

# Building Safe Communities

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## Outside the Car

Traffic safety programs often focus on automobile and truck occupants—but others are also at risk on the roads. In 1997, 2,106 motorcyclists, 5,307 pedestrians, and 813 bicyclists were killed, and close to 190,000 were injured, in traffic-related crashes. This issue of *Building Safe Communities* describes how programs can help protect those “outside the car.” ■

## Oakland Pedestrian Safety Project

The Oakland Pedestrian Safety Project (OPSP), a Safe Communities program supported by the California Department of Health Services and the California Office of Traffic Safety, began in 1995 after a series of pedestrian deaths and injuries inspired City Council Member Nate Miley to ask the city manager to assess Oakland’s pedestrian injury problem. The resulting analysis revealed that



Oakland’s pedestrians were at twice the injury risk of those in the rest of California. Miley then enlisted partners, including city and county agencies (such as the Department of Aging, the City of Oakland Police Department, and the Alameda County Injury Prevention Department), community groups (including the Chinese Community Council and the United Seniors Council), and health care providers (including Children’s and Highland hospitals), and created the OPSP.

Project Director Fran Gage reports, “We use local data to map the locations of pedestrian injuries and target neighborhoods. The data have also led us to target children under the age of 10 and senior citizens.” Citizens are



City Council Member Nate Miley (rear) on Walk Our Children to School Day

## Oakland Pedestrian Safety Project

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another important source of information. Gage says, "In the past three years, the number of neighborhood groups that have joined us or requested presentations has grown exponentially. These groups tell us where the problems are. When we look at the data, it usually turns out that they are right. Oakland is a big town. We wouldn't be able to target our activities without their input."

OPSP has garnered considerable community support. In 1998, more than 1,100 children and 111 senior citizens received safety training during Oakland's First Annual Pedestrian Safety Week, and more than 20,000 children participated in Oakland's First Annual Walk Our Children to School Day. But the program is not resting on its laurels. Gage reports, "The City Council just assigned Community Economic Development Committee staff to work with us on a Pedestrian Safety Plan. The process will take a good three or four years because we have to go to many community meetings to get input. The plan might include targeted locations for sidewalks, crosswalks, stop signs, traffic lights, and medians. We might make some one-way streets into two-way streets to slow down the traffic. But it's all about how we make Oakland more 'walkable' for its citizens." ■

For more information, contact Fran Gage, Oakland Pedestrian Safety Project, One Frank Ogawa Plaza, City Council, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Oakland, CA 94612. Telephone: (510) 238-7049; fax: (510) 238-6129; e-mail: <fgage@oaklandnet.com>.

## It's Time to Start Planning for 1999's National Walk Our Children to School Day

On October 6, 1999, politicians, health and safety advocates, and community leaders will join children, parents, and other caregivers for the third annual National Walk Our Children to School Day. Last year's event involved nearly 160,000 children and parents from more than 600 elementary schools in 52 communities, representing 27 states. For more information, contact Harold Thompson at the National Safety Council, (800) 621-7615, ext. 2383, or point your Web browser to <claire.hsrc.unc.edu/publicaware/walk/>.

## Bicycle Helmets and Dentists

In this excerpt from a conversation with BSC, Stephen McCloskey, Safe Communities of Jacksonville Program Manager, describes a project that reinforces the bicycle helmet lessons learned in school in a unique venue:

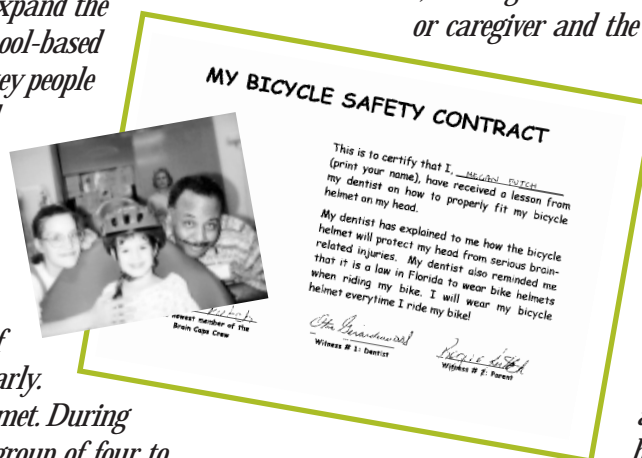
*We're in our second year of the Bicycle-related Brain Injury Prevention Project, which is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We wanted to expand the bicycle safety culture created by our school-based program into the community by getting key people to give the same messages to kids. I heard of a Colorado program that used dentists. Our county health department has a very big dental sealant program. I approached them to see if we could work in the dental clinics. We got the people who schedule appointments to ask parents if they could bring their child in 30 minutes early. If they did, they would get a free bicycle helmet. During each 30-minute program, we educate a group of four to seven kids in the waiting room. We use videos, games, and worksheets. And then we give each child a helmet and a lesson on its correct use.*

