



SafeRoutes News

THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

A PROGRAM OF THE MARIN COUNTY BICYCLE COALITION

FALL 2003

COME and PLAY



**Sunday, October 12
at Kent Middle School
Free for Kids**

You are invited to play Ride n' Seek, Marin's first rolling treasure hunt for families. The hunt will be on Sunday October 12, starting at Kent Middle School in Kentfield at 1 p.m. Ride n' Seek is sponsored by Marin General Hospital, Schwinn Bicycle Co., and Marin Scope Newspapers.

Ride n' Seek will be the local culmination of International Walk To School Week. It will highlight the Ross Valley's multi-use pathway through Ross, Kentfield, Larkspur and Corte Madera. Families and experienced cyclists will discover hidden treasures and broaden their knowledge of this area by solving clues provided at the start of the ride.

This is a new community outreach event for Safe Routes to Schools, aimed at increasing community awareness of both the program and local bikeways.

Who Can Play

Families will be led by their children, who will interpret and navigate the route via clues along the bikeway. Experienced riders can expand their search into the surrounding areas with a more

challenging hunt. Both routes are expected to take approximately two hours to complete.

The event begins and ends at Kent Middle School, with riders beginning at their convenience between 1 and 2 p.m. Post-hunt recovery food will be available for a small fee. While relaxing after the ride, participants will enjoy guest speakers discussing the latest developments in creating a more bike-friendly Marin and illustrating the benefits for children riding and walking to school. A representative from Senator Barbara Boxer's office will discuss national plans for Safe Routes to Schools.

Prizes to the winning riders and teams include a kayaking adventure on San Francisco Bay donated by Sea Trek, and, for the experienced riders, another kayaking opportunity on Tomales Bay provided by Tamal Saka. Additional prizes have been donated by Birkenstock, REI, Village Peddler and others. The Water Store will provide water stations. Thanks also to Woodland Market and Bank of Marin for their generous donation.

Riders may register for Ride n' Seek online at www.saferoutes.to.schools.org, or by calling 415.488.4101. Cost in advance is \$20 for adults (\$25 at the event), \$10 for ages 12 to 18 (\$15 at the event), and **free** for children under 12.

Walk and Roll to School on October 8th



The organizers of International Walk to School Day have expanded the event to a whole week. The official International Walk to School Day will be on October 8, but the whole week, from October 6 through October 12 (Ride n' Seek Day) can be used to promote walking and cycling to school. Activities can include contests, special events, and promotion of safe walking and biking routes. The California Department of Health Services has provided a whole host of ideas on how to make this event lots of fun and educational for your school. Marin's Safe Routes to Schools program has purchased hundreds of zipper pulls and balloons to distribute to its participating schools. To find out more, go to the official California Walk to School Day web site at www.cawalktoschool.com. You can also track international activity at www.iwalktoschool.org.

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Safe Routes to Schools is a program of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization.

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SafeRoutes News

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Treasure Your Neighborhood

Discover the jewels of your neighborhood through walking and biking

By Wendi Kallins

When I was a kid, we used to gather down at the empty field at the end of my street to play. I knew the names of all of my neighbors and we used to play hide and seek through the back yards. I became an expert on all the great hiding places and the best climbing trees.

Walking and biking allows children to discover the hidden jewels in their neighborhood. Meandering at a slower pace, there is so much more to see. You can admire your neighbor's garden, explore walking routes where cars can't go, get to know the people on your street. Marin offers children acres of open space and parks in which to play, but with so much of their time scheduled and their parents chauffeuring them around, kids have less time available to explore their neighborhoods.

Safe Routes to Schools programs help to change that. Encouraging children to walk and bike to school expands the opportunities for the whole family to discover activities close to home that are both healthy and fun. Taking a walk around the block can become a whole adventure. Discover the bike routes that can take you to your favorite parks. Find the treasures of your neighborhood.

