

National Center for Safe Routes to School Announces Spring 2010 Mini-grant Recipients

25 Applicants Recognized for Creativity and Community Impact

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (December 8, 2009) — The National Center for Safe Routes to School announced today the selection of 25 mini-grants recipients to receive up to \$1,000 for local projects that encourage student creativity in Safe Routes to School (SRTS) activities in the spring 2010 semester.

“We were truly impressed by the creativity and innovation of the mini-grant applications we received,” said Lauren Marchetti, director of the National Center for Safe Routes to School. “Proposed activities ranged from trail construction and letter writing campaigns, to middle school social marketing strategies.”

The National Center received 247 SRTS mini-grant applications from schools and community organizations across 44 states and the District of Columbia. Selected proposals distinguished themselves through originality of efforts to help lead local community efforts to promote safe walking and bicycling to school, including the strong involvement of students, protecting the environment, promoting physical activity, and the implementation of measurable activities.

“Each SRTS mini-grant recipient illustrates the potential greater impact of successful SRTS efforts nationwide,” continued Marchetti. “The National Center is pleased to support the vision and creativity of local efforts that can lead to real change in transportation behaviors across the nation.”

The selected 25 mini-grant recipient organization programs/activities include:

- **Thorne Bay School Student Council (Thorne Bay, Alaska)** will lead efforts to improve the school's nearby "Health Heart Trail," which will create safer trails for students and staff commuting to school and for parents and community members attending Thorne Bay events.
- **Town of Gilbert (Gilbert, Ariz.)** will coordinate a SRTS Triathlon - focusing on Health, Walking, and Bicycling - among 16 schools that participate in the Town's SRTS program. Students will compete for the highest numbers participating at their various schools. Student-led activities include Walking Wednesdays, walking school buses and bicycle trains, park and walk locations and mileage clubs.
- **Meiners Oaks Elementary (Ojai, Calif.)**, lead by the sixth grade leadership class, will begin a SRTS program that includes "Bikeology," a bicycle safety and maintenance course, bi-lingual

safety information with maps, and youth outreach that is designed to show students how they can change their community through the political process.

- **Dallas Ranch Middle School (Antioch, Calif.)** with 511 Contra Costa, a commuter transportation network, will create a website and craft a social marketing campaign to educate fellow students about pedestrian and bicycle safety and health benefits as part of its “Walk and Roll 2 School” program. Among additional activities, the student-led effort will promote texting as a great way to coordinate meeting up to walk and bicycle to school in groups and will host a helmet fashion show with categories for “funny helmets” and the “best spiked hair.”
- **Cesar E. Chavez Elementary School (San Pablo, Calif.)** will establish a Youth Safety Ambassadors program to assist the County Health Department with safety education, a Safety Patrol comprised of parents, neighbors and staff trained by Richmond Police, and conduct research to identify barriers to walking to school and to develop messages to target unsafe parent drivers. Additionally, the Chavez SRTS Team and Youth Safety Ambassadors will partner with a local middle school’s and high school’s student leadership teams to research, write, produce, cast, and perform a Walk to School-themed play targeting elementary school students. As part of a writing contest at Chavez and the middle school, students’ original artwork, poetry, and/or songs will be integrated into the play.
- **Bridge Street Elementary (Yuba City, Calif.)** students in the school’s Bulldogs Beyond the Bell After School Program will participate in a club that has the sole focus of keeping themselves and other students informed about safety. The club will work with the Yuba City Police Department and Friday Night Live to study traffic and crime statistics, will develop maps of safe routes for students and will present their findings to the Board of the Yuba City Unified School District and the City council.
- **Get Smart Schools, Inc., (Denver, Colo.)** will work with AXL Academy in Aurora, a college preparatory charter school, to teach the importance of lifelong pedestrian and bicycle safety and integrate these lessons into the school curriculum, especially as it relates to exercise. Older students, with teacher guidance, will provide training to the younger students two to three times a month for eight to ten weeks on pedestrian and bicycle safety and additional education on the rules of the road. Students will use the SRTS walk-ability and bike-ability checklists to lead younger students in a safety audit around the school to determine safe routes and to create a SRTS map.
- **Wood River Middle School (Hailey, Idaho)** and Mountain Rides, a local multimodal transportation service, will hold a day-long SRTS Community Mapathon to create comprehensive maps for students’ safe commutes to and from school. Students also will produce graphic design projects that can be used to promote the Mapathon. The SRTS coordinator, students and volunteers will use donated GPS devices to create a detailed, interactive map of safe routes at Wood River Middle School and Bellevue, Hailey, Hemingway, and Woodside elementary schools, which will be uploaded to

MapMyRide.com, a popular online mapping site. The routes will be available free online, where users can customize and print out maps or upload their own data.

