



# SafeRoutes News

THE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

FALL 2002

## More Children Walking and Biking to Schools

Surveys show 38% of kids are getting to school on their own power

Safe Routes to Schools completed its second year with a steady increase in the percentage of students walking and biking to school at participating schools.

By the end of the 2001-2002 school year, 38% of the students at the public schools participating in the program were walking and biking to school (only 21% of students were walking and biking at the start of the program in the year 2000, two years ago). The number of children arriving alone in a car was reduced to 38%, which means that the number of children walking and biking at participating schools is now equal to the number arriving alone in a car. Carpooling has also increased, from 11% to 21%. *See chart on page 2.*

## SR2S works with parents & schools to improve traffic safety in the community

Fourteen public and private schools in San Rafael, Ross Valley, Bolinas, and Mill Valley participated in last year's Safe Routes to Schools program. Parent volunteers organized regular Walk and Bike to School Days and contests such as Frequent Rider Miles, and helped to promote the program in the schools.

Safe Routes to Schools provided Bicycle Rodeos, Pedestrian Obstacle Courses, and other classroom lessons on traffic safety and the environment. Each school also participated in a community task force to assess the safety of its area streets and work with the Safe Routes to School Engineer and its city public works department and law enforcement agencies to identify and remedy safety hazards. This has resulted in several capital grants, including \$343,000 for Mill Valley to improve its multi-use pathway and crossings, and \$200,000 for Fairfax to build new sidewalks.

Schools benefit from the Safe Routes to Schools program by reducing traffic on surrounding roads and increasing the health and safety of students. Neighborhoods also benefit from the program. Nancy Hansen, a resident of Fairfax, wrote: "Before Safe Routes to Schools was established, the volume of traffic in the mornings was intense. Now it is quiet and peaceful as if we had returned to an earlier time. I say if your neighborhood doesn't do this, you are missing a great opportunity to improve the quality of your life!"



These Old Mill School kids regularly walk and ride to school.

## 21% of morning traffic is caused by parents driving their children to schools

Safe Routes to Schools is a project of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition. It is under contract with the City of San Rafael to offer the program countywide. Nelson/Nygaard acts as project manager and David Parisi & Associates provides engineering consultation. The Marin County Congestion Management Agency estimates that 21% of morning traffic is caused by parents driving their children to schools. For more information or to join the Marin Safe Routes to Schools program (free to participating schools), please call 415-488-4101. Additional info is also available at [www.saferoutestoschools.org](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org).

## Mark Your Calendars: October 2 is International Walk to School Day

### Marin Joins Millions for Worldwide Event

Marin Safe Routes to Schools is pleased to participate in the third annual International Walk to School Day. In the United States and in at least twenty other countries, including Mexico, South Korea, India and Great Britain, millions of adults and children will walk (or bike) to school together.

This event raises awareness of the importance of teaching children safe walking behaviors, such as how to cross streets and how to select safe routes to schools. The event encourages local jurisdictions to take specific steps to create more walkable and bike-able communities by advocating for more crosswalks,

## Safe Routes to Schools

P.O. Box 201, Forest Knolls  
CA 94933  
415.488.4101  
www.saferoutestoschools.org

### Program Director:

Wendi Kallins  
415-488-4101  
wendi@marinbike.org

### Safe Routes Instructor:

Chris Davis  
415-453-3762  
chris@marinbike.org

### Education Assistant:

Rosalinda Paez  
415-456-3469  
rosalinda@marinbike.org

Safe Routes to Schools is a program of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. The program is under contract with the City of San Rafael representing the Cities and County of Marin with funding provided by the Marin County Congestion Management Agency, the Marin Community Foundation, and private donations and grants.

### SafeRoutes News

Editor: Wendi Kallins  
Production: Jeremy Thornton  
Copy Editing: Connie Breeze



Stinson Beach kids kayak across the Bolinas Lagoon and then jog to school on Walk to School Day.

### Walk to School Day [continued from front page]

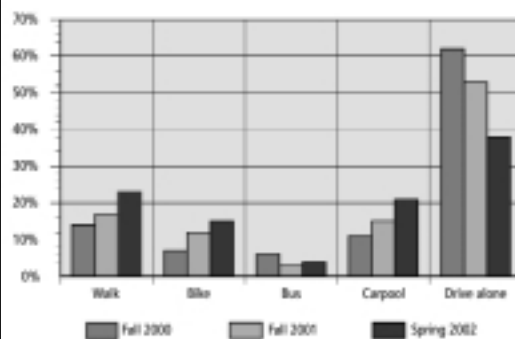
sidewalks and crossing guards, and better driver behavior. Participants discover how easy and enjoyable walking is. Adults and children spend healthy, active time together doing the world's simplest exercise—walking!