This year, Safe Routes to Schools launches its Treasure Your Neighborhood campaign. Its goal is threefold:

- 1 We will encourage family outings on foot or bike so that children can get to know their street and the people who live there. On International Walk to School Day, participating

schools will hand out a mini-treasure hunt forms for children to use on their walk to school. On October 12, we invite you to play Ride n' Seek, Marin's first rolling treasure hunt, starting at Kent Middle School at 1 p.m. (see page 1 for details).

- 2 Once families know their neighbors, they can form School Pools, so that children can walk or bicycle to school on a regular basis (see page 3 for details).

- 3 We will educate drivers to respect their own and other people's neighborhoods by driving slowly and attentively and watching for children and adults who are walking and cycling. We have a grant request pending with State Farm Insurance to purchase lawn signs and decals asking drivers to "Slow Down for our Kids."

You can start right now. Instead of piling into the car for a weekend outing, find your way to the nearest hiking trail and head up to the open space. Walk to the nearest café or ice cream store. Take a biking tour with the whole family; tandems and alley cats allow you to take the little ones in tow while the older kids bike behind. Most people move to Marin for its natural beauty. What better, more satisfying way to enjoy it firsthand than by viewing it through the power of your own two feet?

What will be your children's fondest memories? They may not be expensive classes, amusement parks, video games or blockbuster movies. Join your children in discovering the treasures right around your corner.



"Mommy, how many times around the block would be the same as the Tour de France?"

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Manor students take the Walking School Bus to School. K.C. brings up the rear with the younger children in hand.

SCHOOL POOLS

Walk, bike or carpool with your neighbors

Every Wednesday last spring, children would gather at Piper Park in Fairfax and join K.C., her granddaughter and lots of friends to walk to school together. This walking school bus provided a safe and healthy way for Manor children to get to school. And it was lots of fun. "It wakes you up and makes you pay attention more in class," said one child. "Plus you don't talk as much [in class], 'cause you talk to your friends on the way to school," added another girl.

Safe Routes to Schools is pleased to announce a partnership with Rides for Bay Area Commuters to facilitate the formation of this kind of School Pool. A School Pool consists of two or more families who share in the responsibilities of getting their children to school by forming walking school buses, bike trains and carpools.

Rides will offer two different kinds of computer assistance. They can set up a special sign-up site on their web page, especially designed for a particular school. People can then log on and discover other people in their neighborhood who are interested in forming School Pools.

Rides will also offer GIS mapping of the school, allowing the school to more aggressively assist parents in forming school pools. GIS mapping takes a database and plots it on a map. Specific neighborhoods can then be identified and those who live there are grouped together. A neighborhood organizer is then given information on how to form School Pools. Privacy will be protected, as no real addresses will be revealed. Each school will develop its own system to fit its needs.

School pools are advantageous for a variety of reasons. Fewer parents driving means less traffic at the school and creates a safer, less stressful morning drop-off period. Those who choose to walk or bike will get the added benefit of morning exercise, which improves student health and performance, and boosts parent health as well. In addition, everyone participating enjoys social interaction, getting to know neighbors. This leads to greater bonds and friendships. Neighborhoods where people know each other are safer as well, as people look out for each other's homes and children.

Find the hidden treasures of your neighborhood. Form a School Pool. To find out more, call 488-4101.

It wakes you up and makes you pay attention more in class

Frequent Rider Miles Rides Again.

Students thrilled with new Trek bicycles

Eight-year-old Molly Rebscher was in shock when she heard her name called for the Fre-



*Molly Rebscher loves
her new Trek Bike.*

*It's good for you
and there's
no pollution.
You don't go
zooming by things
that are pretty.*

—Molly

quent Rider Miles contest last spring. "I'd won things before, but never anything big," she said. She ran right out and got her new bike within days. "It's got front shocks!" she grins. Molly was one of twenty Marin County students to win a \$200 gift certificate towards a new Trek Bicycle for walking or wheeling to

school. Molly joined a bike train from Woodacre to Lagunitas School, led by parent Buzz Voytovich every Wednesday with about a dozen kids. She also rode with her dad, Steve, and Buzz and his daughter on Fridays.