*This year, we are trying a different approach. We want the program to be driven by the staff, and we want the dentist to do the education while the kid is in the chair. We had a hard time finding a dentist who would participate, but we did. We gave him a canned presentation and a flip chart—a five-minute presentation on brain injuries and a lesson on how to wear a helmet correctly. Each child gets a picture taken of him- or herself in the chair, wearing the free helmet, flanked by his or her parent or caregiver and the dentist. This picture goes on a*

*contract that says, "I will wear my helmet every time I ride." The contract goes on their refrigerator so the kids and caregivers get reinforcement.*

*In the first year, our pre- and post-tests showed that the program resulted in a significant increase in knowledge and change in attitudes about helmets. We haven't crunched the*

*data on the second year yet, but I like the concept of using the dentist, and not just the dental facilities, to help reinforce the message that the kids are getting in school.* ■



## Safe Cycling in Jacksonville

**W**hen Stephen McCloskey became the Injury Prevention Manager for Duval County, Florida, he discovered that children between the ages of 5 and 14 accounted for 35 to 40 percent of bicycle-related injuries and fatalities in the county. Only 3.5 percent of these children were wearing helmets when they were injured.

In his search for partners to address this problem, McCloskey, who is also Program Manager of Safe Communities of Jacksonville, became involved with the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, a coalition that had attempted to bring bicycle safety education into the local schools but could not convince the school system to commit the necessary resources. McCloskey began a search for funding, which eventually led to a grant from the Florida Department of Transportation and supplemental funding from service clubs and the Brooks Health Foundation.

The program chosen for the schools was the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program developed at the University of Florida at Gainesville. It combines teacher training with a simulated road environment in which children learn and practice safety skills. McCloskey explains, "We put children in simulated dangerous traffic situations and teach them defensive moves. This is essential. Kids learn by doing." A team of physical education teachers and health department staff were trained to use, and teach others to use, the program. The project also designed and built 10 trailers to hold the necessary equipment, including bicycles, helmets, videos, and props for the simulated road environment.

The Traffic, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Safety Education Project has trained more than 55,000 children. But it does more than train children: It puts helmets on their heads. The program sustains this activity by using the proceeds from the helmets it sells (for four or five dollars each, which is less than the project pays for the helmets) to purchase additional helmets. In this way, the project projects that its initial investment in 19,800 helmets will result in the distribution of almost 50,000 helmets.

Three important policies have increased the effectiveness of the program. In 1997, Florida mandated the use of helmets by bicyclists age 16 and younger. The Duval County School Board established the curriculum goal that every student would participate in a pedestrian and bicycle safety program by the end of the fifth grade. The board also now requires any child riding a bicycle to or from school to wear a helmet.

The use of a comprehensive strategy encompassing education, environmental change (putting helmets on heads), and enforcement (of the state law, curriculum mandate, and school helmet rule) is proving remarkably effective. In 1997, bicycle helmet use by those under 12 increased by 425 percent. Helmet use by those ages 13 to 18 increased by 281 percent. Much of this increase is due to the safety program, which is demonstrated by the fact that elementary school children are using helmets at three times the rate of their middle school peers (most of whom have not completed the program), while adult helmet use actually decreased 10 percent. ■

*For information about Safe Communities of Jacksonville, contact Stephen McCloskey, Duval County Health Department, Injury Prevention Program Office, 900 University Blvd., North, Suite 205, Jacksonville, FL 32211. Telephone: (904) 630-3300, ext. 2308; fax: (904) 745-3014; e-mail: <Stephen\_McCloskey@doh.state.fl.us>.*

*For information about the Florida Traffic and Bicycle Safety Education Program, contact Linda Crider, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, 431 ARCH, P.O. Box 155706, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-5706. Telephone: (904) 392-8192; fax: (904) 392-8192.*



