

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL SUCCESS STORY



30%

increase in walking to school among children who live between ¼ and ½ mile of school between 2011 and 2012

5%

increase in the overall number of students walking to school between 2011 and 2012

7%

increase in the overall number of students walking home from school between 2011 and 2012

10%

increase in the number of students bicycling to and from school between 2011 and 2012

175

students benefitted from having the Safe Routes to School program at their school

August 2012

California Safe Routes to School Technical Assistance Resource Center, a program of California Active Communities

www.CaSafeRoutesToSchool.org

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Grant Elementary, Eureka, CA

CALTRANS DISTRICT 1, HUMBOLDT COUNTY

There was a time when the sight of children walking and bicycling to school was a familiar scene in communities across California. In fact, in 1969 approximately 50 percent of children walked or bicycled to school. Today, fewer than 15 percent of children do and rates of childhood obesity and overweight are overwhelming.^{1,2}

Concerns about traffic safety are often cited as one of the main reasons children do not walk or bicycle to school.³ And for good reason, as in 2010 alone, over 21,000 California school children were sent to an emergency department and over 1,500 were hospitalized due to pedestrian or bicycle injuries.⁴

Creating safe opportunities for walking and bicycling is critical to improving the safety of young pedestrians and bicyclists and to reducing overweight and obesity among California's youth. As such, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs are key to reversing these trends. SRTS programs increase the number of children who safely walk and bicycle to school through education and encouragement programs, enhanced enforcement, engineering improvements, and strong program evaluation.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

With the help of the Eureka SRTS Task Force (which received start-up funding from a State SRTS award), the Grant Elementary Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and parents organized a school site SRTS Planning Workshop and Walkability Audit. Because Grant Elementary is a low-income school, the SRTS Workshop was provided at no-cost by the California SRTS Technical Assistance Resource Center.



The workshop helped identify safety concerns about the lack of safe crossings and high speed of cars near the school as well as to plan appropriate education and encouragement activities to fit the unique needs of the school community. Following the completion of the workshop, the PTA applied for and received

Implementing Agency

Humboldt Partnership for Active Living,
a Program of the Natural Resources
Services Division of Redwood
Community Action Agency

Location

Eureka, Humboldt County
Caltrans District 1
CA Assembly District 1
CA Senate District 2

Funding

Community mini-grant
California Kids' Plates Program mini-grant

Participating School

Grant Elementary
77 percent of students eligible for Free
and Reduced Price Meals Program

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a small community grant to begin an education and encouragement program that included:

- Providing pedestrian and bicycle safety education for students;
- The PTA painting "Bulldog" prints (school mascot) to mark the safest way to cross the street;
- The PTA and parents coordinating regular "Walking Wednesdays;"
- Regular "Walking School Buses" led by parents and community volunteers;
- Classroom contests based on the number of students walking to school; and
- Applying gravel to a frequently-traveled path to school making it safer and more inviting.

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

- The average participation of walkers on Walking Wednesday increased so that 50 percent of students have participated at least once, and many of them participate every Wednesday.
- There has been a decrease in the amount of traffic and congestion from cars in front of school in the morning, because some participants opt to walk the last few blocks to school and get dropped off further from school to walk in a group.
- The pathway is no longer muddy and dark, but is now an inviting, open and pleasant walking path.
- Grant Elementary received funding through Caltrans State SRTS Cycle 10 for infrastructure improvements (including sidewalk infill near school, raised crosswalk in front of the school, bulbouts and a pedestrian median at busy crossing near school).