



March 2014

Coordinator's Corner

The spring semester is moving ahead and schools throughout the state are holding walk and bike to school days, using Mini-grants, holding bicycle rodeos and applying for walkabouts.



February was Crossing Guard Appreciation Month. Schools and parents nominated their school's crossing guards to be recognized as the one of Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guard of 2013. This month, instead of highlighting a SRTS supporter for our Friends and Faces column, we're going to showcase Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guards of 2013. Find out below which crossing guards won and hear what parents and teachers had to say about them.

Also, be sure to read about the upcoming Virginia Safe Routes to School Webinars. These webinar topics were chosen by Safe Routes advocates across Virginia and will help provide information and best practices to implement SRTS projects. In March, we'll be exploring liability regarding Safe Routes projects and what schools can do to find the right information for their school and division. In April, we're going to present some of the best practices for starting and sustaining walking school buses and bicycle trains in preparation of National Bike to School Day.

And remember to check out the most recent QuickStart Mini-grant recipients and their great Safe Routes Projects.

Read on!

-Rob Williams
VDOT Safe Routes to School Coordinator

Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guards of 2013

As part of Crossing Guard Appreciation Month, parents and schools nominated crossing guards across the state to be recognized as Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guard. Twenty Five crossing guards were nominated and they all have shown to be crossing guards that go above and beyond what is expected and are irreplaceable members of their communities.

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CALENDAR

MARCH

- 7: Saris Bicycling Poster Contest
- 12: SRTS Liability Webinar
- 20: QuickStart Mini-grant applications due

APRIL

- 9: Bike Train and Walking School Bus Webinar
- 17: QuickStart Mini-grant applications due

MAY

- 7: National Bike to School Day

Hear what parents have to say about Virginia's six Most Outstanding Crossing Guards of 2013:



Angie Thigpen
Charles Barrett Elementary
School, Alexandria

Not only is she the crossing guard during school arrival and dismissal but it's not unusual to see her volunteering to help out during special events at the school or during lunchtime at the cafeteria. She is relentlessly efficient and focused when it comes to keeping the community safe and I have never seen her without a smile and kind word for the parents and kids. She is amazing.

Angie gives me daily updates on how my daughter was in school. She was the first person to make me feel like I belonged in the community. She has a big smile every day that makes you feel special.

Caroline Woolwine
Radford High School, John
Dalton Intermediate School
and McHarg Elementary
School, Radford



Mrs. Woolwine is an incredibly important part of our school community. She has served as a crossing guard for the Radford City Schools for many, many years. She takes her job seriously and is always pleasant and inviting with the students she serves. On a daily basis, you can find her at the intersection of 12th and Robertson Streets, assisting our walkers to our after school program, working with disadvantaged students to the high school, and supporting many athletic events. She knows the students' names and is familiar with the families, as well. The students respect her and she genuinely loves each of them. She is extremely dedicated and hardworking and rarely misses work no matter how she feels or the weather conditions. We appreciate her enthusiasm and her kind disposi-

tion each morning and afternoon. She is a tremendously important part of our family.

Fancelle Liggins
Cumberland High School,
Cumberland Middle School
and Cumberland Elementary,
Cumberland



Fancelle Liggins has served Cumberland County Public Schools as a crossing guard since 1993. She takes her job seriously, always putting the safety of the students first. She not only monitors the students, but watches for unsafe drivers, assists other pedestrians, and checks for unsafe street conditions. Mrs. Liggins regularly participates in training activities so that she can be the best possible crossing guard. Her attendance is excellent, and she is outside during all seasons and all weather, ranging from freezing cold in winter to scorching heat in summer. She is pleasant to work with, always has a smile for students, parents, staff, and community members. She can be seen every afternoon, wearing her regulation steel-toed boots and hard hat, standing in the middle of busy Route 60 directing traffic so that the buses and students can walk safely.



Jim O'Brien
Johnson-Williams Middle
School and Berryville Primary,
Berryville

Mr. O'Brien has been working with Clarke County Schools for 12 years and he is a constant fixture on the corner of Main Street and Lincoln Avenue in all kinds of weather. He greets each student, parent or community member with a smile and a kind word. The bus drivers in the division know that traffic will flow well and students will be safe with Mr. O'Brien at his post. Everyone in the neighborhood looks forward to his friendly wave as they drive past him. Mr. O'Brien is so dedicated that he scheduled his last surgery so as to limit the

amount of days that he would be away from his corner. The days that he did miss, the substitute was constantly asked, "When will Mr. O'Brien be back?"



