

SRTS CASE STUDY:

Mechanicsburg, PA

Section of Town Sees New Walk to School Events

SafeRoutes
National Center for Safe Routes to School



CASE STUDY

Background

Broad Street Elementary School is located in the borough of Mechanicsburg, an older section of town where the traditional pattern of the blocks make it a great place to walk. Many of the school's students already walked to school, but there was no formal Safe Routes to School program or an annual Walk to School Day until 2005.

Details

A local SRTS task force was created with representation from school administrators, residents, parents, children, law enforcement officers, elected officials, municipal staff and individuals in the public health field. The task force first assessed existing pedestrian conditions on the school property and in nearby neighborhoods, and then they prepared maps noting the locations and conditions of existing sidewalks, bicycle routes, trails, intersections, crosswalks and signs. The SRTS task force distributed brochures to each student at Broad Street Elementary to increase awareness of SRTS, explain programs and list the benefits of walking or bicycling to school.

In October 2005, Broad Street Elementary participated in its first Walk to School Day. Two weeks before the annual walk, golden painted shoes were hidden in downtown Mechanicsburg and along pedestrian routes utilized by students walking to school. Students who found the shoes were entered into a drawing to win a gift certificate for a pair of new sneakers donated by a local Footlocker distributor. On the day of the event, local high school cheerleaders and band members greeted the students, and Capital Blue Cross donated lunch coolers filled with healthy snacks from Giant Food stores to them.

Broad Street Elementary also provided Frequent Walker/Biker cards for students who walked or bicycled to school on a regular basis. For every trip to and from school on foot or by bicycle, the students received one punch on their card. Students unable to walk or bicycle to school could walk during lunch and still have their cards punched. After ten punches they are entered in a grand prize drawing. In 2007, the prize was a bicycle donated by Mountainside, a local bicycle shop.

The placement of pedestrian road signs to warn drivers of children walking has increased the safety along pedestrian routes and around the school. The signs are not secure and must be replaced occasionally, but their presence grabs the attention of drivers as they approach the school.

Results

Walk to School Day at Broad Street Elementary attracts 95 percent of their student body and is seen as a great success. Currently, 40 percent of the students regularly walk to school, and the SRTS task force is working to increase that statistic to 50 percent by 2010. Since Broad Street Elementary's first celebration of Walk to School



Local high school cheerleaders greet students as they arrive to school during Walk to School Day.

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Day in 2005, two other elementary schools in the Mechanicsburg district have organized similar events for their schools. The local SRTS task force's goal is for all five elementary schools to participate in Walk to School Day by 2008.

Contact

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The mayor of Mechanicsburg attend part of the Walk to School Day celebration.

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For more resources and information on Safe Routes to School, please visit the National Center for Safe Routes to School Web site at www.saferoutesinfo.org.