



## Safe Routes to Schools



Walk to School Day, Arlington, Massachusetts

**T**hirty years ago, more than 65 percent of American children walked to school. Today, less than 10 percent walk. Two NHTSA-funded Safe Routes to Schools demonstration projects are developing strategies to help reverse this trend. Wendi Kallins, coordinator of the Marin County project, explains the dual nature of the problem:

*Children are becoming more sedate, less active, and less independent. One in five children, and one in three teens, is overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. This represents a 50 to 100 percent increase in just the past 10 years. At the same time, traffic is at an all-time high. School-related traffic is a major contributor to this congestion. In Marin County [California], 21 percent of morning traffic is related to school travel. Surveys in other areas of the country show figures ranging from 20 to 30 percent. A change in the way children travel to school could have a major effect on the morning commute.*

But as Don Eunson, program coordinator for the Safe Routes to Schools project in Arlington, Massachusetts, explains, “We can’t sell parents on the idea of having their children walk to school unless we respond to the concern that their children be safe.”

His observation that safety is the foremost concern parents have about their children walking or bicycling to school is confirmed by research conducted by both projects.

Both projects use comprehensive approaches to promote walking and bicycling. And both projects work with coalitions of community volunteers, school staff, local walking and bicycling advocates, public works departments, and local law enforcement agencies to safeguard young pedestrians and bicyclists by mapping safe routes to schools, identifying areas in need of physical improvements or enhanced enforcement, sponsoring Walk and Bike to School Days, and bringing pedestrian and bicycle training programs to schools.

Both projects develop strategies and activities that respond to the needs of the communities in which they work. In Marin County, a Share the Road campaign encourages motorists to be more considerate of pedestrians and bicyclists. In Arlington, a “sidewalk inventory” revealed that several key streets within a quarter-mile

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## Safe Routes to Schools

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of one elementary school lacked sidewalks. The project is now working with parents and town officials to have sidewalks built on those streets.

The programs are succeeding. The Marin County program achieved a 57-percent increase in the number of children walking to school and a similar increase in the number of children bicycling to school between fall 2000 and spring 2001. The Arlington effort is also showing results. Both programs found community allies

and funding that allowed them to continue and expand their work after the demonstration grants expired.

For more information about the Marin County program, contact Wendi Kallins of the Marin County Bicycle Coalition by telephone at (415) 488-4101 or e-mail at <wkallins@igc.org>, or visit the website ([www.saferoutestoschools.org](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org)). For more information about Arlington's program, contact Don Eunson of WalkBoston by telephone at (617) 522-0656 or e-mail at [deunson@gis.net](mailto:deunson@gis.net), or visit the website ([www.walkboston.org](http://www.walkboston.org)). BSC

## Safe Routes to Schools Resources

The Marin County Bicycle Coalition website ([www.saferoutestoschools.org](http://www.saferoutestoschools.org)) includes resources for those wanting to start a Safe Routes to Schools program. Also available on this site are Marin County's *Safe Routes to Schools Toolkit* and *Safe Routes to Schools* newsletter.

*The 2001 Summary of Safe Routes to School Programs* in the United States is available from Transportation Alternatives, telephone: (212) 629-8080; e-mail: [Saferoutes@transalt.org](mailto:Saferoutes@transalt.org); Web: [www.saferoutestoschool.org](http://www.saferoutestoschool.org).

The California Safe Routes to School Clearinghouse of the Center for Health Training provides technical assistance and resources to communities with an interest in safe routes. They can be reached by telephone at (877) 4-SAFERT or found on the Web at <[www.4saferoutes.org](http://www.4saferoutes.org)>. The Center for Health Training is creating a *Safe Routes to School Best Practices Guide*, which will be available from NHTSA in fall 2002.