## Last year kids walked, biked, scooted, skated and even kayaked to school

Last year, 27 Marin schools participated in International Walk to School Day. From Mill Valley and Tiburon, to San Rafael, Ross Valley and West Marin, kids walked, biked, scooted, skated and even kayaked to school. Supervisors Hal Brown and John Kress and Assembly member Joe Nation joined with children to celebrate the joys of getting to school on their own power amidst the company of friends and family. The excitement and enthusiasm of this event carries on throughout the year, as schools participating in Safe Routes to Schools hold monthly, and even weekly Walk and Bike to School Days.

This year, the California Department of Health Services is providing a comprehensive package of materials to assist schools in developing successful Walk to School Day events. The package includes posters, flyers, brochures, and great ideas for boosting community awareness. If you would like to plan a Walk to School Day event at your school, you can receive one of these kits by calling Wendi Kallins at 488-4101 or emailing her at wendi@marinbike.org.

### Children Walking & Biking to School



The statistics over the two years show that children:

- Walking to school went from 14% to 23%
- Biking to school doubled from 7% to 15%
- Carpooling increased from 11% to 21%
- Arriving alone in a car shrank from 62% to 38%

The following public schools participated in the survey: Vallecito, San Rafael; Manor, Fairfax; Hall Middle School, Larkspur; Neil Cummins, Corte Madera; Ross School, Ross; Brookside Upper Campus, San Anselmo; Bacich, Kentfield.

(Note: Only Vallecito School offers bus service. Last year there were two schools offering bus service)

# Kids Win Schwinn Bikes & Digglers



## Frequent Rider Miles Contest a Big Hit

A dozen schools participated in this year's Frequent Rider Mile contest for the Safe Routes to Schools program. In the contest, children keep track of the number of times they walk and bike, carpool or bus to school. This year, there were two grand prizes: A gift certificate for a Schwinn bicycle worth up to \$200 and a Diggle.

Nine-year-old Sonia Kissin of Neil Cummins School, is thrilled with her new Diggle. "This is my first scooter and I like it a lot. It's like two things in one. I'm definitely going to school on it." She recommends that adults use other ways to move around that are healthier like biking and walking.

## Diggler – the New Scooter

A Diggle has the steering, braking and suspension of a mountain bike, BMX sized wheels, a low center of gravity, and a skateboard deck. It's designed to make physics work for you. On the underside of the frame is a high-density plastic plate like a ski. Safer and more durable and maneuverable, this is not your common scooter.

Diggle ([www.diggle.com](http://www.diggle.com)), based in Petaluma, is the brainchild of Fairfax resident Robb Fruechtenicht. "When I was growing up in Marin at 13 I had the idea," he said. "I was wrapped up in downhill skateboarding and BMX biking and also mountain biking when it was young. I loved scooters as well as snowboarding. I had a dream about combining the elements of all my favorite sports to pioneer my own sport. The fact that I was in Fairfax, the birthplace of mountain biking, and grew up with these sports brought it all together."

Nine-year-old Bjorn Fox of Bolinas was grinning from ear to ear as he mounted his new Diggle. Bjorn bikes from his Stinson Beach home to the bus stop every day. Since the start of the Frequent Rider Miles program his two siblings, ages 5 and 7, have been biking with him. On one Walk and Bike to School Day his mother rode with him all the way from Stinson Beach to Bolinas. He has a good role model: his father bikes to work from Stinson Beach to San Francisco.

Frequent Rider Miles winners won Dirt Dawgs, a kid version of the mountain scooter. They are built for safety with knobby, air-filled tires and suspension that can go over cracks and bumps. This allows taking the scooter toy to a sport level. Sports Illustrated for Kids voted the Dirt Dawg one of the things "kids say you've got to get."

## Not Your Father's Schwinn

Miles Peacock was one of the first kids to arrive at Bolinas school on his bike where volunteers were dispensing oranges, apples and juice to the kids. His eagerness was rewarded when his name was drawn for the grand prize, a new Schwinn bike, just in time for his birthday coming up on June 24. It was also fortuitous because his brother kept borrowing his bike and raising the seat. Now they each have a bike to ride.

