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Resource Center News:
SRTS Travel Plan at your School

The Resource Center will soon be accepting nominations for schools interested in developing SRTS Travel Plans. Travel Plans serve as a comprehensive guide for a school's Safe Routes to School program, and include tailored recommendations and plans for activities and events to address Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation, and Engineering.

The Resource Center's staff will help facilitate a multi-meeting process that may include:

- Brainstorming with school personnel, parents, community partners and other key stakeholders to identify ways to improve safety and address barriers to walking, biking, or rolling to school.
- Interactive mapping and discussion exercises and a walk audit around the school community (led by a planning and design firm specializing in bicycle and pedestrian planning).
- Review of a draft plan written by the Resource Center.

For more information, or to learn more about how to nominate your school for Travel Plan assistance, please contact your School Outreach Coordinator.

From our State Coordinator

May is full of bicycling events in honor of National Bike Month and offers multiple opportunities to celebrate the many reasons to ride. Whether you ride your bike to school or to work, to save money on gas, to exercise and improve your health or to help the environment, use National Bike Month to encourage your community members to have fun riding too!

- Bike to School Day is Wednesday, May 9th
- Bike to Work Week is May 14th-18th
- Bike to Work Day is Friday, May 18th

Draw on Bike to School Day to launch the National Bike Challenge at your school, and employ Bike to Work Week to encourage your faculty and staff to start logging miles for your team.

If you're interested in planning and
Upcoming Event: National Bike Challenge

The National Bike Challenge will run from May 1st through August 31st and is an opportunity to challenge yourself, your school and your students to ride more often. Record your rides and add up the miles you’ve ridden. You can embrace the spirit of competition by winning points for your school, your community, or your state. Everybody wins when people ride more, but hundreds of participants will win gear through the monthly prize drawings.

Monthly Prize Drawings: With just three days of riding, you become eligible for monthly drawings, and as you ride more, the prizes get better.

Take Home a Trophy: There are also National Challenge plaques for the businesses or schools, individuals, communities, states, and teams that rack up the most points.

You’ll be part of a team of more than fifty thousand riders logging over ten million miles, demonstrating the power of the bicycle to build healthy people, healthy communities, and a healthy planet.

The Resource Center is encouraging schools to register for the Challenge as an organization and promote your students and families to participate over their summer vacations. This is a great way to keep your students active over the summer! Use National Bike to School Day as a "Kick-Off" event for the challenge and get your students excited!

Funding Opportunity: ING Run for Something Better Grant

Schools can receive up to $2,500 to start or expand a running program through ING Run for Something Better. The program, in partnership with the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), seeks to increase physical activity in students and help fight childhood obesity.

Last year, four schools in South Carolina, plus Charleston County FitCatz received grants: Central Elementary School in Central, Gettys Middle School in Easley, Pelion Elementary in Pelion, and Townville Elementary in Townville.

Running is one of the simplest, most effective, and enjoyable forms of physical activity. This grant can help students build and maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. Consider using this opportunity to establish a program that will meet the SRTS Resource Center Gold Partner level requirement of "sustaining an on-going weekly program". Contact your School Outreach Coordinator for more information regarding the Partnership Program.

For more information, visit NASPE’s ING Grant Page. The application deadline is May 15, 2012.

event, click here for tips on how to plan an event in only 7 days! Customize this letter to send home to parents announcing Bike to School Day and the Bike Challenge.

On April 30, the US Secretary of Transportation wrote about Safe Routes to School in his Fast Lane Blog. Secretary LaHood took part in a Walk to School Day event recently with his own grandchildren in Indianapolis. He writes about the five E's of a comprehensive Safe Routes program and encourages participation in National Bike to School Day. Read the entire blog entry here.

Be safe and have fun!

Spotlight on a Friend: BlueChoice HealthPlan® - WalkingWorks® for SC Schools

BlueChoice HealthPlan® invites teachers to lead their classes on five-minute walks every day. Progress is recorded and students receive FREE incentive prizes! The 12 week program begins on September 10, 2012.

How to enroll your school:

1. Select ONE coordinator from your school (ie: Nurse or PE teacher)
2. Send an email to annie.fearon@bluechoicesc.com with “WalkingWorks for SC Schools” in the subject line.
3. You will receive an enrollment form to complete and return by the deadline.

Deadlines:

- Enroll by June 15, 2012 and your school will receive printed materials, delivered at the start of the 2012-2013 school year.
- Enroll by August 31, 2012 and your school will receive electronic copies that are print-ready.

Check back on our website for more information coming soon on WalkingWorks®.
Spotlight on a Partner:
Houston Elementary, Spartanburg

At Houston Elementary School’s Bike to School Day on May 9th, students and parents will meet as a group and bike together to an obstacle course and bike safety event on the school’s track. Music and prizes will make it fun for everyone!

The school has held Walking and Wheeling Wednesdays each week in April, leading up to the Bike to School Day finale. This program has helped boost motivation for being active and for participation in the May 9th event.

PE Teacher Nick Isaksson has been organizing Bike to School Day events for four years. With support from Partners for Active Living, especially in the early years, the school has increased participation each year. Nick’s tips for making bike events as safe as possible for elementary students include these rules:

- Students will ride only on the sidewalk, will not cross busy roads, and will follow a specified route.
- Teachers and a police officer will be present to help supervise.
- Parents are encouraged to ride, and students in grades K-2 must have a parent ride with them.

An innovative teacher, Nick has revolutionized PE during his four years at Houston. He’s implemented Project Fit America, with help from the Mary Black Foundation. Project Fit America includes a new outdoor fitness center, indoor fitness equipment and a wonderful curriculum that has been proven to help students become all around healthier individuals.

Nick also uses the First Tee National School’s Golf Program, and SPARK. With his leadership, students at Houston Elementary are becoming more fit and are enjoying physical activity.

Contact your local SOC about how this activity can fit in with your SRTS program.

BlueChoice HealthPlan is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

"Active Kids = Smarter Kids"

According to a recent article published in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, children who participate in physical activity perform better academically. Fourteen research studies that all examined the impact of physical activity on academic performance for K-12 aged school children were compiled and analyzed. Each of these studies took into account at least one physical fitness measurement and at least one measurement of cognition. The conclusion was that physical activity has a significant impact on a student's academic performance.

The article continues to discuss the importance of engaging children in physical activity during school hours. Elementary school students, who were given breaks of physical activity throughout the school day, improved their ability to stay on task during academic work by twenty percent.

The research studies completed have shown the positive correlation between physical activity and academics in school aged children. Increase your students' physical activity today by getting involved with Safe Routes to School. Walking or riding a bicycle to school in the morning is one option to increase a child's activity level, and in return better prepare them to start the academic school day. Click here to read the published article and find out more research studies on this topic.
The SC Safe Routes to School Resource Center is a program of the South Carolina DOT