



## Georgia Safe Routes to School Resource Center Monthly Progress Report March 2014

### Highlights

During March, two schools partnered with the Resource Center; the attached list provides the names of our 417 Partner Schools. Outreach staff gave eight presentations and held 90 meetings with stakeholders and schools. March 5<sup>th</sup> was Georgia Walk to School Day, and 123 schools participated throughout the month with a few schools holding events next month in April. The team continued providing assistance for two School Travel Plans. Draft recommendations were compiled into the Travel Plans that were then provided to the local school teams for review and input.

### Outreach Summaries

#### Metro Atlanta Territory - Nichole Hollis, School Outreach Coordinator

Nichole maintains 129 Partners in the Metro Atlanta Territory. There were a total of 51 Georgia Walk to School Day (gWalk) events held throughout Metro Atlanta. She attended events at **Inman Middle School (Atlanta Public Schools)**, **Livesey Elementary School (DeKalb County Schools)**, and **Pittman Park Recreation Center (Atlanta Parks and Recreation)**. She assisted schools with planning their events and helped schools solicit participation from their local communities.

**Kids All Dressed Up** is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has been participating as a friend with the Safe Routes to School Resource Center since 2010. They provide workshops to improve self-esteem and teach essential lifelong learning skills. Recently on Georgia Walk to School Day, the organization had students from **Western Michigan University's Alternate Spring Break** work with students at **Kennedy Middle School (Atlanta Public Schools)** to promote safe walking. Students wrote a script for gWalk and created a public service announcement.

**Drew Charter School (Atlanta Public Schools)** along with six other schools in Metro Atlanta had the **U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers** volunteer on their gWalk events. Drew Charter had local support from the **Atlanta Police Department Zone 6 officers**, **Atlanta Department of Public Works**, and the **East Lake Security Patrol**. The schools **East Lake Foundation** also informed local apartment communities about Georgia Walk to School Day. They are planning their next walking and biking event on May 7<sup>th</sup> for **National Bike to School Day**.



*Drew Charter School students in Atlanta hold signs for gWalk.*

Nichole also met with three infrastructure awarded schools including **Lawrenceville Elementary School, Seaborn Lee Elementary School, and Love T. Nolan Elementary School**. Nichole is working closely with the schools to provide education programs at the schools in conjunction with the infrastructure improvements. By meeting with the schools, she learned about new concerns and gave the schools up-to-date information about Resource Center materials and programs.

Nichole presented to a Parent Liason Event in Clayton County at **Mount Zion Primary School**. Parent Liaisons are staff people at the schools that work directly with parents and provide a point of contact at the school to families. There were three schools represented at the event. Nichole was able to answer questions about SRTS and explained the benefits of having SRTS programs at each of the schools. **Safe Kids Cayton** was also present to support the safety initiatives of SRTS.

In April, Nichole plans to hold the fourth Travel Plan meeting for **Springdale Park Elementary** and also encourage registration for National Bike to School Day. She will also be working with a Bike Advocacy group in Roswell called **Bike Roswell** to promote biking among schools in the Roswell area.

### **North Georgia Territory - Alicia Hatcher, Senior School Outreach Coordinator**

There are 103 Partner Schools in North Georgia. Twenty schools in North Georgia participated in Georgia Walk to School Day. **Pleasant Grove Elementary** in Dalton participated in their first Walk to School Day by having students walk around the school campus during their PE class. PE teacher and School Champion Sallie Thomas then taught a pedestrian safety lesson from the NHTSA Pedestrian Safety Curriculum provided by the Resource Center. **Murdock Elementary** in Marietta had another successful Walk to School Day with 200 students participating! Students walked from nearby neighborhoods and received incentive items as they arrived at school. PE teachers and School Champions Allison Redhead and Marc Renna organized the event to promote the health incentive of walking.



*Murdock Elementary School, Cobb County*

Alicia met with Maria Bowie, Program Coordinator for **Walk Georgia**. Walk Georgia is a Friend of the Resource Center and is a free online program that tracks walking and other physical activities for two to twelve weeks. Schools use this resource to encourage students to be more physically active and log activity in Walk Georgia's system. Alicia and Maria talked about potential synergies between the programs. This could be a great opportunity for schools that hold weekly or daily Walk to School Days to see which student walks the furthest or most frequently. Alicia and Maria plan to meet again over the summer and have more details ready for the start of the 2014-2015 school year.

In April, Alicia will promote National Bike to School Day. Additionally, she will plan and facilitate the second statewide **Regional Commissions** web conference.

