



## Progress and Activity Report - Georgia Safe Routes to School: Task Orders 9 and 10 Spring 2013

This Progress Report reflects activities ending March 31<sup>st</sup> under Task Orders 9 and 10. Through this billing period, the Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center project team continued to provide services and outreach for schools and community stakeholders throughout the state. The Resource Center has a network of over 430 schools signed on to the Georgia Safe Routes to School Partnership Program. One new Partner signed on in March. Burgess Peterson Academy in Atlanta is the newest Partner. Staff made four presentations and supported over 60 events.

### School Outreach Coordinator Highlights

During this activity period, the GA SRTS Resource Center focused efforts on promoting and supporting Georgia Walk to School Day (gWalk.) Partners registered 60 events for the fourth annual gWalk. All registered events can be found at [www.SafeRoutesGA.org](http://www.SafeRoutesGA.org). As reported last month, the Governor issued a Proclamation supporting Georgia Walk to School Day and Safe Routes to School.

### City of Decatur Schools

The City of Decatur schools participated in its first inter-school competition to celebrate Georgia's Fourth Annual Walk to School Day. The school with the highest percentage of walkers received a "Platinum" shoe award to commemorate their victory.

Eighty-five children (15%) from 4/5 Academy at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue participated in the school's first gWalk event. More than 240 students (31%) from Renfroe Middle School walked and rolled to school, led by the Principal, who joined the fun as a bike train captain! Although St. Thomas More Catholic School is a private school with very few children able to walk due to distance, 155 students (34%) participated in the event by walking from designated park and walk sites. Oakhurst Elementary and Glennwood Academy earned honorable mentions with 44% and 50% participation respectively.



Clairemont Elementary school claimed this year's top award with 60% participation! More than 200 walkers and rollers braved a frigid 25-degree morning to celebrate Georgia's Walk to School Day at Clairemont. The school promotes monthly, themed walk-to-school events and plans to retain their award when the schools compete again for National Bike to School Day in May.

### Dunwoody Area Schools (DeKalb County)

Nearly 2,000 students filled the sidewalks of Dunwoody on Georgia's Fourth Annual Walk to School Day. Five area-schools participated in the Second Annual Dunwoody gWalk competition. The winner received a special Dunwoody "Golden Shoe" Award, and the principals of losing schools were required to wear the winning school's spirit wear t-shirt for the entire day!



Nykia celebrated gWalk at Dunwoody Elementary School where 307 students (33%) walked with their parents, siblings, and family pets. In addition to braving the cold weather, students brought small gifts to thank the school crossing-guard for his service. During an early morning shift, Mr. Larry saved a student from a pedestrian-vehicle collision. This near miss brought awareness to on-going safety issues around the school and contributed to the Gubernatorial Declaration of Crossing Guard Appreciation Day on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

Vanderlyn Elementary School won this year's gWalk Golden Shoe Award with 93% participation (594 students). Austin Elementary School followed as a close second place with 489 student walkers (91%). Chesnut Charter experienced its highest participation to date, despite the cold weather, with 73% participation, or 288 students walking. This is nearly a 40% increase from last year's participation! Kingsley Charter rounded out the competition with 301 walkers (68%).

### Panola Way Elementary School (DeKalb County, Bronze)

In late January, Panola Way Elementary school lost a student to a pedestrian-vehicle accident. In response to the horrible accident, the school utilized "Communities Putting Prevention to Work" (CPPW) grant funding from the DeKalb County Board of Health, and their partnership with GA SRTS, to kick-off safe walking to school on Georgia Walk to School Day. Students identified as frequent walkers attended a meeting with the principal and the school's intervention specialist to learn about pedestrian safety. These students received high-visibility, child-sized, reflective vests and were encouraged to wear them every time they walked to and from school. The principal initiated an incentive program for students who practice safe walking daily. Those "caught" wearing their vests regularly win a small prize at the end of each month. The program has been so successful that non-walking students have begun expressing interest in walking to school in order to participate! Following gWalk, Nykia was invited to present about SRTS at the monthly "Dads and Donuts" morning meeting. In addition to presenting SRTS programs and activities, Nykia provided pedestrian safety tips and encouraged parents to practice good pedestrian skills with their children. Nykia will continue to work with this school to build programs and encourage more parent involvement.



### Arcado Elementary (Gwinnett County)

Despite the chilly weather, more than 60 students participated in Georgia Walk to School Day at Arcado Elementary – setting a record participation level for the school! The Clean Air Bair from Clean Air Schools greeted students on the morning of the walk. Students were given an incentive item as they arrived at school and also signed their name on a poster titled “Arcado Elementary: Reduce Your Carbon Paw Print.” School Champion Joellen Wilson appeared on the morning announcements along with a student and the Clean Air Bair to thank everyone who participated.



### Sope Creek Elementary (Cobb County)

Sope Creek had a successful Georgia Walk to School Day event with 377 students walking or biking to school -- almost a quarter of the school population participating. The Sope Creek Elementary Student Council spearheaded the effort and created a promotional logo entitled "MARCH ON, EAGLES!" They also created a [video](#) of students walking and biking to school.



### Sharon Elementary (Forsyth County)

Sharon Elementary recently received new sidewalks as a result of efforts by City Commissioner Brian Tam. The school sits on a main road near neighborhoods and shopping centers with sidewalks and crosswalks, but there were no sidewalks connecting the street to the school's entrance. With the installation of the new sidewalk, Sharon Elementary had over 50 participants for Georgia Walk to School Day. The number of regular walkers is expected to continue to increase.

### PLAY and Family Connections Presentation

On March 25<sup>th</sup>, Georgia State University's initiative, "PLAY," provided a day of technical training and networking about strategies to combat childhood obesity. The audience members for the initiative were representatives of Georgia's Family Connections Collaborative in Macon. Each county in Georgia has a Family Connections, divided by counties into 12 regions in the state. Eight of the 12 regions were represented at the training. Patti presented about Safe Routes to School, while other presenters represented the Georgia Department of Education, Georgia Department of Health, Farm to School Program, Alliance for Healthier Generation, and HealthMPowers. Discussion and networking followed the presentations, and the Resource Center staff continues to follow up with Family Connections staff as well as the other panelists and organizers.

### SRTS Marketing (Toole Design Group and Outreach Staff)

**Website, Hotline, and Social Media:** The website was updated during March with additional Walk to School information. The Walk to School Day registration page was maintained and events were noted on the "Who's gWalking" page as they were registered. The Governor's Proclamation for Georgia Walk to School Day was included on the website with a brief news item. The Hotline received one call during this billing period.

The Resource Center's Facebook Page encourages users to visit the program's website and other relevant SRTS webpages and information sources. The Resource Center staff made seven posts to Facebook during March that included information about gWalk and photos from events. The Facebook Page has 54 "likes."

### **Looking Ahead**

In April, the Resource Center staff will call for nominations for 2012-2013 Outstanding Partners of the Year. Each year, the Resource Center selects an outstanding partner from each of the six territories. Deadline for submissions is April 19<sup>th</sup>. The staff will also promote the second annual National Bike to School Day (happening May 8<sup>th</sup>) throughout April. Schools are encouraged to register at [www.walkbiketoschool.org](http://www.walkbiketoschool.org). General outreach, presentations, partner development will continue throughout April and May.

The current Resource Center contract ends May 31<sup>st</sup>.