Schwinn is almost synonymous with bicycles, as most everyone grew up riding a Schwinn bike. Schwinn is all that you knew growing up, but with new technology and state of the art products. "Since 1895, Schwinn has been dedicated to crafting the best bicycles in the world." says Nick Andrade of Pacific Cycles. *[continued on next page]*

Sonia Kissin of Neil Cummins celebrates her new Diggle with friends



Miles Peacock with Bolinas Crossing Guard Miles looks forward to his new Schwinn.

*[continued from page 3]*

*There is no excuse  
not to ride to school  
when you live close*

—Mollie Williams, fourth grader

“The legacy continues today by combining the highest quality materials and workmanship, giving you the greatest performance and durability available.” Pacific Cycles ([www.pacific-cycle.com](http://www.pacific-cycle.com)) donated the Schwinns, which were redeemed at Eastside Bikes in Petaluma. “Pacific Cycles is pleased to be a part of Safe Routes to Schools,” states Andrade. “It is critical for kids to be able to bike to school. We hope to see this program spread around the U.S.”

St. Rita’s student Cara McAfee loves to walk to schools, to the store and to other places in town with her mother, Stephanie McAfee. Now she loves it even more because she can go on her new Schwinn bike. “It has gears and it’s easy to go fast,” she says. She says she would love it if there were fewer cars on the road so that “People could walk more.” Her sentiments were echoed by fourth-grader Mollie Williams of St. Patrick’s School. “When drivers come around the corner they go too fast. Also there is no excuse not to ride to school when you live close,” Mollie added.

Other schools participating in the Frequent Rider Miles contest: Edna Maguire, Kent Middle School, Bacich, Brookside upper and lower campuses, Vallecito, and Manor. Safe Routes to Schools would also like to thank Specialized Bikes for donating gloves and bike lights, Oury Grips for handlebar grips, Mirrycle Corporation for bells, Caesar’s Cyclery for a scooter, and Cat Eye for blinkies.

**Bicycle Rodeo**  
Learn Basic Bicycling Skills  
While Having Fun On Your Bike

Coming to a School Near You!

# Creating Safe Kid Zones

## How to Create Safe Streets for Kids

Many children would love to walk or bike to school, but they face severe obstacles including speeding cars, lack of sidewalks and bikeways and inadequate crosswalks. Safe Routes to Schools offers the consulting services of licensed traffic engineer David Parisi, and Michael Jones, a transportation planner, to assist you in developing safe Kid Zones in your community.

It is important to create a safe environment for children to walk and bike to school. Most people are aware of the need for better sidewalks and crosswalks and the need to slow down traffic. While engineering-related improvements are usually needed to help accomplish this goal, these take time—sometimes years, for fundraising, design and construction. Therefore, it is important to inventory your resources and determine what can be accomplished in just a few months. Focusing on the aspects below will help you create safe and secure “Kid Zones” where children are most likely to be walking and bicycling to school.

Once you have established the routes that children take, see if you can improve the safety environment through one of more of the following methods:

### Short Term Improvements

**Enforcement** – List enhancements that could be provided by local law enforcement. For example, the Town of Fairfax has placed a radar trailer on Sir Francis Drake between St. Rita and Manor Schools in a 25-mph zone that is habitually abused. Corte Madera has used funding from the Office of Traffic and Safety to increase enforcement around Neil Cummins School.

**Volunteers** – Use volunteers to escort children or act as monitors. Brookside schools organize parent volunteers to bike or walk with the kids to school and post information on these “Bike Trains” and “Walking School Buses” in the school offices. Vallecito School places adult monitors at key intersections during its Walk and Bike to School Days.

**Crossing Guards** – Identify dangerous intersections and hire or assign volunteer crossing guards. Mill Valley, Ross Valley and Bolinas School Districts all provide paid crossing guards at dangerous intersections. Kent, Bacich and Neil Cummins Schools assign staff to assist students crossing.

**Engineering adjustments** – Identify early-action changes that can be implemented in the next few months. Larkspur has repainted its bike lanes and added signage to increase the safety of its bike path. Mill Valley adjusted the lights at East Blithedale and Lomita to give an advantage to bicycles and pedestrians. Fairfax and San Anselmo has placed pedestrian warning signs in downtown crosswalks to alert drivers of the need to yield to pedestrians.

**Education** – Develop a Driver Education Campaign. The Cities of Larkspur and Fairfax have purchased banners to stretch



across their main roads. Safe Routes to Schools provides numerous safety flyers to be used by schools to educate drivers.