Molly loves bicycling to school. "It's good for you and there's no pollution. You don't go zooming by things that are pretty." Molly comes from a bike-riding family. Her father bicycles from San Anselmo to his job in San Francisco twice a week, and the whole family goes on cycling outings. Last summer they biked a 10-mile trail along the Truckee river. Her little sister, Anna, just got her training wheels off a year ago and inherited Molly's old bike.

Other Schools Join the Fun

Brookside Schools' upper and lower campus drawings were held during talent shows for each campus, so all students and a lot of parents saw the drawing. "It was really fun," reported Team leader Gina Feiner. The winner at Lower Brookside was a kindergartner, Lily Farmer, who is often seen riding tandem with her mom to school all the way from Fairfax. The winner at Upper Brookside was Brad Newman, whose mom is a dedicated car-pooler.

Kelly Hanley of St. Patrick's School in Larkspur reports that David Zec of Corte Madera won their school's grand prize. "David is a third grader and walked to school every day of the contest. A truly deserving winner. Last year we had four students who walked every day of the contest. This year we had sixteen. Not too bad considering the lousy weather we had throughout April." St. Patrick's is a private school that draws students from all over the county.

At Manor School in Fairfax, the grand prize went to kindergartner Matthew Downey, who had earned 66 points for walking to or from school 33 days last spring, and thus had accumulated three tickets in the raffle jar, increasing his chances of winning. "We are particularly pleased to see the number of lower-grade students who have started the walking and biking habit," reported team leader Deirdra Rogers.

The Wednesday Challenge

Mill Valley Middle School sixth-grade students challenged the seventh and eighth graders to compete on Walk or Wheel Wednesday and see who had the most kids walking and wheeling. On Wednesdays, students signed in and received snacks at four stations staffed by the sixth graders. The sixth graders won the contest hands down, with 77% participating at least once over the eight-week contest.

Kent Middle School handed out extra prizes. Supervisor Hal Brown gave a collection of Golden Gate Bridge shirts and hats for the bus riders. Gallinas School Team Leader Crista Cheap decorated a box with wrapping paper, to store all the prizes in. Every Friday when she went to the school to hand out prizes and check cards, the kids would see her with the box and run to get their cards. Dixie School, which launched its Safe Routes to Schools program with the contest, had 57 students participate.

Other participating schools included Edna Maguire, Tam Valley and Mt. Tam schools in Mill Valley; Bacich School in Kentfield; Wade Thomas School in San Anselmo; St. Rita's School in Fairfax; Ross School; Bolinas School; Vallecito School in San Rafael; and Sinaloa Middle School in Novato. In addition to the twenty \$200 gift certificates, Trek provided helmets, gloves, lights, locks, T-shirts and hats for the contest. Another bike was given away at the Marin County Fair as part of the Healthy Marin Partnership Booth.



Hal Brown addresses Countywide SR2S forum, March 2001.

Safe Routes to Schools Gets New Funding

County Public Works gets Air Quality Grant

The County of Marin's Department of Public Works has been awarded a \$500,000 Air Quality Grant from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to continue the Safe Routes to Schools program in Marin. In January 2004, Marin County DPW will begin to administer the SR2S program that was previously administered by the City of San Rafael. Marin County DPW expects soon to send out a Request for Proposals to engage a firm to operate the program. The current team of Nelson/Nygaard, Parisi Associates, and the Marin County Bicycle Coalition will apply.

Kudos to Supervisor Brown

Thanks to the efforts of Supervisor Hal Brown, a trustee of BAAQMD, this grant will enable the County to continue promoting walking and bicycling while developing Safe Routes to Schools improvement plans for more schools in Marin.