# Preventing the Crash:

## An Essential Component in Motorcycle Safety

**M**otorcycle helmets protect the rider from injury in the event of a crash. But there are also steps that can help prevent crashes from occurring in the first place. Two important considerations for motorcycle safety are road design and maintenance, and rider education. Sean Maher of the American Motorcyclist Association makes the following points:

*In general, road design, construction, and maintenance are designed for four-wheeled vehicles. Motorcycles are often ignored. For example, the reflective marking material used to separate bicycle lanes from motor vehicle lanes or designate crosswalks is very slick when wet, which creates hazards for motorcycles. There are products available that have increased skid-resistance. Also, some maintenance techniques are dangerous to motorcyclists. Some states use rubber-asphalt sealants to repair cracks in a makeshift manner. It is slippery when wet, and pliable when warm and dry.*

Maher also considers rider education programs an essential part of a comprehensive motorcycle safety program. He adds, "A California Motorcycle Safety Program study found that novice riders who had taken the course had dramatically decreased crash rates—compared to their untrained counterparts—in the first six months after taking the course, which is universally recognized as the highest risk time for motorcyclists."

One such rider education



program is Idaho's Skills Training Advantage for Riders (STAR), which was established in 1996 in conjunction with a new state law requiring training for people under 21 who wish to operate a motorcycle. While training is not mandatory for persons over 21, completing STAR exempts individuals from taking the skills test otherwise required to obtain a motorcycle license.



Program Coordinator Ronald Shepard says, "It is important to get communities to take ownership of the program. We talk to motorcycle dealers. We notify the local media. We make ourselves available to driver education programs in schools for presentations on motorcycle safety, at no cost to the school." The program works with motorcycle retailers to encourage their customers to complete the training, using incentives like gift certificates for tuition. Shepard also works with judges to see that the program is used as an alternative sentencing option.

More than 2,000 motorcyclists have completed the STAR program. And the number of motorcycle collisions, fatalities, and injuries has been dropping steadily since the new law, and the STAR program, took effect in 1996. ■

*For more information about STAR, contact Ronald Shepard, Motorcycle Safety Education Program, Idaho Department of Education, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0027. Telephone: (208) 332-6852; fax: (208) 334-3484; WWW: <[www.sde.state.id.us/stars](http://www.sde.state.id.us/stars)>.*

## The Pedestrian Safety Road Show

The Pedestrian Safety Road Show is a four-hour seminar that helps towns and cities identify pedestrian safety problems and develop strategies to resolve them. Communities hosting a Road Show are encouraged to invite a variety of participants, including elected officials, traffic engineers, law enforcement officers, EMS personnel, business leaders, and youth group and senior citizen representatives. Support materials on pedestrian safety, as well as training on how to facilitate a Road Show, are available. The Road Show is a joint project of the Federal Highway Administration and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. ■

*For more information, write to the Pedestrian Program, U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of the Secretary, P-15, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. You may also contact Levenson Boodlal, telephone: (202) 366-8044; fax: (202) 366-7909; e-mail <[Levenson.Boodlal@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Levenson.Boodlal@fhwa.dot.gov)>, or visit the Road Show website at <[www.ota.fhwa.dot.gov/walk/](http://www.ota.fhwa.dot.gov/walk/)>.*

# The National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety

The National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety was initiated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to develop a strategic vision for the future of motorcycle safety, build a national commitment, and reduce motorcycle crash-related injury and fatality rates. The



Photograph courtesy of the American Motorcyclist Association

Technical Working Group creating this vision is coordinated by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and includes representatives from the motorcycle industry, law enforcement, health care, injury prevention, and the motorcycle riders community.

The Working Group will investigate factors that contribute to motorcycle injuries, including human (e.g., alcohol, licensing, training), vehicle (e.g., conspicuity, braking, design), and environmental (e.g., road hazards, the enforcement of laws and regulations). It will also identify and involve groups who should be active in motorcycle safety. Stephen Garets, a member of the Working Group, reports that community-based traffic safety programs and motorcycle safety advocates do not work together as often as they might. He hopes that the broad range of views and the vision articulated by the National Agenda can help change this. ■

*The Working Group will present its recommendations in November 1999. For more information, contact Tom Yager, Motorcycle Safety Foundation, 2 Jenner Street, Suite 150, Irvine, CA 92718-3812. Telephone: (949) 727-3227; fax: (949) 727-4217; e-mail: <tyager@msf-usa.org>.*

## Resources

### Motorcycle Safety Resources

To locate your state's motorcycle safety coordinator, contact the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators (SMSA), P.O. Box 32912, Fridley, MN 55432. Telephone: (612) 785-9242; fax: (612) 784-1660; e-mail: <info@smsa.org>; WWW: <www.smsa.org/index.html>.