### **East Central Territory - Taki Smith, School Outreach Coordinator**

Taki currently maintains 81 Partners in the East Central Territory. In March, Taki signed on **Greenbrier Elementary School**, located in Columbia County, as a new School Partner. Six schools have opted not to continue participating in the SRTS Partner Program due to limited involvement from parents, administrative turnover since originally partnering, or having partnered only because of the infrastructure call in 2010. Taki will look for opportunities to re-engage these Partners in the future. During the month of March, Taki focused on delivering Georgia Walk to School (gWalk) incentives, meeting with potential schools, attending SRTS events, composing the SRTS Wayfinding March

Newsletter edition, updating the Resource Center Facebook page and promoting Walk to School Day and the Saris Bicycle Poster Contest.

Taki had 25 School Partners register for gWalk. Several schools that were not School Partners also registered for the event. On March 5<sup>th</sup>, Taki attended a Walk to School Day event at **Greenbrier Elementary School**. Despite the cold and wet weather, over 100 students and many of their parents participated in the event. The safety patrol students at the school greeted the students and parents with SRTS pencils and bookmarks as they arrived. Greenbrier Elementary School, gWalk event was also featured on [WRDW News Channel 12](#), a local news station in the area.



*Taki presents at the Power Up for 30/Walk to School Day Kick-Off Celebration*

**Georgia Academy for the Blind**, a School Partner located in Bibb Co. hosted a Power Up for 30/Walk to School Day Kick-Off Celebration on March 19, 2014. Taki attended the assembly and presented the school with 200 SRTS pedometers to help launch their SRTS program working with the visually impaired students. She also gave a presentation to the school introducing the program and welcoming them. Immediately following the assembly, the students and teachers walked the track and were greeted with healthy snacks once they reached the finish line. The academy's gWalk event was also featured in the [Macon Telegraph](#), a local newspaper in the area.

In addition to gWalk, Taki traveled to Greene Co. where she participated with the **Greene County School System**, Greene Reads Kick-Off Celebration at the Greene Co. Library. She read children's books with bicycle or walking themes to over 25 students from the community. Those books were [Duck on a Bike](#) by David Shannon and [Make Way for Ducklings](#) by Robert McCloskey. Participants received SRTS safety bookmarks. The Resource Center was featured as a community partner at the event.

In April, Taki will focus on traveling to different counties throughout her territory, presenting SRTS and keeping community stakeholders and schools abreast of upcoming SRTS events and program offerings. Taki will focus on encouraging her schools to complete student travel tallies, register for Bike to School Day and continue to meet with active and non-active School Partners and Friends in the East Central territory.



*Taki reads to students in Greene County.*

### **Southwest Territory - Chelsea Carter, School Outreach Coordinator**

The Southwest region has 66 Partner Schools. In March, Chelsea helped plan and participate in gWalk events, promoted the Saris Poster Contest, scheduled Spring Tally collection dates, and coordinated with the schools that have been awarded infrastructure grants.

Chelsea attended gWalk events at two new Partner schools in **Thomas County**. Schools in Carroll County have planned to make their walking a monthly education and walking class, including a lesson from the NHSTA Curriculum.

Chelsea dedicated significant time to working with **Baker County K-12**. This school had originally opted out of the Safe Routes to School Partner Program, though after discussion about their GDOT-funded SRTS infrastructure

project and commitments to education and encouragement, the school's administration has recommitted. A sidewalk is being constructed to connect to existing sidewalk routes. This will pave the way for students to walk safely to a nearby church. Students currently walk this way after school and the new sidewalk will improve safety of the path and may increase the numbers of students that walk after school. Chelsea made contact with all stages in the construction process in order to get information before presenting at Baker County K-12's Board of Education Meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Sidewalk construction began on March 26<sup>th</sup> and is expected to be complete in a few weeks.

Chelsea also presented the Safe Routes program to attendees of the **South Georgia Regional Commission** monthly meeting. She promoted the program, upcoming events, and travel plans while also explaining how the program is incorporated into rural schools and towns. There were representatives from each county in the region, including Echols County. Chelsea is working to sign on schools in Echols County.

Chelsea is working to coordinate NHTSA Child Pedestrian Safety Workshops at the **Thomasville, Moultrie and Valdosta YMCAs** as well as with the **Safe Kids of Columbus** and surrounding schools. Chelsea presented the NHTSA Curriculum to the Valdosta YMCA and they were very excited to try and fit a workshop in before their Healthy Kids Day in order to incorporate it that day. In the next two months the Southwest Territory should have at least 4 NHTSA workshops.