- **Keith Middle School (New Bedford, Mass.)** students will survey how fellow students get to school and if they feel safe, and then document various routes to school with photos and videos highlighting areas of concern. Students will publish the information on the internet and will present the information to a school committee, including the mayor. Efforts will be made to coordinate student routes so that no one walks alone and to include all students, 80 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch, in order to feel an increased connection to their community and pride in helping create safe routes to school.
- **Erickson Elementary School (Ypsilanti, Mich.)** Student Council will conduct a logo and slogan contest promoting safe travel in the Erickson neighborhood and will create yard signs for 50 households using some of the slogans. The SRTS committee will also provide opportunities throughout the year for parents to request and find student travel buddies in the neighborhood for their children, including during National African American Parent Involvement Day in February and spring conferences.
- **Lyndale Community School (Minneapolis, Minn.)** will start a SRTS program with a focus on establishing well-organized, parent-led walking school buses. The implementation team - comprised of students, parents and school staff - will develop a schedule for the walking school buses, which are planned to operate twice a week from late April to early June. The goal of these efforts is not only to improve the safety of students already walking but also to increase the number of students walking and bicycling to school, help students and families develop relationships, build bridges across cultures, promote more active parent involvement, and in turn help to develop a strong community.
- **Fairview Elementary School (Columbia, Mo.)** PTA Wellness Committee will offer an eight week pedestrian education program to students participating in its fee-based before- and after-school activities. The "Walk This Way...Adding Fun and Education to Pedestrian Safety" course will be offered to third through fifth graders, and will include class discussions and theme walks as well as journaling. Funds will be used to provide partial and full scholarships to enable children from low income families to participate. In addition, fifth graders who have been nominated are eligible to serve as crossing guards, an honor for students.
- **Smithton Middle School (Columbia, Mo.)** student group will design and implement a Safe Routes to School Challenge at Smithton Middle School via a student-led promotion of bicycle safety programs. The goal is to increase participation in the BikePro class, which is offered at three Columbia middle schools and is PedNet's eight-hour version of the League of American Bicyclists Kids II bike safety course. This project was initiated by three students, who are participating in this year's FIRST Lego League Smart Moves Challenge and who want to encourage more of their peers to walk or bicycle to school.

- **Oxford School District (Oxford, Miss.)** and the University of Mississippi will support Oxford Middle School sixth, seventh and eighth grade students as they design, pilot, disseminate, and assess the effectiveness of a SRTS social marketing campaign aimed at their peers. Among other efforts, students will create three short films encouraging their peers to walk or bicycle safely to school. The goal is to increase participation from six to 15 percent of the 33 percent of middle school students who live within one mile of school.
- **Pinehurst Elementary School (Pinehurst, N.C.)** Student Council will be trained to assist adult conductors and drivers of the walking school buses. Students will wear safety vests and teach pedestrian safety messages to students. Walking Wednesday events will be held each week and the first walking school bus each week will be in charge of picking up trash along the route and placing it in recycling bins at the school. The class with the greatest participation at each grade level will plant a tree on the school grounds. This effort will end on April 21 with a special Walk to School Day celebration in recognition of the 40th Celebration of Earth Day. The student council will extend invitations to the mayor, town council, school board and superintendent of schools. The aim of these efforts is to boost fifth grader involvement in the Pinehurst Walks program, which sets a positive example for younger students.
- **Safe Kids (Grand Forks, N.D.)** will offer its “Takin’ it to the Streets” bicycle safety program to fifth graders at **Century, J. Nelson Kelly, and Lewis & Clark elementary schools**. The program includes both in-class education as well as on-the-road training with local police bicycle patrols, the University of North Dakota Cycling team and a local bicycle shop. Students will identify barriers to riding bicycles to school, develop posters to promote bicycling to school, attend a classroom presentation on safe riding and enjoy on-the-road bicycle riding with the Grand Fork Police, UND cycling club and the Grand Forks Public School physical education department.
- **Saddlebrook Elementary’s (Omaha, Neb.)** fourth grade Green Team club at will work with **Activate Omaha** to support Walk and Roll Wednesdays through the development of a student-led program that educates fellow students about the science of bicycling and its environmental and health benefits. The program will begin with the “Science of Cycling” and incorporate fun experiments and demonstrations using bicycle themed equipment, including a brain-shaped Jell-O mold and a bicycle blender. Students will also develop a hypothesis about how weather impacts student travel modes and will use the school’s weather station to obtain daily weather data that can be compared to travel modes. The club will also develop and present a student assembly to show the science of cycling and the benefits of active transportation. The materials will be available to other Omaha area schools through Activate Omaha.
- **Fountain Inn Elementary School (Fountain Inn, S.C.)** students will study Greenville County air quality information and then will develop a board game with a system for monetarily rewarding good habits and penalizing bad choices. Developing the game’s playing cards will require students to write clear statements about behaviors related to air quality, such as

the benefits of walking and bicycling safely to school. The game will be used in multiple grade levels, during and after school and in the learning center area, and students will be able to check it out to play with family members at home.

