway and the crossing guard is now posted at this location. Curb extensions were constructed on both sides of Galway Drive, at the new crosswalk location, to improve pedestrian safety as well as to maintain safe traffic operations through the school zone.



YOLO High School Pedestrian Safety Campaign



Last school year high schools utilized the YOLO Campaign toolkit in creative ways to spread awareness of the risks of distracted walking and other dangerous pedestrian behaviors. Shown above, students from Bethesda Chevy Chase High School along with the Leaders Institute used the YOLO materials and had a “Lunch Fest” where students could sign the pledge banner, get pedestrian safety information, answer safety related questions, etc. These BCC students also had an information table at various events including their own Across the Block party held in downtown Silver Spring and at the County’s World of Montgomery festival.

Alexis Pineda, from Gaithersburg High School worked with her fellow students and school staff to organize a safety assembly (picture below). The assembly included speakers and various performances by students. The speakers included Councilmember Craig Rice, Captain Tom Didone from the Montgomery County Police, and Gwen Ward, mother of Christina Morris-Ward, a Seneca Valley student that was killed on her way to school in 2012. Principal Dr. Handy-Collins told students to tweet things they learned during the assembly and so many students tweeted that the #yolowalksafe hashtag began trending on twitter!



If you would like to do something at your high school but are not sure what to do or how to do it, please contact Nadji Kirby, SRTS Coordinator at 240-777-7169 or nadji.kirby@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Safe Routes to School in Montgomery County Targeted Education and Outreach Programs

Montgomery County's Safe Routes to School program provides safe and active walking and bicycling to and from school. It provides an opportunity to make walking and bicycling safer and more accessible for children, including those with disabilities, as well as to increase the number of children who chose to walk and bike. On a broader level Safe Routes to School can enhance children's health and well-being, ease traffic congestion near schools, improve air quality, and improve community member's overall quality of life.



Montgomery County's Safe Routes to School program is led by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and is supported by the Montgomery County Police Department, Montgomery County Fire Rescue Service, the Maryland Highway Safety Office, and other County and State agencies working to improve student safety. We work collaboratively with schools to develop creative solutions for school related traffic problems.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation – Safe Routes to School

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