In April, Chelsea will have three tabling events throughout her territory and will set up more presentations in counties with no partners. She will be pushing Partners to complete Student Travel Tallies as well as promoting Bike to School Day in May. Chelsea has a meeting scheduled with the town of Moultrie to discuss the infrastructure grant awardee **CA Gray Junior High School**. Similar to Baker K-12, CA Gray planned to remove their school from the Safe Routes program. These upcoming meetings will be to discuss their continuation of the program in their school, the project and its construction.

### **Coastal Georgia Territory - Patti Sistrunk, Project Manager**

Coastal Georgia has 38 Partner schools. Five schools in the Coastal Region participated in gWalk. One of those, Juliette Low Elementary in Savannah is not a Partner. Patti is working with the school contact to sign the school up for the program and provide resources. **East Broad Street School** held an event that included over 300 students walking. **Safe Kids Savannah** supported the event with snacks and drinks for the students and a gift card drawing for parents that walked with the students.

Patti was a key stakeholder at a Complete Streets workshop put on by **Healthy Savannah** and the Coastal Georgia YMCA. The collaboration included representatives from many SRTS stakeholders including **Savannah Bicycle Campaign, City of Savannah**, and the **Savannah Chatham County School District**. Patti is working with schools and these organizations to support increased walking and bicycling. Healthy Savannah and Patti identified schools in target areas near Complete Streets and trail projects of interest to the workshop attendees.

Travel planning continues with **Charles Ellis Montessori Academy (CEMA)** in Savannah. The local team reviewed the draft plan recommendations during March and is preparing for another meeting on April 16<sup>th</sup> at the school. This meeting will allow participants to provide any final feedback, address responsibilities, and discuss timeline and implementation. As a result of the planning process, John Bennett, Executive Director of the **Savannah Bicycle Campaign (SBC)** contacted Savannah College of Art and Design. A professor in the Industrial Design department is using the CEMA school bicycle rack problem as a class project. CEMA is an older school built on just one city block in a densely populated section of historic Savannah. The school has no room for more bicycle racks. Existing multi-level racks are not child-accessible in that they are often difficult to operate. The Industrial Design Research classes have been tasked with researching the problem and looking for potential opportunities. When this term is over, they'll present their findings and potentially pass their information on to a studio class that will design and possibly build

concepts for the bicycle rack. Patti and John presented the challenge and background about SRTS and SBC to the two Research classes on Monday, March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Patti continued work with the **Coastal Regional Commission** on a Travel Plan for **Liberty Elementary and Midway Middle Schools** in Liberty County. The school's plan has been developed over the last three years with delays caused by staff turnover at the Regional Commission and other obligations at the schools. Patti updated the noninfrastructure portions of the plan and incorporated some new strategies specific to the new timeline. The Travel Plan is currently under review by the local stakeholders.

## Marketing

The website was updated. Carol Kachadoorian, Marketing Manager, is working with a contract web developer and designer. Updates include:

- gWalk information
- Updated list of registered events (about 2 to 3 times per week)
- Saris Poster Contest information

The Resource Center issued a March Newsletter mid-month. The Wayfinding newsletter was drafted by Taki and edited by Carol and Alicia. It notified recipients about National Bike to School Day registration.

Glow in the dark wristbands and updated pedestrian safety bookmarks were distributed to schools as incentives for events leading up to gWalk and throughout the month as needed by schools. By the end of March, 123 schools held events.

## Thirty-day "Look Ahead" Period

Throughout April, schools will be encouraged to register for National Bike to School Day which is May 7<sup>th</sup>. SOC's and the team will promote the events on the website, on Facebook, via email, in person, and with press releases. Each SOC will attend events in their territory.

Post-gWalk event surveys will be compiled and information will be reviewed by the team in mid-April.

The team will meet April 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> for the spring quarter team meeting and training. The training will consist of presentation and meeting training as well as a client update, summer planning, and Forum planning. A date, location, and agenda will be set for the Forum in early April. During the team meeting, the group will coordinate speakers. Carol is working with a graphic designer to develop marketing materials. She is also developing a registration form on the website.

An April Newsletter will be distributed in mid-April and will focus on promoting National Bike to School Day, encourage schools and communities to nominate partners for the Partner of the Year awards, and promote the Forum.

The project year ends on June 17<sup>th</sup>.