



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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A Very Successful Walk to School Day

Over forty-five Montgomery County schools participated in the 2012 International Walk to School Day, a 12% increase over last year!

That's an estimated 18,000 students, parents and school staff in Montgomery County walking and biking to school on October 3rd. At Dr. Charles Drew Elementary, elected officials joined students and parents walking to school.

Dignitaries spoke about the importance of physical activity and being safe when walking and biking to/from school.

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! Check out the [video](#) from Charles Drew!

Many schools had impressive turn-outs and creative celebrations. Congratulations to all those who participated!



Walk to School Day 2012 at
Dr. Charles Drew Elementary School

Keep the momentum going! Choose one day a week to walk or bike to school, or park your car and walk several blocks. Share the fun by inviting others to join you!

More inside!

Walking and Biking Tips

The winter weather and daylight savings time has arrived and children walking and biking to school should be prepared. Below find a few helpful tips:

- **Wear A Helmet:** Better to mess up your hair than your brain. To be effective, a helmet must fit properly, and if you crash, replace the helmet.
- **Make yourself visible to motorists.** Incorporate flashing lights, headlights and reflectors into your walking and biking gear and clothing. Small children, particularly, are difficult to see. And avoid traffic, especially during dark hours.
- **Be aware of your surroundings.** Pull off your iPod. Don't talk on the phone. Don't text. Auditory cues can be as important to safety as visuals.
- **Bike like a driver.** You have the same obligations as a driver to go with the flow of traffic, signal your turns and do all the things you would do in a car.
- **Be careful when you cross the street,** and be there when your kids do. Children ages seven and under lack the cognitive skills necessary to deal with all the information their taking in to determine when it's safe to cross. As parents, take the time to give your children guided practice.



Walking and Biking programs are a great way for parents to get involved in a hands-on way that kids see. It can make a meaningful difference in teaching and learning.

Parents and community volunteers can play many roles:

- 1) Monthly walk and bike activities/celebrations
- 2) Raffle prizes and community support
- 3) Bike Rodeos
- 4) Walking School Buses
- 5) Safety classes

For more information about how you might get involved at your local school, please contact Nadji Kirby, Safe Routes to School Coordinator: 240-777-7169 or nadji.kirby@montgomerycountymd.gov



Welcome!

We are proud to launch the first issue of Safe Routes News! 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 and/or please email me their address and I can add them to the list, nadji.kirby@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Nadji Kirby, Editor
MCDOT Director's Office

Engineering at Wood Acres!

At Wood Acres ES, there was a recurring problem of parents parking/halting their vehicles in the “No Stopping Any Time” zones at the school crosswalk and at the school driveways. This negatively impacted sight distance of pedestrians in the crosswalk and drivers entering/exiting the driveways. Now with the physical features in place, the vehicle parking/halting has been eliminated keeping pedestrians and drivers safe!



SchoolPool – “Share the Trip”

SchoolPool is a free, interactive matching service for parents of children who attend the same school and want to share the responsibility of transporting students to school on foot or bike! This safe and secure service matches parents with other parents in their neighborhood who are interested in organizing a walking school bus or bike train! Some schools and parents can use it for carpooling.

SchoolPool is a safe, convenient way to get kids to school while saving parents time, encouraging healthier, active lifestyles, and reducing congestion. Did you know that as much as 25% of morning traffic is generated by parents driving their children to school? So, while reducing congestion and improving air quality in and around your school zone, you can also give yourself (and your car) a break by sharing the ride with a friend, neighbor or classmate or walking or biking with your child to school. It’s never too early to begin teaching your child the importance of caring for our environment.

- **SchoolPool enrollment is now open for school administrators!** Each school registers to participate by completing and returning the [SchoolPool application](#) form. Some schools have already registered! If you are an interested parent, please encourage your school to register.

- Parents/guardians enroll online at www.commuterconnections.org/schoolpool. They will be asked to provide information, including home address and grade level for each child they want to enroll. All information is confidential and will be provided only to prospective “matchlist” parents from the same school and to the Montgomery County Safe Routes to School Coordinator.

- After enrolling, parents/guardians will receive a “matchlist” for each child with the email of other enrolled parents from their neighborhood who travel to the same school.

- It’s up to the parents/guardians to make whatever arrangement they prefer.

For questions or additional information, please contact Nadji Kirby, Safe Routes to School Coordinator via phone at 240-777-7169 or via email at 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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