### Long Term Improvements

Once you have established a short-term plan to create immediate safety improvements, you can then work with SR2S engineers and your local public works department to develop infrastructure-related improvements that require additional funding and could be incorporated into the jurisdiction’s capital improvement plan. Here are some of the important things to consider:

**Continuous sidewalks** – Ideally, sidewalks should be five feet in width, free of intrusions, in good condition, and continuous along major arterials and feeder routes. At crosswalks, curb ramps should be provided to assist disabled persons.

**Cohesive bike paths, lanes or routes** – For younger children, bike paths are best, but at a minimum there should be striped bike lanes, at least five feet in width, along arterial roads.

**Visible crosswalks along routes** – Crosswalks should be provided at crucial locations where children must get to the opposite side of the street. Mid-block crosswalks can be considered when they occur along heavily used routes. Crosswalks should be highly visible, with amenities such as warning lights when feasible.

**Improved intersections** – Upgrade traffic signals; install stop signs, medians, and extend curbs.

**Traffic calming** – Speed humps, speed tables, traffic circles, chicanes, diverters and other devices can help to slow down and/or reduce traffic along crucial walking and biking routes. These improvements are rigidly regulated by Caltrans and require warrant studies.

When the streets are safer, more parents will allow their children to walk and bicycle to school. The greater the numbers of children getting to schools on their own power, the less traffic on the roads, and the safer the streets. This positive reinforcement creates a better environment for everyone.

*If I were king,  
I'd make Marin  
County the bicycle  
capital of the  
United States*

—Congressman Oberstar

## **Safe Routes to Schools Chosen Clean Air Champion**

### **Award for exceptional efforts to clean up the air**

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District selected Safe Routes to Schools to receive one of its Clean Air Champion Awards for 2002. The awards, co-sponsored by the American Lung Association, RIDES for Bay Area Commuters, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, honor Bay Area individuals or groups for their exceptional efforts to clean up the air.

“The efforts of these groups and individuals towards cleaner air are a source of inspiration that deserves to be recognized,” said Air District Executive Officer William Norton.

Safe Routes to Schools was chosen for its innovations in educating children about the benefits of bicycling and walking to school. The program's key goals are to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion, make the streets safe for kids to walk and bike to schools, and create a new generation that is aware of and uses alternatives to driving.

Other winners include: Sausalito City Council member Paul Albritton, SF Muni General Manager Michael Burns, the Bishop Ranch Transportation Association in San Ramon, and the City of Vallejo.

## **Congressional Leaders Support Bicycle Agenda**

### **Safe Routes champion Congressman Oberstar visits the North Bay**

On Wednesday, August 7th, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (D-Petaluma) and Congressman James Oberstar (D- Minnesota), Senior Democrat on the House of Representatives' Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, attended a “Congressional Bicycle Breakfast” sponsored by the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) and Transportation Alternatives for Marin (TAM).

The event, held at the Sheraton Hotel in Petaluma, focused on the role that pilot programs play in shaping federal public policies, and how interconnected bicycle networks can substantially reduce traffic congestion. Also dis-

cussed were Safe Routes to Schools and the North-South Greenway.

Elected to the House in 1974, Congressman Oberstar gave an inspired speech recounting his historic role in crafting the Intermodal Surface Transportation Equity Act (ISTEA, 1991) and the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21, 1998), and telling how these important pieces of legislation made bicycle projects eligible for transportation dollars in almost every federal funding category. He also described how he began the National Safe Routes to Schools pilot programs.

Congressman Oberstar joked that his idea of Armageddon is society, stuck inside their automobiles —white-knuckled, with fists clenched around steering wheels— as the last drop of gasoline runs out, and everyone comes to a screeching halt. At that moment, a lonely bicyclist cruises by, amidst all of the dead cars. The Congressman went on to contrast that view with Marin County's achievements in shifting auto trips to bike trips, and said, “If I were King, I'd make Marin County the bicycle capital of the United States

In addition to the two Congressional speakers, Deb Hubsmith, executive director of the MCBC, gave a speech about the phenomenally successful Marin County Safe Routes to Schools program, which was selected in August 2000 to be a National model. Hubsmith said, “Safe Routes to Schools is getting America back on its feet while building healthier communities and healthier children.” Patrick Seidler, founder and

president of TAM, discussed the role of the North-South Greenway in the nation's evolving transportation, energy, and health policies. He said, “We have a great opportunity to be a positive influence and make our neighborhoods safer by promoting health and efficient transportation.”