- **Beardon Elementary School (Knoxville, Tenn.)** fourth and fifth graders will serve as role models and peer tutors for the rest of the school to increase participation in the SRTS program and change the culture of car riding at Beardon. Students will collect information about lifestyle and energy use to determine their carbon footprints and will also maintain activity logs. The program intent is for students to see their impact on the environment and for the older students to serve as peer tutors for healthy lifestyles inspiring younger students to make healthier choices.
- **Roger E Sides Elementary (Karnes City, Texas)**, will expand its existing bicycle program, which emphasizes safety, exercise, responsibility and bicycle repair. When the school began a monthly bicycle ride for students in 2008, school officials learned that many students could not participate because they lacked bicycles or their bicycles were unsafe to ride. This mini-grant will expand on the school's efforts to enable students to earn bicycles and bicycle supplies through an improvement in grades, conduct, or responsibility via an agreement with the principal.
- **Alpine Elementary School (Alpine, Utah)** will strengthen student-led SRTS activities and increase families' involvement through promotion of Car-free Wednesdays and, with the Alpine City Council, the safe use of Utah's Student Neighborhood Access Program. Students will also meet with the student council of the local high school to promote safe driving among a group that commutes beyond our safe routes. They will write press releases about their efforts and will work with the public media. The funds will also support the school's data graphing of the daily walking and biking log that is kept by each student. The sixth graders will give monthly presentations of the results.
- **Frances C. Hammond Middle School (Alexandria, Va.)** students will establish an Outdoor Activity Sampler Club focusing on the environment, physical exercise and safety. The Club will hold a poster/window decal contest to raise awareness among local businesses that students are walking and bicycling to school, and will kick off activities for the club with guest speakers, a mileage club, bicycle outings and a bicycle rodeo to teach safe bicycle practices and skills.
- **Madison, Roosevelt and Pioneer Elementary Schools (Olympia, Wash.)** will develop an anti-idling and anti-speeding campaign for parents. The campaign will use social marketing tools and incorporate a special pledge for drivers in the family to drive the speed limit and to turn off their engines if they are idling more than 30 seconds. Walk n' Roll partners will help teachers conduct speeding audits using a speed gun and will monitor air quality by measuring particulate matter in emissions (via car exhaust on note cards coated with petroleum jelly) for use in class lessons. Students will create Public Service Announcements to contribute to the anti-idling and anti-speeding campaign.

- **Orca K-8 (Seattle, Wash.)**'s parent-run safety committee and student-led Green Team will plan month-long environmental challenges to encourage students to walk and bicycle to school and to become more appreciative of the environment. The Green Team will create materials to promote each challenge and also educational materials about the physical, community and environmental benefits of bicycling and walking. Each classroom will track the number of students who participate and their participation amounts. Classrooms with the most riders and walkers will celebrate with the Cascade Bicycle Club's bicycle safety superhero, "Sprocket Hero." The Green Team also will promote a letter writing campaign where students can describe their experiences with biking and walking. These letters will be sent to the Seattle City Council, and one letter will be chosen to be sent to the Editor at the Seattle Times.
- **Cumberland Elementary School (Cumberland, Wis.)** will create a Walking School Bus program to enable students to walk to school in groups with trained students, teachers and volunteers. Science classes will study how the walking school buses impact the environment. National Honor Society students from the high school will post signage to make the routes safer. A map of school walking school bus stops will be posted, and graphs of mileage recorded by pedometers will be displayed. The school will work with its community partner, Healthier Cumberland Coalition, which seeks to increase physical activities for students.

About The National Center for Safe Routes to School

Established in May 2006 through funding from the Federal Highway Administration, the National Center for Safe Routes to School assists communities in enabling and encouraging children to safely walk and bicycle to school. The Center strives to equip Safe Routes to School programs with the knowledge and technical information to implement safe and successful strategies. The National Center for Safe Routes to School is maintained by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center with funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. For more information, visit www.saferoutesinfo.org.

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