Supervisor Brown has been a tireless champion of alternatives for school commutes. He formed the first regional Safe Routes to Schools task force for the Ross Valley, comprised of school representatives, law enforcement, county and city staff, and elected officials. The task force meets every 6 or 8 weeks and coordinates SR2S activities while developing improvement plans and grant applications.

Supervisor Brown also brought in BAAQMD funds to launch the free bus program now being piloted at Marin middle and high schools. Students get free vouchers to ride Golden Gate Transit buses to and from school and for after school activities. The program has attracted 1200 new bus riders since its inception in February 2003.

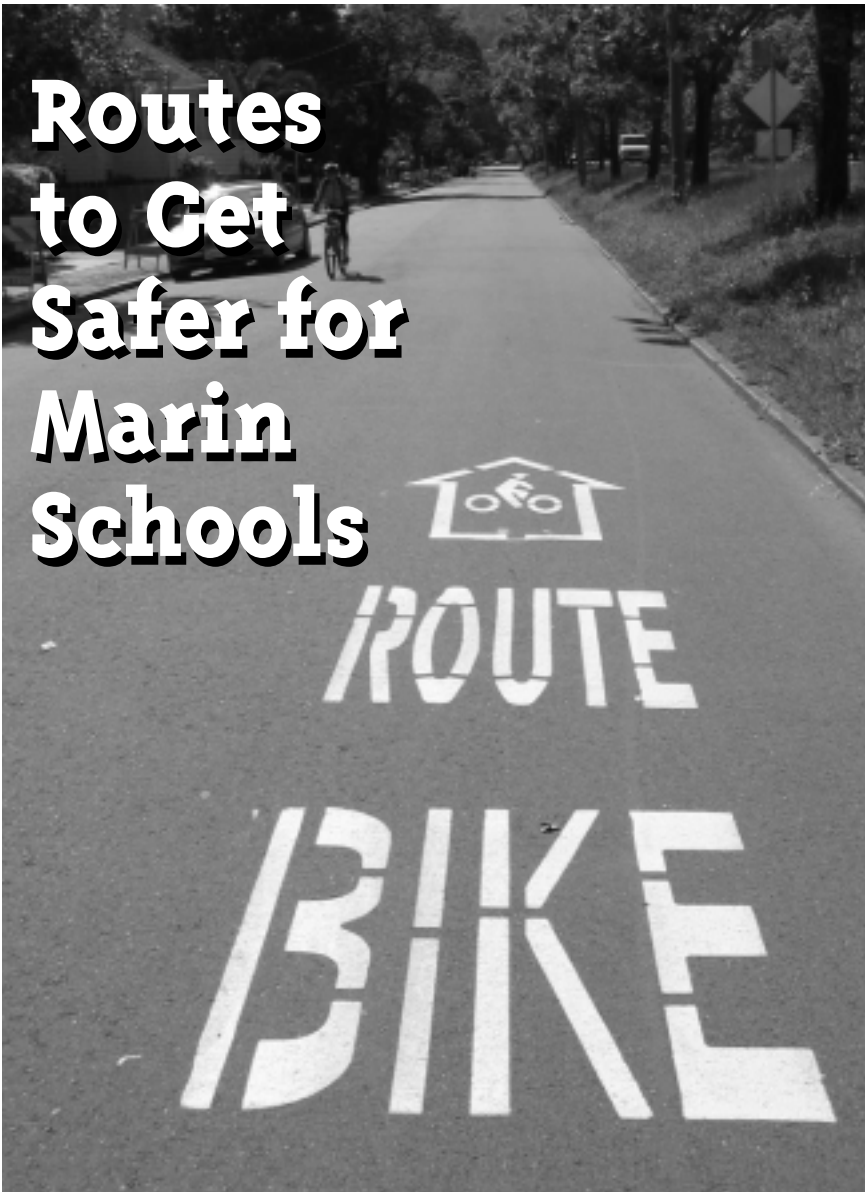
New Bill Would Create a National Safe Routes to Schools Program