# Safe Routes Expands Its Curriculum

## Environment, Health and Transit Studies Now Available

Safe Routes to Schools is pleased to expand its curriculum offerings in the 2002-2003 school year to include public transit, health and additional environmental education.

SR2S will continue to provide safety training for 2nd and 4th graders. In addition, we are partnering with other organizations to include some new and exciting opportunities in health and transit. We will also provide lesson plans for teachers who wish to explore transportation with their classes on a deeper level.

## Active Living and Nutrition



Kaiser Permanente offers Zip's Great Day (All school lassembly, a free-of-charge, 50-minute traveling show with puppets and costumed characters using music, dance, and dialogue to teach children about topics such as exercise, nutrition, smoking, and safety. The Marin County Department of Health and Human Services will bring Nutrition Town Exhibit (all grades) to your school. It includes the Seven Healthy Habits "par course,"-a nutrition and physical activity education exhibit. It's a collection of interactive and "visual" activities that demonstrate the county's Health and Wellness campaign of "Feel the Difference! Eat Healthy! Be Active!" Schools can choose from a variety of activities. Active Living for Better Health (grades 3, 4 and 5) is a lesson plan that demonstrates the relationship between the lifestyle choices we make early on and a long, healthy life.

## Environment

Transportation Choices and the Environment (grades 7 and up) helps students see how the choices they make on how to get around, affect the health of the environment. The presentation covers renewable versus non-renewable energy sources. Greenhouse in a Bottle (Grades 5 and 6) is a hands-on science project that can also be set up as a demonstration. Students work in teams to

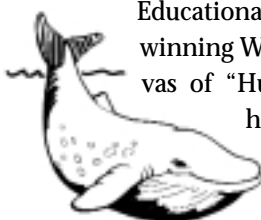
simulate the earth's environment and then compare and contrast pre- and post-greenhouse atmospheres. The experiment creates an opportunity to discuss how cars and non-renewable energy affect the environment.



Family Mouse Behind the Wheel (Grades K-1) is a fable with an environmental message. When the forest creatures vote to develop their home in the name of progress, they wind

up in gridlock. The Eco Points Diary (Grades 5-8) is a lesson plan that demonstrates the "footprint" our transportation and energy-use choices make on our environment. This activity can be used to support math, geography, social studies and other curriculum. A simpler version of this is The Eco Score Card, a game students play in small teams. Each team must answer certain questions about how they use energy (transportation, appliances, etc.) for a cumulative team score. The higher your score, the greater your team's impact on the environment.

## Transit



Educational Whale Tale The award-winning Whale Bus—a 40-foot canvas of "Humphrey" the wayward humpback whale and his seafaring dolphin friends—will visit your school. Golden Gate

Transit staff, along with local Marin County storyteller DonnaLei Sumner, deliver a 45-minute presentation on the importance of the environment in which we live, and public transit's role as one of the many Pollution Solutions. The Golden Gate Ferry Cruise teaches children the value of ferry transportation while enjoying an outing. Plan a field trip using Golden Gate Ferry for a special fare of only 10 cents for a round trip. Youth group travel reservations are required at least two weeks in advance of the trip. Safe Routes to Schools will help you plan a Transit Trip Around the Bay. Take ferry, buses and trains and learn how to get around using public transit.

These are only a few of the classes available through Safe Routes to Schools. To schedule a presentation or order a classroom lesson for your school, call 488-4101.



October 2, International  
Walk to School Day.  
Be There!

## 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

## Safe Routes Welcomes New Staff Member



### Bi-Lingual Education Assistant

This fall, Rosalinda Paez will be joining our staff as our new Education Assistant. A native of Mexico, Rosalinda has spent the last ten years in New York doing marketing and research. However, her real love is riding her bicycle and working with kids. She has worked at summer camps with kids of all ages and backgrounds, and led bicycle tours in Central Park. She also worked as a tour leader taking groups into the jungle in Mexico, where the groups had the opportunity to learn about nature and the way of life of indigenous people. "I love nature and I want to combine it with my previous experience with kids, the outdoors and biking," she explains. Fluent in English and Spanish, Rosalinda will be a welcome addition. She will assist with rodeos and walking obstacle courses, and with surveying and flyer distribution. She will also be the alternate classroom instructor for our safety classes. In addition she will be a valuable resource in our work with the Spanish speaking community of Marin.



**SAFE ROUTES  
TO SCHOOLS**  
MARIN COUNTY

P.O. Box 201, Forest Knolls, CA 94933 • 415.488.4101

NON-PROFIT  
ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT #93  
MILL VALLEY