Phyllis Krapf
Armstrong Elementary
School, Herndon

Mrs. Krapf is an outstanding crossing guard! Her mantra must be "the kids' safety comes first." She makes cars, school buses and even police cars wait for pedestrians. Our family admires Mrs. Krapf so much! We

look forward to her smiling face every day, and we always know that she is there to help us safely cross the busy Lake Newport Road. She definitely goes above and beyond when she looks out for us when we are running late for school. We are thankful for her assistance! And my eight year old loves it when she blows her whistle at the cars!

Sherry Mull
Stratford Landing Elementary
School, Fairfax

Ms. Mull is present, energetic, armed with a broad smile as she approached the daunting task of ensuring the safety of 915 students arriving at Stratford Landing daily via bus, car, and foot. She has lots of passion for her job and demonstrates it every morning and afternoon as she keeps us all safe. She has purchased reflective gear to wear and hold, making her a bright sight on Riverside Road, so cars are aware of her directions at all times. She regularly communicates with the school administrator and patrol sponsor about issues on Riverside Road as well as offers helpful suggestions for our school that we can share with parents. She even appears at school functions to educate parents and students on the safest procedures for school drop off and pick up. Ms. Mull is an outstanding Crossing Guard, loved by our community.



The following three crossing guards were recognized with honorable mention for Virginia's Most Outstanding Crossing Guard in 2013:

Chester Robinson
Crestwood Elementary
School, Springfield

Chester Robinson, has been a crossing guard at Crestwood for the past 9 years. Once his duties are completed in the morning at his post, he comes into the school and begins his day. He is a mentor, tutor, book room organizer, cafeteria host, school crisis team member, buddy reader, manages all keys in the building, volunteer coordinator for high school students during PTA meetings, and PTA member. Just last week, a parent new to our school stopped by the office to thank him. We are fortunate to have Chester as part of our school community!



Howard Wallace
James River Elementary
School, Williamsburg

Mr. Howard recognized the need several years ago to assist students at the main entrance of the school and began to volunteer as the crossing guard for James River Elementary School. Each day, rain or shine, he would interrupt his regular schedule to assist students crossing the main street to James River Elementary. Each day the students who walk to school are greeted by Mr. Howard as he directs the traffic and assists the students across the main street at the entrance to school. Mr. Howard always gives a warm smile, a helping hand, and encouraging words to help students start their day. Parents and community members alike have expressed their sincere appreciation for the attention to the safety of the students who walk to school that Mr. Howard so graciously provides.



Joe McDonald
Lutie Lewis Coates
Elementary School, McNair
Elementary School & South
Lakes High School, Herndon

Over the years, Joe McDonald has not only performed his duties with the utmost care and safety for the students, but has gone above and beyond to support their success as well. He attends many of the evening community and school events, such as the fall and spring band, strings, and chorus concerts and the fall festival. He helps to build positive relationships with our students and staff and is even the mentor for a student. Whenever there are concerns about the safety and well-being for the students, he is the first person to meet with the administration, ensuring that all of our students can come to school and go home safely. Without Mr. McDonald, our community and school would not be complete!

Be sure to visit the Virginia Safe Routes to School Website to see the full list of nominated crossing guards and to print out thank you cards and other materials to show your appreciation of your school's community crossing guard.

SRTS Spring Webinars

This spring, the Virginia Safe Routes to School program is continuing its informational webinar series in preparation for National Bike to School Day. The topics for these webinars are chosen by Safe Routes supporters across the state and highlight information and best practices by other active Virginia Safe Routes to School advocates. Be sure to register for the March 12 and April 9 webinars.

March 12, 2014 12:30pm: School Liability for Bicycling to and from School. Join the Virginia safe Routes to School program for the next webinar in our series to

increase safe biking and walking to school. We'll discuss how a lack of consistent and correct information regarding liability can affect a Safe Routes to School project and we'll talk with Becky Short, a Safe Routes to School Division Coordinator in Prince William County, who has worked with her division to address how to best understand liability and share that information with school administrators. Be sure to register online and get around this road block to safely biking and walking to school!

April 9, 2014 12:30pm: Bicycle Trains and Walking School Buses - Best Practices In preparation of National Bike to School Day, please join the Virginia Safe Routes to School program for our next webinar where we'll discuss the best practices for establishing and sustaining walking school buses and bike trains at your school. Walking school buses and bike trains are great ways to encourage both students and parents to walk or bike to school as well as teach pedestrian and bicycling safety, and they are a great way to include the community in a safe routes to school project. Don't forget to register online to help get bike trains and walking school buses moving at your school!

