Parent Volunteer Guidebook

How to host our Green Sneaker Challenge at your elementary school!

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1. **What is the Green Sneaker Challenge?**

The Green Sneaker Challenge is a highly engaging way for elementary schools to increase the number of children who bike and walk to campus.

Students receive a colorful Green Sneaker Challenge (GSC) card to attach to their backpack at the start of the contest. The GSC cards are stamped once a week at a morning welcome table on Wednesdays. Children look forward to receiving a green ink “sneaker” stamp for four weeks. On the last day of the GSC, students place their cards into a box and become eligible to win a raffle prize provided by Safe Routes to Schools.

Elementary school children **love** our challenge! The GSC backpack cards serve as a badge of honor and boost green travel school pride. Additionally, the backpack cards are an “on and off-campus” colorful marketing tool to promote green transportation.

The **primary benefits of hosting the GSC at your school include:**

- Plant “seeds” at a young age for kids to use their feet to get places
- Improve academic performance …children arrive brighter and more alert for their first morning class
- Reduce school traffic and pollution
- Inspire students to make green travel a lifelong habit
2. How to get started

1. Seek Principal approval to host the GSC at your school. Safe Routes to Schools suggests all participating elementary schools host our contest this fall from **October 10 to October 31, 2018**. However, if these dates do not work for your school, then please select another four-week period. We suggest inviting your Principal to be present at the welcome table on the first day of the contest.

2. Recruit volunteer parents to stamp backpack cards at your welcome table. Additional volunteers may be needed for schools with larger student populations and multiple school entrances. Ask your student leadership or green team to assist on the first morning of the GSC. Younger children need more assistance attaching cards to their backpacks. If you are short volunteers, then “pre-stamping” cards is recommended. Another option is to distribute all backpack tags in advance of the start date by delivering the cards to classrooms with a flyer.
ATTENTION ALL BACKPACKS!
The Green Sneaker Challenge starts on Wednesday, October 10

Make Walking & Biking to School a Fun Habit!

MORNING STAMP DAYS
 OCT 10, 17, 24 and 31

Obtain your backpack card at our welcome table on the morning of October 10.

Receive an ink “sneaker” stamp every Wednesday for four consecutive weeks. To receive a stamp, you must travel to school by foot or bike once a week (any day of the week).

Live far away? Drive and park near our school and then walk partway!

On the last day of our contest children can enter their Green Sneaker card into a raffle box to become eligible to win a new scooter.
3. Publicity steps

**FLYER**

- Publish the “Attention All Backpacks!” flyer in your school newsletter **TWICE before** the contest starts. We recommend the last two weeks of September.

- Post the “Attention All Backpacks!” color flyer around campus.

- Insert the flyer in every child’s backpack if your school has “backpack mail.”

- Ask your Principal to forward the flyer to all parents via e-mail or digital media communications.

**MASTER CALENDAR**

Publish the dates of the Green Sneaker Challenge on your school’s master calendar, marquee and website.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

If your school engages in social media, then post on FaceBook to get families excited about the GSC.
4. Welcome table “stamp” days

Cards are stamped once a week for four weeks.

Here they come! The first day of the contest is when GSC cards and plastic holders are distributed to students at a welcome table. Please arrive 30 minutes early and have extra pens on the table for students to fill out their name and classroom number on their GSC cards. It is suggested that you recruit parents and leadership students to help attach cards to backpacks of younger students.

The weekly GSC welcome table is also an opportunity for volunteers to engage in friendly conversation with children by asking:

“How did you arrive to school today?”

If a child responds that they arrived by foot, bike, carpool or bus, then you can stamp their card. Or, if they did not travel green, you can still stamp their card if they promise to travel green another day of the week. Volunteers are “easy graders” when it comes to stamping and encouraging children to make green travel a habit.
5. Raffle prizes

On the last day of the GSC, each student will place his/her backpack card and plastic holder into a large raffle box. Safe Routes to Schools is providing elementary schools with a scooter as the grand prize. Additionally, if your PTA has funding for more prizes, then go for it! You can list several prizes in your school newsletter announcements to create excitement about the GSC. Another option is to obtain additional raffle prizes by contacting local shops and providing them with our tax i.d. letter. (Please see sample letter on following page.)

Here are a few suggestions how to deliver prizes to raffle winners:

1. Deliver the prize to the raffle winner’s classroom and congratulate them in person with your Principal.
2. Attend a school-wide assembly and ask the Principal to announce the winners. Use the assembly as an opportunity to promote green travel.
3. Announce the winner using your school’s public service announcement system and have the student come to the front office to pick-up his/her prize.
Dear (INSERT NAME OF BUSINESS):

Safe Routes to Schools is hosting a contest called the Green Sneaker Challenge in efforts to increase the numbers of students walking and biking to school. Our program helps to reduce traffic and make our streets safer while promoting eco-friendly transportation alternatives in Marin County. At the end of the Green Sneaker Challenge, students will turn in their stamped backpack cards to become eligible to win a raffle prize.

Would you consider donating a raffle prize?

Donations from contributors like you help students realize that our local community support their actions to make a difference. Safe Routes to Schools is currently working with 50 schools and 20,000 students throughout Marin with a goal of reducing Marin’s carbon footprint and improving health through everyday physical activity.

All donations are fully tax-deductible. Safe Routes to Schools is a program of the Transportation Authority of Marin and implemented by the Marin County Bike Coalition, a 501(c)(3), id#68-0419394. Additionally, we will recognize your business in the local school newsletter and in Safe Routes to Schools’ digital newsletter that reaches thousands in Marin County.

Thank you for your consideration and generosity.

Sincerely,

________________________________________
Safe Routes to Schools, Marin County

Enter your name and phone number
Return plastic sleeves to Safe Routes to Schools!

We need to get back all of the plastic card holders at the end of the contest so that we can re-use them. Please send an e-mail to Laura Kelly at mailto:laura@marinbike.org when you are ready to return your sleeves. Thank you!