### Biking to school in Marin County

tion for state, regional, and national agencies and organizations involved in school transportation safety; case studies; and resources such as drop-in newspaper articles, fact sheets, talking points, flyers, and an activities guide. The kit can be ordered on the Web at [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov) or through the NHTSA hotline at (888) 327-4236. BSC



NHTSA revised its *Getting to School Safely Community Action Kit* for the 2001–2002 school year. This essential resource includes a guide to developing school transportation safety programs; contact information

## NAGHSR Looking for Impaired Driving Prevention Programs



The National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives

(NAGHSR) is looking for programs to feature in a new Safe Communities Impaired Driving Prevention Tool Kit. They are interested in impaired driving prevention programs working in one or more of the following areas:

- ▶ Public education
- ▶ Enforcement
- ▶ Prosecution, adjudication, and treatment
- ▶ Legislation
- ▶ Partnerships with key groups, including schools, employers, alcohol retailers, public health and medical organizations, and elected officials
- ▶ Program management and monitoring

If your program is working in any of these areas and would like to be featured in this NHTSA-funded publication in order to help other programs learn from your experience and bring national recognition to your efforts, send a summary of your program along with contact information, no later than January 31, 2002, to:

Pam Beer, PMB Communications  
7236 Riding Hood Circle  
Columbia, MD 21045  
Telephone: (301) 621-8401  
Fax: (301) 621-8402  
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# Local Notes


## Mayor's Council for a Safe Community

The Mayor's Council for a Safe Community in Minot, North Dakota, takes a multifaceted approach to occupant protection. Its Buckle Up or Get Busted program works with six local radio stations to sponsor live remote broadcasts at which Safe Community members talk about occupant protection. Drivers who come to the broadcast site and are properly buckled receive prizes, including coupons for free oil changes or meals at local restaurants. The radio stations also air buckle-up PSAs developed by the Mayor's Council. The Minot High School Key Club is conducting pre- and post-test surveys to help judge the campaign's effect.

Buckle Up or Eat Glass is a related effort taking place at Minot High School. Kristen Parlow, director of the Mayor's Council, explains that this program targets drivers of pick-ups (especially young men) and their passengers because they have low seat belt usage rates. Members of the high school's DECA Club conduct educational activities and distribute prizes in the school parking lot, and reinforce the buckle-up message with posters

and peer education activities in driver's education classes. Buckle Up or Eat Glass is using surveys to measure the program's impact. Parlow explains, "We put a lot of effort into these programs, and we want to make sure they are making an impact."

Another key activity in the Mayor's Council campaign is training local law enforcement officers about North Dakota's seat belt laws and the importance of enforcing them. The council also conducts child safety seat clinics and is planning several public education events on occupation protection and impaired driving.

For more information, contact Kristen Parlow at (701) 839-0488 or <[safecity@web.ci.minot.nd.us](mailto:safecity@web.ci.minot.nd.us)>. 



**Buckle Bear and friends in Minot**

## Macomb County


In 1965, the major insurance companies threatened to stop writing new automobile insurance policies in Michigan unless something was done to lower the state's high rate of motor vehicle crashes. In response, the Macomb County Board of Commissioners and the County Road Commission established the Traffic Safety Association of Macomb County (TSA), which, in partnership with law enforcement agencies and other organizations, has worked to improve traffic safety in Macomb County for more than 35 years.

In the last five years, TSA has created a model in which it organizes and partners with Safe Communities coalitions within Macomb County to respond to the traffic safety needs of individual communities while helping to make the entire county a safer place in which to drive, bicycle, and walk.

In 1998, TSA sent a letter to every community in the county, offering to assess their traffic safety needs using ACTS, a tool developed by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety. (More information on ACTS can be found in the summer 2001 edition of BSC.) The towns of Centerline, Clinton Township, Harrison, New Baltimore, Richmond, Roseville, Sterling Heights, and Utica

accepted this offer. After completing the assessment, TSA helped each community establish a Safe Communities coalition. The eight Macomb County Safe Communities coalitions work with TSA to implement projects and activities in their own communities. By holding periodic meetings of all the programs, program staff are able to coordinate their efforts.