QuickStart Mini-grants

The next round of 2014 QuickStart Mini-grants are due March 20, 2014. Up to six QuickStart Mini-grants will be awarded to schools to support small SRTS projects or activities that encourage walking and bicycling to school. These grants are great for purchasing incentive items for students, promotional materials, even bicycle racks for your school. In the last round of QuickStart Mini-grants, seven schools received Mini-grants to help support SRTS projects. The seven schools receiving Mini-grants are:

Belle View Elementary School,
Alexandria

Bicycle Rodeo for K - 6 grade students and bicycle accessories

**Belmont Ridge Middle School,
Leesburg**

Bicycle and Pedestrian Education training and walk to school incentive water bottles and pencils

**Keister Elementary School,
Harrisonburg**

Safety vests for Walking School Bus leaders and walk to school incentive items for students

**Prince William County Schools,
Prince William County**

Reproduction of NHTSA Child Pedestrian Safety Curriculum for all PE teachers in the county

**TC Miller Elementary School,
Lynchburg**

Installation of bicycle and skateboard racks prior to an upcoming bicycle rodeo

**Victory and Lakeview Elementary Schools,
Portsmouth**

Bicycle helmets and bicycle lights for an upcoming bicycle rodeo

Don't forget to apply online for your school to receive a QuickStart Mini-grant!

National Bike to School Day is May 7, 2014

Join tens of thousands of children, parents, school officials, and many other supporters for the third annual Bike to School Day on May 7, 2014



In 2013, eighty-four (84) Virginia schools had registered for Bike to School Day. This year, our goal is to double Virginia's participation. So far, twenty-one (21) schools in Virginia have registered for Bike to School Day. You can help make this year's event even bigger! Register now.

Also, be sure to check in on the VDOT SRTS website on April 15 to get downloadable flyers and posters for National Bike to School Day!

Walkabout Mini-grants are Available!

Virginia Safe Routes to School is offering Walkabout Mini-grants to schools and communities who are interested in learning about the bicycle and pedestrian network around their school. Walkabouts are led by the Local Technical Assistance Coordinator and are an excellent opportunity for community stakeholders to experience pedestrian and bicycle conditions, share perspectives, and build consensus around potential solutions. Walkabout reports will include a description of conditions observed during the walkabout and photos documenting the area. Also, the report may include recommended infrastructure improvements if your school intends to apply for a specific funding opportunity. An example walkabout report is available on the VDOT SRTS website.

In the past, schools have used Walkabouts to assess the existing pedestrian and bicycling facilities around the school to focus potential improvements. Additionally, schools have used the Walkabout to gather additional information to prepare infrastructure grant applications. Walkabouts will be offered during the spring and fall this year on a rolling basis. If interested, apply online for a walkabout mini-grant.

LTAC Shares Virginia SRTS Successes at Maryland Bike Symposium

Over the past 2 years, the Virginia SRTS program has given out more than 110 QuickStart Mini-grants, doubled Bike to School Day participation, and increased Student

Travel Tally data collection by nearly 700 percent. Jim Elliott, the Virginia Safe Routes to School Program's Local Technical Assistance Coordinator (LTAC) for the Piedmont Region, shared these and other success stories from the Virginia SRTS Program with bicycle advocates, state and local government officials, and others attending the Bike Maryland Annual Bicycle Symposium, an annual, day-long event that this year was held on February 11 in Annapolis.

In his remarks, Jim emphasized the role that the Virginia program's structure played in these successes, particularly the program's 12 division and area coordinators. He also shared the Virginia program's strategy for the spring, which is to encourage localSRTS programs to build their spring calendars around a series of coordinated education and encouragement activities building up to a Bike to School or Bike at School event in May, such as bicycle safety education, frequent walker and biker programs, and bicycle trains. He indicated that upcoming QuickStart Mini-grant due dates (March 20) had been strategically timed to help local SRTS programs pursue such activities and to purchase items, such as bicycle racks and bicycle rodeos, to support and encourage safe bicycling to and from school.

Jim's presentation was very well received. His panel included Jessica Silwek, the Maryland SRTS Coordinator, and Lucy Neher, SRTS Coordinator for the City of Takoma Park, Maryland.

Let's Move Active Schools

As part of the Let's Move! Program, which works to improve the health of children through proper nutrition and exercise, Let's Move Active Schools is a nationwide program to encourage schools to include sixty minutes of physical activity each day through before, during and after school activities. Safe Routes to School projects like Biking Fridays and Walk to School Days help contribute to increasing student activity during the day. Find out more about what it takes for your school to be a recognized Let's Move! Active School online.

4th Annual National Bicycling Poster Contest

Submissions for the Saris Cycling Group's 4th National Bicycling Poster Contest are due this Friday, March 7. The contest is a great opportunity for 5th graders to express their creativity, to get excited about bicycling, and to learn about health living.



One winning 5th grade student in Virginia will receive a new bicycle, bike light, helmet, and will be entered into the national competition with a chance to receive a trip to the 2015 National Bike Summit in Washington D.C. Also, their school will receive bicycle parking for 20 bikes and a bike/walk tracking system called The Hub. To learn more about the contest, please read the Virginia Contest Rules and the Contest Permission Slip.

