



# Winter 2008 Newsletter



Be Safe. Have Fun. Grow Healthy. Get There.  
[www.saferoutesportland.org](http://www.saferoutesportland.org)

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## Did You Know?

Physical Education is currently not a daily practice in most City of Portland schools, yet sedentary lifestyles are linked to cardio-vascular disease, hypertension, osteoporosis, and some cancers. This makes physical inactivity second only to smoking as a lifestyle risk factor for disease and premature death.

Experts suggest children get at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week. (1)

Potential benefits of physical activity for youth include: (2+3)

- Weight and blood pressure control
- Bone, muscle, and joint health and maintenance
- Reduction in the risk of diabetes
- Improved psychological welfare
- Better academic performance

Healthy People 2010 recommends more children and youth walk to school more frequently. They have set an objective of having walking trips be 50% of trips for children living within a mile of school. (4)

It takes about five to ten minutes for children to walk a quarter of a mile or bicycle an entire mile.

Walking can help improve mental health and wellness. Walking helps release endorphins that "contribute to happy feelings and less stress" (5)

## Engineering Highlight



23 new bike racks on two separate concrete pads were installed at Gilbert Heights Elementary.



[BikePortland.org](http://BikePortland.org)



## ODOT/Federal Grant

Portland Program Wins Major ODOT Grant

Eleven schools in Portland's Safer Routes to Schools (SR2S) program will benefit from nearly \$600,000 in grant awards.



The Federal money was awarded by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), after extensive citizen volunteer Safer Routes Advisory Committee review. Funds will go toward SR2S Site Organizer staff and bike and pedestrian safety projects that were identified by each school's SR2S Team at the following schools: Atkinson, Capitol Hill, Chapman, Chief Joseph, Faubion, Forest Park, Gilbert Heights, Kelly, Rosa Parks, Sacramento, and Sunnyside Environmental. Projects to be completed with the funds range from pedestrian countdown signals, new sidewalks, curb ramps, and more.

According to PDOT Safer Routes manager Lore Wintergreen, all schools named in the grant are second-year Portland SR2S schools that have gone through an initial Quick Fix planning process to identify school safety needs. The work done through this process positioned Portland to respond to the quick application turnaround (which many other communities were unable to meet). Wintergreen also added that the response by the entire Portland SR2S coalition-led service team and SR2S traffic safety engineer Scott Batson was instrumental in the city getting this award.

City Commissioner Sam Adams, Portland Public Schools Superintendent Carole Smith, and ODOT Region 1 Manager Jason Tell were scheduled to join Kelly Elementary School Principal Sharon Allen, students, parents, and faculty at Kelly to celebrate the grant award and to honor the great Walk + Bike to School Bus program at Kelly on January 28th.

Due to snow and ice, school was delayed and the event has been rescheduled for February 26th. This gives you the chance to join us for the Walk + Bike to School Bus starting at 8:00 AM (gathering at SE 89th at SE Harney) or to come to the assembly at 9:00 AM (at Kelly Elementary School, 9030 SE Cooper).

## March for Martin Luther King Jr.

Safer Routes Lead to Positive Change: Marching for MLK



In late January, staff of the Safer Routes to Schools program joined hundreds in downtown Portland to march in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

The march was organized by a non-profit neighbor of the BTA, Sisters of the Road Café. At the march were BTA staffers Stephanie Noll, Gregg Lavender, and PDOT's Safer Routes program manager Lore Wintergreen.

Noll said just a small group of families and students turned out (it was a school holiday), but that it was a "good way to take part in a community event and support our neighbors at Sisters of the Road". She added that the "Safer Routes program works toward safer neighborhoods and stronger, healthier communities, so it was great to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of positive social change by marching together."

## Starbucks Donation

Coffee Keeps Forest Park Program Thriving

Forest Park Elementary's location in the foothills just west of downtown Portland can make for frequent cold and foggy mornings. With such daunting winter weather, sometimes parents need a bit more than the "Four Es" to get them out of their car. So what magical plan did their stellar Safer Routes team devise?



How about the the "Big C" -- as in coffee.

According to site coordinator LeeAnne Ferguson, a generous donation of Starbucks coffee makes the mornings a bit more appealing.

Each week, the local Starbucks -- which happens to be just down the street -- donates two, large "traveler" jugs of coffee to parents and teachers who walk and bike. LeeAnne says the donations started in January and was such a hit that, "the children signed a thank you card and now it's hanging in the store."

## Tomorrow's Activists

Teaching Tomorrow's Activists Today

A group of sixth graders at Rosa Parks Elementary in North Portland are learning how to solve problems in their neighborhood.



Nick Merrick's class is taking part in a new piece of Safer Routes curriculum designed by Safer Routes team member Stephanie Noll. She's teaching students how the City works and how to think like traffic engineers and community activists.

Noll started with a walkabout where the students, armed with maps, photographed and discussed possible problem areas on the streets around their School.

In their recent class session, the students decided to focus their energy on a vacant, gravel-strewn lot directly across from the school's entrance. The lot has become a launching pad for some youth throwing rocks at people and/or cars, and the students are concerned that someone will get hurt while walking or biking to school.



Noll took the students through a problem statement, a location analysis, and possible solutions. Ideas for the lot ranged from putting in a new swimming pool to planting grass for a new park. The most popular solution? A café that would serve chicken, donuts, and soul food.

Noll plans to put together a panel of officials to hear a final presentation by the class.

Whatever happens, Mr. Merrick tells the students that they can be part of history in their neighborhood, "If you take this seriously, it might actually happen."

## Safer Drivers

Teaching bike safety... to drivers!

The Safer Routes to Schools team is accomplished at teaching bike safety to 4-6th graders. They have a standard, 10-hour curriculum (including both classroom and on-the-bike instruction) taught with rave reviews to students throughout Oregon.

But what about teaching people how to drive around bicyclists?

That was the request the Safer Routes to School program recently got from a parent, so they decided to come up with a list of tips to share with parents at participating schools.

With help from an existing list used by the BTA in their bike commuting workshops, the Safer Routes team came up with several good nuggets of wisdom:

- Check the bike lane.
- Pass with ample room.
- Don't honk to communicate with cyclists unless there's an emergency.
- Don't follow closely.
- Allow bicyclists to use crosswalks.
- Be cautious in residential neighborhoods.
- Look for cyclists before opening your door.
- Use good manners.
- Give children extra space.