Congressman James Oberstar (D-MN), the federal government's champion of Safe Routes to Schools, has introduced the Pedestrian and Cyclist Equity Act of 2003 (PACE). PACE would create a national Safe Routes to Schools program that would provide \$250 million a year to fix unsafe conditions on roads near schools and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school. Grants available through PACE would also help communities encourage more physical activity through the design of their transportation systems; the bill would allocate \$25 million per year for six years to promote active living programs. The bill also includes funding for three pilot communities for non-motorized transportation, allocating \$75 million over a six-year period to build out complete bicycle and pedestrian networks.

The PACE initiative will likely be folded into the reauthorization of the overall transportation funding bill, which Congress will address this session.

This bill encourages children and adults to reacquaint themselves with the joys of human-powered transportation.

—Congressman
James L. Oberstar (D-MN)



Routes to Get Safer for Marin Schools

San Anselmo stenciled bike routes through town last spring.

Community Task Forces develop improvement plans

Safe Routes to Schools consulting engineer David Parisi was kept busy last spring developing plans for many of the new and continuing schools in the Safe Routes to Schools program. School and community task forces evaluate the streets conditions, identify problem areas and work with Parisi, a licensed traffic and civil engineer, local public works staff, and SR2S staff, in developing their Safe Routes to Schools Improvement Plans.

Bacich, Kent, and Brookside schools received assistance from Parisi in preparing Safe Routes to Schools grants to upgrade intersections, add sidewalks, and improve bike lanes. The grant winners will be announced in November. Kentfield requested \$535,000 for a sidewalk along Wolfe

Grade, sidewalk improvements at Bacich, and pedestrian crossing improvements along College Avenue. San Anselmo requested \$433,000 to add sidewalks along Butterfield Road and Brookside Drive and to make signal improvements at Sir Francis Drake and Butterfield.

San Anselmo's Public Works Department assisted local bicyclists in stenciling the streets for bike routes and have installed pedestrian warnings in crosswalks at the request of its police department. In addition, San Anselmo will be installing imbedded lights at key crosswalks along Sir Francis Drake.

Ross School's Safe Routes to Schools committee has developed a program that will improve crossing and walking conditions along Sir Francis Drake, Laurel Grove, Shady Lane and the streets immediately adjacent to the school. They are soliciting community support for their recommendations before going before the Town Council in October.

San Rafael Schools Seeking Improvements

The Bahia Vista Parent Leadership Safety Committee has developed a plan for improved drop off and pick up, curb extensions and a more visible crosswalk in front of the school. They are also developing a volunteer crossing guard program, pending approval of insurance by the Office of Education and the School District. Bahia Vista School is slated for major improvements as part of a recent bond measure. The parent safety committee will be providing input on how the redesign can assist the safety of children walking and biking to school.

Vallecito School has developed a new drop-off plan for its students, including a raised crosswalk through the parking area, better circulation and parking, and a pedestrian walkway. They are working with St. Mark's School on improving the safety of the bike lane through the private school, and they are coordinating safety education together with Kaiser Permanente Hospital and Terra Linda High School. The committee has recommended a new crosswalk in front of the school and speed-feedback signs similar to those installed in Mill Valley. They also want to participate in the Volunteer Crossing Guard program. The School District has given its blessing to the plan and now awaits the City of San Rafael's approval.



The Bahia Vista Parent Leadership Safety Committee.

To identify safety concerns, parents of Gallinas School students took a bike ride along North San Pedro Road and parallel routes. A bike path runs along North San Pedro, but it is riddled with obstructions and pavement cracks. A parallel route along Adrian Way is one alternative, but it is notorious for speeding cars. A walking path leads directly to the school, but it has been blocked by pillars that prevent bicyclists from using the facility. SR2S will be presenting the parents with recommendations in the fall.