The coalitions take full advantage of TSA's other activities, which include operating impaired driving and other traffic offender programs for the courts, conducting child safety seat inspection clinics, and distributing child safety seats through the United States Department of Agriculture's Women, Infants, and Children program. Other activities sponsored by TSA and its Safe Communities affiliates include alcohol and drug awareness training for high school counselors, child safety seat training for law enforcement officers, and school-based bicycle safety programs.

For more information, contact Gail Peterson, executive director of the Traffic Association of Macomb County. Telephone: (810) 293-4660; e-mail: <[trafficsafety@voyager.net](mailto:trafficsafety@voyager.net)>. 



# Reaching African Americans Through Physicians

Although Americans are using seat belts in record numbers, usage is not consistent across all groups. Observational studies conducted during 2000, for example, showed that 69 percent of African Americans used safety belts, which is 5 percent less than white Americans. One of the reasons for differences in seat belt use is that, historically, much of the public education about occupant protection was developed for a “general” audience—but this is starting to change. NHTSA’s Laurie Flaherty explained the importance of tailoring educational messages and strategies to specific groups within our society:


*As the gains previously made on occupant protection and impaired driving plateaued, we realized we had to segment the market and create new approaches to address specific audiences. Focus group research showed that the messages we had previously developed were not reaching African Americans. The research also told us that people listen to their doctors. A number of studies show that people are more likely to act on advice coming from their doctors than from other sources. That is why we went to the National Medical Association.*

The National Medical Association (NMA) is a professional association with a membership of more than 25,000 African American physicians. Working with NHTSA and the Department of Occupational and Preventive Medicine at Meharry Medical College, the NMA is developing educational materials that address the needs and concerns of the African American community. Both the NMA and Meharry have been active in this issue.


Meharry’s report *Achieving a Credible Approach to Increasing Seat Belt Use Among African Americans* and the NMA position statement “The Role of African American Physicians in Reducing Traffic-Related Injury and Death Among African Americans” are seminal documents on injury prevention in the African American community. Chaka Burgess, project director at the NMA, says, “When our members are educated about traffic injuries and realize that these injuries represent one of the most preventable causes of death in our community, they become galvanized.”

## Building Partnerships Between African American Physicians and Safe Communities Coalitions



The National Medical Association would like to establish partnerships between its members and Safe Communities coalitions. To locate NMA members in your community, contact Chaka Burgess at NMA headquarters: telephone: (202) 374-1895, ext. 232; e-mail: <chaka@nmanet.org>. Physicians who want to locate a Safe Communities coalition should contact the Safe Communities Service Center (see page 6). 

The current project is developing materials to educate physicians about the importance of occupant protection and to help them provide counseling on this issue to their patients. The NMA is also using physicians as media spokespersons to deliver traffic safety messages and is using existing NHTSA materials developed to promote occupant protection among African Americans. For more information (or a copy of the NMA position statement on occupant protection), contact Chaka Burgess at NMA headquarters: telephone: (202) 347-1895, ext. 232; e-mail: <chaka@nmanet.org>.

A summary of *Achieving a Credible Approach to Increasing Seat Belt Use Among African Americans* is available on the Web at <www.mmc.edu/seatbelt\_safety/>. The full report is available for \$35 from Seatbelt Safety Center, c/o Medical Treatment Effectiveness Program, Occupational and Preventive Medicine, Meharry Medical College, 1005 Dr. D.B. Todd Jr. Blvd., Nashville, TN 37208-3599. 