*Evaluation of the California Motorcyclist Safety Program* can be obtained from SMSA above and found on the Web at <www.smsa.org/californiaeval.html>.

*Without Motorcycle Helmets We All Pay the Price* is an educational package addressing the importance of motorcycle helmets within the context of a comprehensive motorcycle safety program. It, and other resources on motorcycle safety, is available from NHTSA (see below). *Without Motorcycle Helmets We All Pay the Price* can also be found on the Web at <www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/safebike/index.html>.

Other sources of information on motorcycle safety include the American Motorcyclist Association, 13515 Yarmouth Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147. Telephone: (614) 856-1900; fax: (614) 856-1920; WWW <www.ama-cycle.org>; and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, 2 Jenner Street, Suite 150, Irvine, CA 92618-3806. Telephone: (949) 727-3227; fax: (949) 727-4217; e-mail: <epiper@msf-usa.org>; WWW: <www.msf-usa.org/>.

### NHTSA Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Resources

NHTSA's bicycle safety materials include *What's New About Bicycle Helmets? New Safety Standards for Better Protection*, *10 Smart Routes to Bicycle Safety*, and *Your Bicycle Helmet: A Correct Fit*.

*Walking Through the Years: Pedestrian Safety for Your Child*. This program includes a Spanish-language videotape for parents and caregivers that presents child pedestrian safety messages in a soap opera-like story, a Spanish/English Educator's Guide, and a Spanish/English brochure for parents.

*Back to School Safely*. An activity book containing a board game designed to provide elementary school-age children with tips on safe bicycle riding, buckling safety belts, crossing the street, and riding the school bus.

*Walkability Checklist*. A checklist that adults can use while walking with children to help identify "walkability" problems, as well as solutions. Available in English and Spanish.

*Use Your Head. Before You Buy a Bicycle Helmet, Make Sure It Fits*. A poster and flyer illustrating correct and incorrect use of bicycle helmets.

These and other reports and public education materials on bicycle, pedestrian, and motorcycle safety can be ordered from the NHTSA Media and Marketing Division, NTS-21, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590. Additional resources can be found on the Web at <www.nhtsa.dot.gov>.

### Other Resources

Another important source of information on bicycle safety is the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207. Toll-free hotline: (800) 638-2772; WWW: <www.cpsc.gov/>.

Resources on pedestrian safety and creating a "walkable" community can be obtained from the Partnership for a Walkable America, National Safety Council, 1121 Spring Lake Drive, Itasca, IL 60143-3201. Telephone: (630) 285-1121; fax: (630) 285-1315; WWW: <nsc.org/walkable.htm>.

# Building Safe Communities

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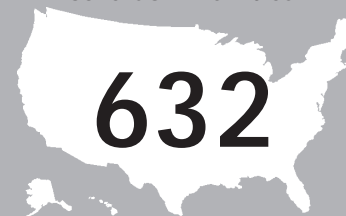
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## Safe Communities



programs as of May 1999

■  
NHTSA maintains a database of Safe Communities programs.

If you have not registered your program with NHTSA, please contact:

Safe Communities Service Center

NHTSA Region VI-Room 8A38  
819 Taylor Street

Fort Worth, TX 76102

Telephone: (817) 978-3653

Fax: (817) 978-8339

E-mail:

[Safe.Communities@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:Safe.Communities@nhtsa.dot.gov)

## Safe Communities Calendar

**September 3-6, 1999: *Back to School/Child Passenger Safety Weekend***

**September 16-19, 1999: *Mothers Against Drunk Driving's (MADD) 1999 National Conference***. For information, call Wilma L. Peterson at (214) 744-6233, ext. 224.

**October 4-8, 1999: *National Walk Our Children to School Week***

**October 6, 1999: *National Walk Our Children to School Day*** (see page 2)

**November 22, 1999: *Buckle Up America* and *Operation ABC Mobilizations***

**December 1999: *National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3-D) Prevention Month***

**December 17-19, 1999: *National Holiday Lifesavers Weekend* and *Impaired Driving Mobilization***