Safe Routes Goes to England

Mill Valley Middle School students to address conference

Marin County has been invited to join with two other communities in representing the U.S. at a Safe Routes to Schools Youth Conference in England in September. Mill Valley Team Leader Cynthia Witwicki, her 12-year-old daughter Kelly, and friend Colleen Zak, also aged 12, will join SR2S program director Wendi Kallins for the conference. They will join representatives from Tucson, Arizona, and Arlington, Massachusetts.

This is the first youth conference sponsored by Sustrans, a British program that promotes sustainable transportation choices. Kelly and Colleen will meet with hundreds of young people from Great Britain to share ideas about Safe

Routes to Schools. They will also be part of a U.S. presentation to the whole conference, describing the success they had in launching a program at Mill Valley Middle School. The trip will also include a tour of Safe Routes facilities in Leicester and York.

Sustrans is the originator of the comprehensive Safe Routes to Schools program now practiced in Marin and other U.S. communities. In 1995, Sustrans launched a pilot program in ten schools; it now promotes the program throughout Great Britain. It produces curricula for teachers, general information for the public, and guides for traveling to and from school. It also helps plan and implement infrastructure improvements such as bikeways, walkways, better signals, traffic calming and bicycle parking. To reduce car speeds, the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions have implemented traffic-calming schemes in rural and urban areas.

These efforts have led to significant reductions in injuries, changes in how parents and children travel, and better facilities for bicycling and walking. Local government interest in developing safe School Travel Plans rose from 38% in 1999 to 50% in 2001. At Hafren School, a primary school that provided covered cycle parking and a network of bikeways, the number of cyclists went from 1% to 14% in four years. At Sandringham School, the number of students walking increased from 35% in 1996 to 47% in 1998. Clearly, we in Marin have much to learn from our British counterparts. This trip will provide a special opportunity to bring home ideas to improve walking and bicycling here at home.

Slowing speed zones to 20 mph in England reduced child pedestrian casualties by 70% and child bicycling casualties by 28%



Chris Davis teaches students at Tam Valley School.

New Classes Offered Through Safe Routes to Schools

Revamped Rodeo, Walk Around the Block, among new courses offered

By Chris Davis

The philosophy that underlies the Safe Routes to Schools curriculum is that we are each responsible for doing everything we can to care for our personal health and safety, and for the health and safety of our entire community and our environment. We know that children learn best through authentic experience; SR2S lessons are designed to give students experiences that make the importance of these responsibilities truly meaningful.

Young people may be very aware of how they are supposed to behave, yet we know that all too often they choose to behave otherwise. The challenge we are facing in changing the behavior of children in traffic is unique: the consequence for misbehaving in certain circumstances could be tragic. Beginning in the second grade with pedestrian safety, we focus on changing the behaviors that we know can result in crashes, such as darting out into traffic. Following the in-

classroom lesson, which focuses on the need to stop at every edge to look for moving cars, we will be taking students on a neighborhood walk, giving them the opportunity to practice what they have learned. This activity replaces the Walking Obstacle Course, which simulated street crossings on the school blacktop.

Taking students on a neighborhood walk around the school will be a more authentic and therefore more meaningful experience. Many students who are driven to school have no experience of the environment around their school. A neighborhood walk will give them a better sense of place.

On-the-Bike Training

We build on these concepts and reinforce the same behaviors at the fourth-grade level. Two classroom lessons, focusing on helmet safety and traffic rules, complement the *On-the-Bike Challenge*, which is commonly called a Bike Safety Rodeo. This year the props have been rebuilt and the courses redesigned. Students will rotate through four courses instead of nine; the event is still driven by the course that simulates street riding. The other three courses now combine the skill-building drills, which emphasize balance and control. Each course will be more engaging because we will progress through several challenges at each station.

Many students who are driven to school have no experience of the environment around their school.



Bicycle Rodeo at Manor School.