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# National News

## National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS)

**N**OYS is a coalition of more than 50 youth-serving organizations dedicated to mobilizing youth to work on major issues affecting their health, including traffic safety, school violence, and the abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. In July 2001, the NOYS National Youth Diversity Summit brought 500 youth and their adult sponsors together in Los Angeles to create recommendations for a national youth traffic safety agenda. These recommendations included involving youth in the development of traffic safety materials and public service announcements, encouraging the use of peer education through grants to local youth organizations, and holding regional and state diversity summits. The summit also featured the rollout of the newly revised NOYS website, dedicated to providing youth with direct access to information on community safety programs. NOYS has just revised its Make Your Party Rock—Substance-Free Party Planner, which includes ideas for celebrating safely year-round. The planner helps youth plan substance-free events for any occasion and any size group, from a small gathering of friends to a community-wide cele-

## Child Passenger Safety Week 2002


February 10–16, 2002, is Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Week.


CPS Week is an opportunity to remind parents that children should use child safety

seats appropriate for their size and weight and that all children who have outgrown child safety seats should be properly restrained in booster seats until they are at least eight years old, unless they are 4'9" tall.

NHTSA is developing a number of resources that Safe Communities programs can use in their CPS Week activities. One of these is the 2002

CPS Week Planner, which includes a prescription pad that helps health care providers recommend the proper seat for every child, a CPS Week flyer that can be sent home to parents via their children, and a poster contest activity. These materials, some of which will also be available in Spanish, can be downloaded or ordered from NHTSA's website ([www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)) starting in early 2002.


NHTSA is also sponsoring a "satellite media tour" in which experts will be available for radio and television interviews about CPS Week and child occupant safety. For more information about the satellite media tour, contact Barbara Sauers by e-mail at [bsauers@nhtsa.dot.gov](mailto:bsauers@nhtsa.dot.gov). 

bration. SADD has adapted the planner for its Think About It . . . New Year's Eve: The Power of Commitment campaign, which provides young people with the tools to plan safe and substance-free all-night New Year's Eve celebrations. NOYS and SADD hope to register at least 2,002 safe and substance-free parties for New Year's Eve 2002. Also launched at the Summit was Speak Out and Make NOYS, a new toolkit for youth advocacy. The kit was developed by NOYS youth members for youth and includes a project manual, organizer, and video. To order materials, see the recommendations from the Youth Diversity Summit, or register your party, visit the NOYS website at [www.noys.org](http://www.noys.org). 

## NOYS National Youth Diversity Summit



## Region VIII Office Safe Communities Hotline

The NHTSA Region VIII Office Safe Communities hotline provides technical assistance on all aspects of creating and maintaining a Safe Communities program, including starting a program, coalition-building, involving the community, identifying resources, planning campaigns, and evaluating outcomes. The primary audiences for the hotline are Region VIII Safe Communities directors and coordinators, as well as state Safe Communities coordinators and state highway safety officials. Region VIII includes the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. If time permits, the hotline will assist other injury prevention programs and Safe Communities programs in other regions. The hotline number, toll-free in Region VIII, is (866) 332-6060. 



# Building Safe Communities

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## Safe Communities Calendar

**December 2001:** *National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month*

**December 15–17, 2001:** *You Drink & Drive. You Lose. Mobilization*



**February 10–16, 2002:** *Child Passenger Safety Week*

**May 7–9, 2002:** *11th International Conference on Safe Communities*, Fort Frances, Ontario

**May 12–15, 2002:** *Sixth World Conference on Injury Prevention and Control*, Montreal

**May 20–27, 2002:** *Buckle Up America Week*



## The Safe Communities Service Center

The Safe Communities Service Center website is a valuable source of traffic safety and injury prevention resources, including local and national news items of interest to Safe Communities coalitions, Safe Communities success stories, a traffic safety materials catalog, a virtual library, and links to the websites of Safe Communities coalitions across the country. The site also includes more than 400 links to other important traffic safety and injury prevention resources. The Safe Communities Service Center website can be found at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities).

Please visit the Safe Communities Customer Feedback website at [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/feedback/](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/safecommunities/feedback/). Your comments will be used by NHTSA to design products that help programs do their work more effectively.

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