

## **ENABLING AND ENCOURAGING CHILDREN TO WALK & BIKE TO SCHOOL**

*Parent/school committee slows traffic, promotes safety to increase physical activity*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Children in South Carolina, as in other states, are not as physically active as they need to be for good health, contributing to the growing problem of obesity.
- Safe Routes to School programs can enhance children's health and well-being and improve air quality and quality of life in communities by promoting physical activity and easing traffic congestion near schools.
- Working together, families, neighborhood groups, schools, government officials, and community leaders can identify the issues around walking and biking to school and develop solutions.

### **Program**

- Federal Highway Administration funds are distributed to states for Safe Routes to School activities through state departments of transportation.
- Rosewood Elementary received a \$200,000 grant from the South Carolina Department of Transportation, establishing a committee of parents, teachers, school administrators and a school nurse to design and implement a comprehensive Safe Routes to School program encompassing education, encouragement, engineering, enforcement and evaluation.
- Activities include: incorporating bike and pedestrian safety information into classroom activities; distribution of safety information to students and parents; a Walk to School Day event; and increased law enforcement patrols of the streets surrounding the school.
- Future plans include: bicycle workshops to teach students bicycle safety; creating a construction plan for sidewalk improvements; crosswalks striping and school zone signage; parent & student surveys to gather opinions on the implementation; and tallies of student modes of travel to school.

### **Impact**

- Based on parent reports, the increased patrolling of the streets surrounding Rosewood Elementary has slowed traffic and parents report increased awareness of bicyclists and pedestrians by drivers.
- Activities such as Walking Fridays have increased student interest in walking to school.
- A written plan submitted to the South Carolina Department of Transportation will describe next steps in implementing the Rosewood Elementary Safe Routes to School program.
- A local television news story about Rosewood Elementary's Safe Routes to School program reached community members with a safety and health message.

### **Contact**

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