Challenging Older Children

At the middle school level, children are at a more independent age, so they need, again, to appreciate that the way they function in traffic could make the difference between life or death. This is also a stage of development during which children are prone to recklessness and risk taking, making them resistant to messages about safety and responsibility. Employing technology can help to get their attention. Using PowerPoint, we have created activities that are interactive and very flexible, and that appeal to high-tech sensibilities.

The PowerPoint presentation for sixth-grade students is a game the whole class plays. Images of local, tricky traffic situations challenge students to explain the safest way to navigate places that they recognize.

Tenth graders are looking forward to earning their driver's licenses. By partnering with driver education programs we are delivering information about how, as car drivers, students need to consider children in traffic. We feel it is important to focus on this age group with this message because children often behave erratically on the road and new drivers must understand the special attention and skills required when driving where children are present. Through discussion and videos, students will learn how children perceive traffic, and learn the best ways to avoid tragic situations. Many high schools are in close proximity

to elementary schools, and young drivers must take their new responsibilities very seriously.

Safe Routes Instructor and Curriculum Developer, Chris Davis has been awarded the 2003 National Education Award by the League of American Bicyclists. The award is given annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to bicycle education at local, state and national levels.

Marin General Hospital and Marin County Bicycle Coalition Launch Bicycle Safety Campaign

Marin General Hospital Trauma Program and the Marin County Bicycle Coalition have announced a new partnership to promote bicycle safety in Marin County. The Hospital sees 12-18 injuries due to bicycle crashes every month and has made bicycle safety a priority for 2003. Marin General Hospital's staff will present helmet and bicycle safety lessons in Marin County elementary school classrooms as part of the Safe Routes to Schools program. Skilled medical practitioners will instruct children on the importance of helmet safety to protect against brain injuries and other issues of safe bicycle riding.

In addition, "Street Skills" Adult Bicycle Education Classes will be taught by nationally recognized educator John Ciccarelli. This is a dynamic, four-hour virtual tour of bicycle commuting techniques. It is ideal for the commute or recreational street cyclist who wants to boost confidence and learn the most effective techniques for staying safe while traveling by bicycle. Street Skills classes require pre-registration and are for Marin County residents only, ages 16 and up. The dates of the classes are October 29, November 8 and November 13. Registration and details are available through the Marin County Bicycle Coalition website www.marinbike.org, or by calling (415) 456-3469 extension 3#. A bicycle is not necessary for the class.

OCTOBER 8

*International
Walk (and Roll)
to School Day*

OCTOBER 12

*Ride n' Seek
A Rolling
Treasure Hunt
fun for the
whole family*

**Yes! I'd like to get
involved with
Safe Routes to Schools**

I would like to:

- Make a donation in the amount of \$ _____
- Become part of a team at my school
- Volunteer for events
- Work with kids in the classroom
- Help to identify safety issues at my school

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

School _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Make checks payable to:

Marin County Bicycle Coalition

Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Clip and send this form to:

Safe Routes to Schools, Marin County,
P.O. Box 201, Forest Knolls, CA 94933



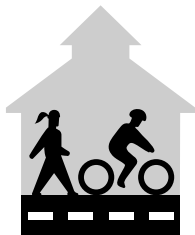
*J.T. drawing based on a photo of
Walk to School Day 2003, Glenwood School.*

You'll look up and down the streets. Look 'em over with care.
About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."
With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,
You're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.
And you may not find any you'll want to go down.
In that case, of course, you'll head straight out of town.

From the book, *Oh, the Places You'll Go* by Dr. Seuss

Thanks to Glen Wanner of Nashville for this brand-new verse.

But if the town is your home, then you'll have to stay there.
So tell the town leaders that this isn't fair.
Streets are for people, not large SUV's
Which seem to be speeding as fast as they please.
Build us nice sidewalks and shade them with trees.
It will help clean the air which everyone breathes.
More bike lanes, more greenways, that should be the rule,
Then children can walk and ride bikes to their school.



**SAFE ROUTES
TO SCHOOLS**

MARIN COUNTY

A program of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition

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